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

Oral History Interview

with

Ann Randolph Samuels

Interviewer: Kerry Reed
Narrator: Ann Randolph Samuels
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Transcriber: Dr. Donna M. DeBlasio

Summary:

Ann Randolph Samuels, a native of Charleston, South Carolina, was born in 1920. She moved to Alexandria when she was nineteen years old, after graduating from high school in Charlottesville. She met her husband, Robert Samuels in Alexandria; they were together until his death in 2003. Ms. Samuels worked for the Marriott Corporation for forty-five years, beginning as car hop at the company's Hot Shoppe in Alexandria and working her way up into management. Ms. Samuels' niece Reese Chandler, and a friend, Michael Johnson, are also in this interview.

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General	Segregated neighborhoods and public facilities in Alexandria; working for the Marriott Corporation; dealing with segregation and racism in daily life.

Places	The Berg; Cross Canal; The Elks; USO; Fort Belvoir; Freedman's Hospital; Colored Rosemont; Del Ray
People	Dawkins, Judge Nolan.

Kerry Reed [00:00:00] So, could we start by retelling us your full name, if that's okay?

Ann Samuels [00:00:05] My name is Ann Randall Samuels.

Kerry Reed [00:00:10] Is that with an E or no E?

Ann Samuels [00:00:12] No E, just Ann.

Kerry Reed [00:00:15] And when were you born?

Ann Samuels [00:00:17] I was born in Charleston, South Carolina, September 15, 1920.

Kerry Reed [00:00:27] Charleston, South Carolina, 1920. That's incredible.

Ann Samuels [00:00:27] [Laughter]

Kerry Reed [00:00:27] And then how did you come to be in Alexandria?

Ann Samuels [00:00:35] I came to Alexandria after finishing high school to visit a friend. [I] got a job and stayed.

Kerry Reed [00:00:44] What friend was that? You said you came to visit a friend.

Ann Samuels [00:00:53] What year was that?

Kerry Reed [00:00:54] Yeah.

Ann Samuels [00:00:54] Oh, gee. Now that's a good question. I have to work on that one. I was about 19 at the time.

Kerry Reed [00:01:10] Okay. So, then you moved to Alexandria when you were 19, right?

Ann Samuels [00:01:14] Yes.

Kerry Reed [00:01:14] Okay. Where did you move to?

Ann Samuels [00:01:23] What I did, I moved with a girlfriend that worked in a private family, and she had living quarters, and I stayed with her.

Kerry Reed [00:01:33] Okay. Do you remember where that was?

Ann Samuels [00:01:35] Oh, goodness gracious. No, because I didn't know the city. I was just staying where she was working.

Kerry Reed [00:01:49] Where was the first place you moved to after that in Alexandria?

Ann Samuels [00:01:54] Oh.

Reese Chandler [00:01:54] Was it Grandma's house?

Ann Samuels [00:01:59] I think so.

Reese Chandler [00:02:00] My great-great-grandma, Lizzie Brady.

Kerry Reed [00:02:06] Where was that?

Reese Chandler [00:02:07] Where was it? Here. Where was Grandma? On Lee Street. Was Grandma living on Lee Street? Because I know Aunt Lou kept saying the house they were in had a ballroom. And you all used to play in that, where they would hold funerals or a body, wakes, in this place. I think it was on Lee Street.

Ann Samuels [00:02:38] I think so.

Reese Chandler [00:02:40] Lee Street.

Francesco de Salvatore [00:02:47] If you guys have questions you want to ask Ms. Samuels, please go right ahead.

Reese Chandler [00:02:51] She's been with me forever. She was around before I was born, [Laughter] so I don't have any questions for her.

Ann Samuels [00:03:00] And I tell you, where I did live, I got a live-in job, and I stayed with the people that I worked for. The first live-in job I had was on Russell Road. And I'll never forget, the house is still there in the 900 block of Russell Road. I forget the name of the people. The father was a district manager for Montgomery Ward Company. I'll never forget that family.

Reese Chandler [00:03:33] Well, shut up! Montgomery Ward!

Ann Samuels [00:03:34] And it was him, his wife, and two kids. I was a live-in maid. I stayed with them for about 4 or 5 years because they moved--I forget the name of the street because it wasn't far from where they were living--and I still stayed with them. I stayed with them for about at least three or four years anyhow.

Kerry Reed [00:04:01] Absolutely. So, after you left Russell Road, where did you move to?

Ann Samuels [00:04:09] Oh, let's see, where did I go after I left them? I got a job working at Fort Belvoir and stayed with the family at Fort Belvoir.

Reese Chandler [00:04:24] Were they military?

Ann Samuels [00:04:25] Yeah.

Reese Chandler [00:04:27] With a military family.

Ann Samuels [00:04:28] Yes, with a military family. They had an infant baby at the time. I stayed with them about a year and a half because I stayed until he got transferred someplace else.

Kerry Reed [00:04:47] So, while you were working for these families, were you coming down to King Street or over at Parker Gray?

Ann Samuels [00:04:52] Yeah, on my day off, you know, I would come into town, you know, go in different stores. I had met some families, and I could visit them. One of my favorite families was your aunt, Liza Samuels, and her family. They lived on—what street was that—Royal Street? No, not Royal. Was it Royal? Not Royal. What's the street down from Royal?

Michael Johnson [00:05:10] Pitt?

Reese Chandler [00:05:15] Pitt.

Michael Johnson [00:05:17] St. Asaph.

Ann Samuels [00:05:19] Oh, it was Pitt Street, and then going down to the river, what's the next one?

Michael Johnson [00:05:24] Wilkes?

Reese Chandler [00:05:25] No, before it.

Ann Samuels [00:05:25]. After Pitt Street, what is the next one?

Michael Johnson [00:05:26] St. Asaph.

Reese Chandler [00:05:32] Orinoco.

Michael Johnson [00:05:35] Going to the river.

Reese Chandler [00:05:36] Going towards the river. Pitt.

Michael Johnson [00:05:38] Pendleton.

Reese Chandler [00:05:39] Pendleton. Royal.

Ann Samuels [00:05:41]-No, it was-Pitt Street, because when I started dating Robert Samuels, he was living on 409 North Pitt Street. Now, what is the street before you get to Pitt Street?

Reese Chandler [00:05:54] Naming the streets, you be riding around here all the time.

Reese Chandler [00:05:57] Royal Street, isn't it?

Reese Chandler [00:05:58] Is it Royal?

Michael Johnson [00:05:59] It's Royal; it's got to be Royal, right? It's Royal, Pitt, then St. Asaph, isn't it?

Reese Chandler [00:06:01] Royal, Pitt, St. Asaph. Yes ma'am.

Ann Samuels [00:06:05] Yes, because that's where [00:06:07]Lalo [0.0s] and [00:06:08]where Lalo and [Holly] were staying.[0.0s]

Reese Chandler [00:06:14] Aunt Lalo. Okay. Okay.

Ann Samuels [00:06:16] That's the family that I would visit on my days off. Lalo took me like one of her kids because she had 4 kids; remember she had 4 kids? She took me in just like I was one of her kids. It was, they were Samuels; wasn't that the last name, Samuels?

Reese Chandler [00:06:36] Yeah, they were Samuels.

Ann Samuels [00:06:41] It was Elizabeth Samuels and her sister that I visited when I would come to town. I would stay with them. Elizabeth and Ollie Samuels.

Kerry Reed [00:06:55] So you mentioned that you would go to stores here in the city. What stores would you go to?

Ann Samuels [00:07:03] Ten-cent Store, JCPenney. Any of the local stores were available, because Penney's [Penney's Department Store] was there. Penney's was on King Street then.

Reese Chandler [00:07:19] G. C. Murphy's? [Murphy's Mart]

Ann Samuels [00:07:24] Murphy's, the ten-cent store: you know that was on King Street. Well, we were right in that area. You know, when you only have one day off, you try to go in stores where you could pick up a little thing for yourself. And Penney's was a nice store to shop because you could get anything in Penney's from clothes, shoes, furniture, anything you want in Penney's.

Reese Chandler [00:07:54] Did you all go to--What's the one in Shirlington? Was that Montgomery Wards?

Ann Samuels [00:08:01] No, Montgomery Wards was on King Street.

Reese Chandler [00:08:02] Really?

Ann Samuels [00:08:03] Montgomery Wards was on King Street.

Kerry Reed [00:08:06] Was that Montgomery Ward?

Reese Chandler [00:08:08] Wards, with an S.

Kerry Reed [00:08:10] What was that?

Ann Samuels [00:08:12] It was the first--.

Reese Chandler [00:08:14] Department store.

Ann Samuels [00:08:14] Department store.

Michael Johnson [00:08:17] Like JCPenney, Sears?

Reese Chandler [00:08:19] Yeah. I can't remember the one in Shirlington. It was a big store. I remember Mama and Aunt Lou talking about going in the store to buy the little shirtwaist dresses and stuff like that. But I can't remember the name. I've never been because it was gone when I came along.

Ann Samuels [00:08:45] But those were the big department stores, and of course the ten-cent store; everybody shopped in the ten-cent store. That's the only store you were able to shop at. I'm trying to think of if there was any restaurants or anything, but this was during segregation time, you all know. Now, you know.

Reese Chandler [00:09:02] Oh yeah, because I remember as a little girl, my mama would take us to JCPenney's, but we weren't allowed to sit at the counter.

Ann Samuels [00:09:11] All this was during segregation time, so some places you weren't even allowed to go in. I don't ever remember an eating place that Blacks went in to eat. You might could go in and get something to take out, but I don't ever remember Blacks being able to go in and sit down and eat. Not even in the ten-cent store. The ten-cent store had a lunch counter. I remember that. Do you remember when the ten-cent store had that lunch counter?

Reese Chandler [00:09:37] Yeah, yeah. And she would explain and try to justify why we couldn't sit at the counter. Yeah, I remember.

Ann Samuels [00:09:49] But all of this is during segregation time. So, it was a different thing, you know, in all. At that time, it was the way of living. It was what it was. Just like it is today, it is what it is. It was the way of living. Blacks lived in one area; Whites lived in the other. And there were some parts of Alexandria [where] Blacks was not even allowed to be caught in that area after dark. Yeah, it was what it was.

Kerry Reed [00:10:33] What parts of Alexandria were you not supposed to be in after dark?

Ann Samuels [00:10:36] It was anywhere from the Rosemont area all the way back up into whatever area that was.

Reese Chandler [00:10:45] Now, Rosemont is Del Ray, right? Is that Del Ray or Glebe Road?

Michael Johnson [00:10:53] Well, we call it Del Ray now. You had colored Rosemont, and then you had the other side, White Rosemont, the other side of G.W. [George Washington Middle School].

Reese Chandler [00:11:01] So Rosemont area was a sundown town, that's what they called it. A sundown area. Yeah, you

couldn't go in and be caught in Rosemont after dark.

Ann Samuels [00:11:13] Yeah, after dark.

Kerry Reed [00:11:19] After you worked for the family in Fort Belvoir, where did you move after that?

Ann Samuels [00:11:27] Didn't I stay with [00:11:28] [Lalo] [0.0s] for a while? I think I stayed with the Samuels for a while.

Reese Chandler [00:11:32] Now Cousin Ann, when did you?

Ann Samuels [00:11:38] Huh?

Reese Chandler [00:11:38] When were you employed with the Hot Shoppe on Washington?

Ann Samuels [00:11:45] I took a job during the same time I was staying with your aunt, because Zetta and I heard that the restaurant was opening [00:11:55] [unintelligible], [0.0s] and it was hiring. We went to see if we could get a job. Zetta was Lalo's oldest daughter. They hired us, they did. What the job was, they had what they call curb service, where you drive up in your car, and you go to the car, take the peoples' orders, and carry it back out to them on a tray so the people didn't have to get out of their cars to eat out for the lunch. That was what we called curb service. We did that for a while. Well, Zetta left, but I stayed. The weather got cold and I got a cold, so then the managers told me, said, "Well, since you've been working so faithful I'll find a job for you on the inside," so, then I started learning how to do everything that had to be done on the inside, from the dish machine to the glass machine, to learning how to work orders from the fountain, learning short order from the kitchen. I learned. I got hired with Marriott at 22. I retired from Marriott at 67.

Reese Chandler [00:13:24] Get out!

Ann Samuels [00:13:25] Yes. 45 years.

Reese Chandler [00:13:26] [laughter]You became a manager, didn't you?

Ann Samuels [00:05:28] 45 years. I did everything. Everything you could do. And it was a wonderful company to work for because you could advance. And I really advanced from working outside to being a relief manager when I retired. I was a relief manager at Tysons Corner cafeteria because down there through the years, Marriott started out with a restaurant called Hot Shoppes. Then it went into catering business. We did food for the airlines. We did food for hotels. We did food for hospitals. Then they went into the hotel business. I went from doing it to training new employees. And I would travel. When I traveled for the company, I went to New York, New Jersey, all around in the Washington metropolitan area. Anywhere they open up a new place, I would go in and train new employees. I worked in what they called, what we had was a test kitchen, where you go in and you test food. You might test potatoes all day from everywhere. Or you might test chicken from everywhere to see who had the best product and whose product would stand up on the heat because some of it was pre-cooked and it had to be able to keep for a while, you know, before it's served. But Marriott believed in all fresh food. At that time, there was no frozen food or canned food. Everything was, everything was fresh. If the turkey was on the menu, turkey was cooking in the oven like you cook it at home. No fresh and no canned food. And even today, I don't think they do too much of that because they still have a name of having very good food. But I worked for the one company; now that's one job I kept for 45 years.

Kerry Reed [00:15:53] That's a long time to stay in one job. So, was the Hot Shoppe--that was in Alexandria?

Ann Samuels [00:15:58] Yes; remember they had them all over because they had the Hot Shoppe here and I looked at it right there on King and Washington, right there on the corner. I know you all don't know anything about it. I don't know if you remember that though.

Michael Johnson [00:16:13] It was by the skating rink. It was right up from the skating ring.

Reese Chandler [00:16:16] I remember the skating rink, but I don't remember the Hot Shoppe.

Ann Samuels: [00:16:18] You don't remember the Hot Shoppes?

Michael Johnson [00:16:19] I do. We just go up there and steal the money off the trays.

Ann Samuels [00:16:27] Because it was a frozen food, a frozen shop, where you get frozen ice cream, frozen because right there in front of the Hot Shoppe. It was Hot Shoppe on one corner, Howard Johnson on the other corner. Do you remember Howard Johnson?

Reese Chandler [00:16:41] I don't remember. I don't remember.

Michael Johnson [00:16:44] Right across from Luna Tavern, it was across from the Luna Tavern on Watson Street. I remember that.

Reese Chandler [00:16:50] I remember that drug store, Timberman's, and momma sometimes would go in, they would mix medication and pour it in the big brown bottles. I remember that.

Ann Samuels [00:17:05] But I kept that job because, like I said, it was a good job, but it was a learning experience for me, too, because I learned about food from the bottom up.

Kerry Reed [00:17:24] Ms. Samuels, you said you were born in Charleston, South Carolina? What were your parents' names?

Ann Samuels [00:17:32] My parents' name, originally my parents' names was Degans.

Kerry Reed [00:17:37] Degans?

Ann Samuels [00:17:38] Uh-huh.

Kerry Reed [00:17:40] What were the first names?

Ann Samuels [00:17:41] I was born in Charleston, but my family lived in. Beaufort? Beaufort, South Carolina. That's where the family home is in Beaufort. That's where we own property. Our family's property is in Beaufort, which is about a little better than [unintelligible] miles from Charleston.

Michael Johnson [00:18:18] That's near the training base for the Marine Corps.

Ann Samuels [00:18:22] But, we still own the property. In fact, three of my sisters and nieces and nephews and cousins still live on the home property. Our property is right down to the river in Beaufort, South Carolina.

Kerry Reed [00:18:43] Absolutely. Your parents' names were Degans? What were their first names? Oh, yeah.

Ann Samuels [00:18:56] Jack Degans, that was my grandfather. And my uncle was James Degans, Robert Degans. My uncle James, as a young man, he moved to York, Pennsylvania, so he got married and lived in York, Pennsylvania. My uncle Robert got married and moved to Savannah, Georgia. And I think Uncle Rayford stayed in South Carolina. I think he stayed at the home place. And all his children grew up there. But the family is sort of scattered, because as the children grew up, there was nothing there, employment-wise. In Buford now, the biggest employment there is the Paris Island Marine Base, because some of my sisters worked in the tailor shop on the base. I had a brother-in-law that was a cook in a hospital on the base, so the base was your main employment agent there, and it still is a big employment. In fact, but now there's an Air Force base close by too, so the Air Force is close by too. But the Air Force came in later years, but the Marine base has always been there.

Kerry Reed [00:20:37] So when you were growing up, what did the property look like? What did the family property look like?

Ann Samuels [00:20:43] All country, country farm, country place. The only thing about my, where my grandfather lived, my grandfather had a pecan orchard. I don't know how he had to come to that part whether that was part of the property that he bought, but he had a pecan orchard, had pecan trees on both sides.

Reese Chandler [00:21:11] Well, that brought in money, didn't it?

Ann Samuels [00:21:12] Down through the years, you know, it's just like anything else. We don't keep it up. You know, you had to do so much work on it every year, you know, to keep it up, but the young people don't know. The young people, when they grew up, they had to leave home. It was nothing there for them to do. A few little jobs here and there, or maybe in the store. And they definitely won't do no farming. They would tell you, "no, it's too much work and no money." So just the young bunch they scattered and went to all different parts. Some of them went in service. A lot of them went in service right out of high school. They could do that because at that time the Army was taking; they could join the Army. So, most of the young men, they just join the service.

Kerry Reed [00:22:14] Is that why you came up to Alexandria? Because there was no work in Beaufort?

Ann Samuels [00:22:20] Well, they went everywhere. A lot of them went to New York. A lot a lot of the women went to New York and got jobs in the factories in New York, and they stayed and worked until they retired. A few of them still went back, in later years, they went back home, because they still have property there, and it's cheaper to live there than it is to live any place else, especially if you got the land, and all you had to do was build your house on it, you know.

Kerry Reed [00:22:49] So you mentioned high school, where did you go to school?

Ann Samuels [00:22:54] I was, I know, you know, I went to school in Charlottesville, Virginia. Okay. Before I was school age, my aunt was living in Charlottesville and she came to visit, and my grandfather asked her to take a hand so she would see the city because he knew she lived in the city. She said, "yeah, that's a good idea." So, I came and stayed with her a couple of years. In fact, she said, "I'll tell you what, if she wants to stay, I'll put her to school." So that's what I did. I stayed in Charlottesville. I went to school in Charlottesville. I didn't ever move back to South Carolina. I didn't ever move back. That's home, you know how you go back and forth home, but I never went back home to live. I came from Charlottesville here.

Michael Johnson [00:24:03] What's the highest grade, did you go to?

Ann Samuels [00:24:04] I went to Judson High School.

Michael Johnson [00:24:05] I mean, what's the highest grade?

Ann Samuels [00:24:07] I went up to four years of high school.

Reese Chandler [00:24:13] Now, see here, it was different for my mother and Aunt Lou. They could only complete seventh grade in Alexandria. There was nothing further for them. If they wanted to pursue what you called the last four years, eighth through, they had to take a bus if the parents could afford it. Send their children into Washington, D.C. My mother and them did not have the money, so they never went beyond seventh grade. Everything they learned was, it wasn't through academically. It wasn't academically. It was through just experience, life experiences. That's how come they survived.

Ann Samuels [00:25:17] I didn't know that there was such a thing that you could only go so far in Alexandria.

Reese Chandler [00:25:21] No, you couldn't go past 7th, not here. They did not have a high school for Blacks.

Ann Samuels [00:25:27] Well, that's understandable. It's really understandable. Well, see, when I went to school in Charlottesville.

Reese Chandler [00:25:36] But you were lucky. You were fortunate that you were given that opportunity.

Ann Samuels [00:25:44] We did have high school there, but what happened in Charlottesville, it was like a city block. You go to from the first grade to the seventh grade, you, go in this building here. You graduated from that building because you were through with grade school and you're going to your high school. So, the high school building was right here, but it was all on one block. It's like just walking from here across the street from the two places. But there were two different schools. You could, like I said, you could run from first to the seventh, and you went from the seventh in the other building. Your four years of high school's in the high schools. That was called the high school, but that was for us. And of

course, you know it was segregated schools, Whites and Blacks didn't go to the same schools.

Reese Chandler [00:26:44] Now, Gallaudet campus over in D.C., for the deaf, it's always been set up. I did not know that they had preschool, elementary, junior high school, and high school on that campus before you went to college. And I only found out when Puckett was there. and they sent him over to the school. I was shocked, Buck and I, we couldn't believe it. And a lot of people did not know Gallaudet had all those different levels of school.

Ann Samuels 00:27:21] What did I say?

Reese Chandler [00:27:26] Oh, okay. But at least, like I say, you were fortunate to be afforded that, where my mother could not, she didn't have that offer of high school.

Ann Samuels [00:27:40] But you know, what is so amazing. It was, you know it was a difference. The whole thing was different. You went to different schools. You lived in different areas. Blacks lived in the Black areas of town. So, you had naturally had to go, you know, when you go shopping--for a long time, Blacks raised their own food, like my aunt and her, we didn't have to go to the store. We didn't to go the store like for eggs and chicken and vegetables. They raised corn, tomatoes, green beans, and, being from the south, okra. They raised their own chickens, chickens laid eggs. They go to the store to buy eggs. I told somebody that the other day, they laughed till they cried. They said, "we go to store to go buy eggs," I said, "what are they going to the store to buy eggs for? They can go out down here and get the eggs out" I said, "you want a chicken, go out there in the yard and kill the chicken." [Laughter] They thought that was the funniest thing they had ever heard. And then, see, the old people, they know how to can. And we had fruit trees, kind of like grapes, and apples, and peach trees, and stuff like that. Them old people would know how to do some of everything, didn't throw away nothing. They knew how to fix something, everything. We raised them. You had no money to go to the store and buy food. You had to go like for your flour and your meal and your lard and stuff, staple food, regular food. But you know what, at hog killing time--enough meat there to last for the winter. [Laughter]

Kerry Reed [00:30:11] What did your aunt's house look like? Did y'all have a garden and a farm at your aunt's house in Charlottesville?

Ann Samuels [00:30:17] No, I had a regular house, try to keep the roof on it sometimes. Sometimes we had a roof leak, pots and pans were catching the water to keep from ruining the carpet. No, that was a regular old country house. Oh, boy, when it rained, you could hear the rain falling on top of the roof. Oh, goodness. But like I said, you know, oh, it was, it was that time. We had, you know, you had your own doctor on that event. And I don't know, because I never had any children. But I don' know if your parents did or not. Women, even here in Alexandria, because I know several families that said, "What time can we have the children?" Yeah, they go to work. They had to go to a hospital in Washington called Freedmen's Hospital.

Reese Chandler [00:31:30] I remember Freedman's

Ann Samuels [00:31:30] And that's where the women from Alexander would go to the Freedmen's Hospital to give birth to the children because there was no place for them in the Alexandria Hospital.

Michael Johnson [00:31:43] Did you know a midwife named Ms. Lavonia Johnson? Ms. Jackson lived on Patrick Street? Ulysses Jackson's mother?

Reese Chandler [00:31:56] Now, we remember Miss Melissa. Mama always sent for her to deliver the baby, because I was delivered at home through Miss Melissa.

Ann Samuels [00:32:14] And, of course, you know, in South Carolina, in that little country town, that's who delivered all the children. It was a midwife.

Reese Chandler [00:32:30] Yeah, midwives.

Ann Samuels [00:32:32] First of all, you didn't have any way of getting into town if they were taking you. How was you going to get there? We didn't have no car. And the few people that had cars, you know, the only way that you get from the country into town with those people that have a few jobs was the few people that had a car. You stand on the side of the road and hope one of them will come by and pick you up and carry you into town to work. And the same thing with

coming back home; either that or walk.

Reese Chandler [00:33:10] I don't think any of us was born at a hospital. All my mother's children were born at home. All of them. Yeah, and she had 11.

Ann Samuels [00:33:25] Well, my mom had 12; all of us were born at home. Yeah, there was no hospital.

Kerry Reed [00:33:34] You have 11 siblings?

Ann Samuels [00:33:37] Yes. I'm number two. I'm 2 out of 12. I'm the second child.

Kerry Reed [00:33:44] Got it. That's incredible.

Ann Samuels [00:33:47] My mom's first child was a boy, but she lost the first child, and her last child was a boy and she lost that one. So, we don't have no brothers, all of us were sisters. She lost two girls in between. In the country. That's why country people have so many children. What else was there? I guess when you go up and look back over your life, you say, well, what else did they have to do? They didn't have any electricity. Your light was a lamp that you put oil in. Water was a pump, you know, either pump or well. So, you now, so what are we going to do? I'm number 2 out of 12. And I still have four sisters. I'm the oldest living, I'm 104. My next sister is 95. My next sister is 93. My next sister will be 92 this year, and the baby is 87. Everybody's living, everybody's staying in their own house. Everybody has their own home. Everybody's able to stay by themselves. Nobody's sick, so they have 6 children, but nobody's sick so anybody have to wait on them. So, we're blessed.

Reese Chandler [00:35:17] Yeah.

Ann Samuels [00:35:18] My mom lived to be 88. One of my sisters that died, she lived to be 88. My first sister died, my sister Charlotte. She was the youngest one. She's the first grown child my mother ever lost. She was in her 40s and we never lost a sister. It was 30 years before we lost another sister.

Reese Chandler [00:35:43] That's a blessing.

Kerry Reed [00:35:45] That's incredible. Did your sisters move with you to Charlottesville as well?

Ann Samuels [00:35:56] No. At times, they would just come to visit, you know, because, well, most of my sisters got married early, and the ones that had children started having children early, so the children stayed, sort of tied them down at home, so they didn't do a lot of traveling. One sister had six. My sister, Ellen, had six; all six of her kids are still living. My sister Evelyn had seven. She just lost one son here about two months ago. My youngest sister had eight. She's lost three. My sister--no, me, my sister next to me, and my sister Juanita--we're the three sisters that did not have children. But I said, well, so many other kids, we didn't miss not having them. Because every time, everybody has children. [Laughter]

Reese Chandler [00:36:51] It was a lot of us, wasn't it, because of that. It was so many of us. And then my cousin, she had what, 12? So, yeah, you always had kids around you.

Ann Samuels [00:37:09] And somebody always needed something.

Reese Chandler [00:37:10] Yeah.

Michael Johnson [00:37:13] So when you were working at the Hot Shoppe, were you living in the Berg area?

Ann Samuels [00:37:16] When I started working for the Hot Shoppe, I was living in the Berg. I lived at 490 Fifth Street. You know, I don't know if you remember. You know Reverend, do you remember Reverend Strong? Yeah. Yeah, I remember that. I tell you what, you know the house right next to it. You know he had a church right, you know, where the city garage used to be? The city garage use to be right there. What happened to all those?

Reese Chandler [00:37:42] In the Berg, ya'll weren't living in brick houses. Ya'll were living in, I call them now, what kind of houses? I had the name for them. But it was just shacks.

Ann Samuels [00:38:02] That's what they were, they were shacks, but that's what you had to live in.

Reese Chandler [00:38:10] Because everybody's under the impression they visualize what they see now or what they see years ago. But it was nothing like that, nothing.

Ann Samuels [00:38:21] Do you remember when they built it, the first project down in the Berg?

Michael Johnson [00:38:28] No, ma'am, I'm just 68 years old. It was before my time. I remember my aunt Fanny living down there.

Reese Chandler [00:38:34] Which was the first set of projects down here or uptown here?

Ann Samuels [00:38:41] The ones in the Berg was the first set.

Reese Chandler [00:38:44] Okay, okay. That was the first set of what they call Goodman houses, right?

Ann Samuels [00:38:50] And I'll tell you what happened after the first set. When they got ready to build the second set, all the people that lived in those old houses, they had--do you remember when they had trailers?

Michael Johnson [00:39:06] They had trailers up by Charles Houston before they built those projects.

Reese Chandler [00:39:09] Really? Well, see, you don't remember that.

Michael Johnson [00:39:12] No, I don't remember, but because I'm an historian. I know what was there.

Reese Chandler [00:39:16] Because it wasn't there when I came along, I'm older than you.

Ann Samuels [00:39:20] Because see what they did, they moved you out of the Berg, out there in the trailers, while they built a new project. Oh, we've come a long way, we've come a long way.

Reese Chandler [00:39:32] That's where I ended up, in the new project.

Ann Samuels [00:39:39] Right. And we stayed in the trailers until they built a new project.

Kerry Reed [00:39:44] So could you talk to me about the shacks that you remember that were in the Berg initially?

Ann Samuels [00:39:51] They were just old houses. The best way to describe them, they were old houses.

Reese Chandler [00:40:03] Throw them together.

Michael Johnson [00:40:05] Built by slaves or was it just where Black folks that where former slaves moved to and built them themselves, I guess.

Reese Chandler [00:40:15] Had to have been. Yeah, you know what I'm saying? She was a young girl in the 20s.

Ann Samuels [00:40:21] And you know, that's where, you remember the torpedo plant? Well, you know they built the torpedo plant right there. You know, Blacks were still living in what they call them shacks when the torpedo plant was there. And white people wouldn't live in those kinds of conditions because of the odor from the plant. And then the river, the Potomac River. You remember when the tide would go out? Great day in the morning; the worst odor. The Blacks put up with that for years. They didn't have a choice. Where were you going to go? You sure didn't have no money to buy a house. And if you had the money, where were you going to buy the house? Because even as late as when I got married and we were looking for...

Reese Chandler [00:41:27] Is it the forties or the thirties?

Ann Samuels [00:41:29] In the forties and we were looking for a place to buy. We had a couple of agencies looking for a house for us. And it was, even in that time, there was nowhere to go because everywhere you went, there were white

people and white people did not want you in, didn't want nobody. You remember, do you remember when the Blacks first bought that house up there, not too far from the Masonic Temple, the Garlocks.

Michael Johnson [00:42:04] Right, that's part of Rosemont.

Reese Chandler [00:42:07] King Street Hill.

Michael Johnson [00:42:08] They call it King Street Hill.

Ann Samuels [00:42:11] And remember when somebody shot through that? They shot through the house. You know, Ms. Garlock and her family?

Michael Johnson [00:42:16] Was that the Dawkins or was that the Grays? Harvey Gray in their house

Ann Samuels [00:42:25]. You know what I'm talking about? You remember when they bought that house? They were the first Blacks up there.

Michael Johnson [00:42:34] Yeah. That was in the newspaper. They shot through the house; a shotgun.

Ann Samuels [00:42:37] That was just how bad it was.

Reese Chandler [00:42:40] That was the judge, right? Judge [Nolan] Dawkins. I could never understand. Now I know down in the Berg, before the government houses were built, people lived in lean-tos. Probably had gaps between the wood slats and you didn't have an indoor bathroom. You had no electric. How did Grandma Grady, grandma, acquire a house on Lee Street, where those shacks still are?

Ann Samuels [00:43:28] You know, those houses right now, at least it was a little bit better than the ones right in the Berg. I don't know. I don' know what it is. But I'll tell you what might have happened. It depends on who you work for. Because if you work for a good white family, they would see that you had somewhere decent to stay because they wanted you, they needed you to work for them.

Reese Chandler [00:44:02] Well, maybe that's how she got it.

Ann Samuels [00:44:08] Because I know you know the Taylors. Well you know, they were the first ones to buy a house where they live right today where Charlene is still living. But he worked for Nice. Remember when Nice had, what stores, what company was that he had? A hardware store. And Charlie worked with him. He was the one that got that house for his, he got that for Charlie and his family because they were living in the trailers with us the same time we were. His boss he stuck his foot out, and he bought that house, and they've been in that house ever since. They've been in that house for over 100 years.

Reese Chandler [00:44:47] Okay.

Ann Samuels [00:44:50] It all depends.

Kerry Reed [00:44:53] What do you remember about the first projects being built? What do you know about that?

Ann Samuels [00:45:02] Oh, I don't know what year it was, but most of us were living in a trailer camp until they built a house. The first project that I lived in was 1023 Montgomery Street. I lived right on the corner of Montgomery and Henry Street. But now this was, this was during World War II.

Reese Chandler [00:45:30] Yeah, because Aunt Lou was working at the torpedo plant. That was the first government jobs offered to Black people because they needed them for the war at the torpedo plant.

Kerry Reed [00:45:50] When did you start living in the trailer camp?

Ann Samuels [00:45:53] Oh God, I don't know what year that was. I don' know what year that was when we started there. I wonder what year was that we moved into the trailer camps.

Reese Chandler [00:46:04] No, he's talking about the project. See, I wasn't born when they built the Berg. I wasn't born. I was born when the built Montgomery Street, all that. That's when I was born.

Ann Samuels [00:46:20] That was the second phase. The first phase of the project was in the Berg and the second phase was up on Montgomery, from Patrick Street on back and they're still there, some of them are still there but all the other projects just about, most of the Berg has been torn down and you know remodeled and all that kind of stuff.

Kerry Reed [00:46:49] So what do you remember about the first phase? What do you remember about the first phase when they were building the Berg?

Ann Samuels [00:46:55] Well, like I said, we were still in the trailers at the time they built the first project. But you had to register, and you had to be married, before they would consider, and find your place. You know, I think they were trying to get families to be more aware of how important families were. You know, not a whole lot of people bunched up together and busting and arguing and fighting all the time you know. It made a difference

Kerry Reed [00:47:35] Absolutely.

Ann Samuels [00:47:36] It made a difference.

Kerry Reed [00:47:38] So what did the trailer camp look like? How big were the trailers, do you remember?

Ann Samuels [00:47:42] It was like living in a small house, like a small house, because you had a kitchen, we had two bedrooms, a bath, and a toilet. It took up from Patrick Street, it took up all the way back to Alfred. Or did it come from Alfred all the way up to Patrick?

Michael Johnson [00:48:15] It went from Patrick Street.

Ann Samuels 900:48:19] No, I'll tell you, it was between Montgomery and Madison.

Michael Johnson [00:48:22] First Street.

Ann Samuels [00:48:24] Yeah, it went between Montgomery and Madison, because we lived on, we lived—me and Robert lived on Montgomery Street--and the next street over was Madison Street. The trailer camp took up that whole block.

Reese Chandler [00:48:43] Now I know across Henry, across Henry there was nothing but woods. Over there where McDonald's is and all that on the other side of Henry Street as far down as the eye could see, it was woods.

Ann Samuels [00:49:05] You remember what they call Cross Canal? Now, a lot of Black people, the people that lived [in] what they called Cross Canal, they lived a little bit better. I don't know how they managed to have property because, like, banks and, oh, goodness, [unintelligible]

Michael Johnson [00:49:34] Warner Johnson?

Ann Samuels [00:49: 37] Oh, goodness. So, they lived in better housing, better conditions. I never did know why they called it or how these people had to live in that area because it was called Cross Canal. But remember, you had go across like a little bridge or something to get over there, you remember? I know you wasn't born,

Reese Chandler [00:50:02] No, but I remember, later on.

Ann Samuels [00:50:06] I don't remember a lot about them, but I know a lot of people lived over there and they were better living people. This was called Cross Canal, but it was a little bridge or something to go to get to it.

Reese Chandler [00:50:21] They never named streets for Cross Canal. That's all it was called, there were no streets.

Ann Samuels [00:50:29] You just lived in Cross Canal.

Reese Chandler [00:50:33] That's it, no street. And that always confused me why there weren't any street names.

Ann Samuels [00:50:43] But there weren't. It was just called Cross Canal. But Ruby Lomax and her family lived across there. Elno lived across that. Cousin Elno Winifry. The Tellers lived across there. You know, and they lived a little just a little better than the people in the city.

Reese Chandler [00:51:05] Bolly, is he still alive? Cousin Elno's son, the one that collects all the buffalo soldiers and stuff.

Ann Samuels [00:51:17] Is he still in his mother's house?

Reese Chandler [00:51:20] Yeah, Mike says that he is

Ann Samuels [00:51:23] Well, I guess he is.

Reese Chandler [00:51:25] Because she been there.

Ann Samuels [00:51:26] I guess he is. Because he been there all his life and never got married.

Reese Chandler [00:51:32] Never got married.

Ann Samuels [00:51:34] But, you know, it's amazing the way things grew, the city grew. To me, I don't think Alexandrea didn't have as much problem changing when they did away with segregation as some places did. Some places, people really rebelled against it, you know. But Alexandria sort of eased into it, sort of easy, one thing at a time.

Reese Chandler [00:52:12] But, you know, I did not know. We were on, we started up here, we ended up on South Side. I did not know about prejudice. I didn't know none of that, because my mother, in her own way, bless her heart, she was a nuisance. She protected us so. And it was like, what, even with the thing at G.C. Murphy's, the counter, she would spin a tale that would ease or take away any hurt that she felt we were feeling. And you never gave any thought to it. Didn't bother me, I couldn't have a hot dog at the counter because of the way she comforted and soothed us. So, I didn't know anything about segregation or any of that, see? Not until it was time for me to go to high school. Now once, I did one year at Parker Gray, all Black, all Black. The next year they were starting to be a T.C. Williams and they bused the Black children to King Street. The building was not completed because we were going through plastic sheets and, you know, that's when it struck me. It was a harsh reality. And we were mistreated. Teachers didn't want anything to do with us. The White people raised their children to be prejudiced. Babies are not born prejudiced. It's fed into them. After one, or was it, two years, it was so traumatic, I dropped out and I went and did my GED. I could not deal with the pain, the anguish, because I never lived like that.

Kerry Reed [00:54:40] Yeah.

Reese Chandler [00:54:43] I never lived like that. And then after I got my GED, I did not have to be bothered. But I'm 75 now. I did miss the prom. I've never been to a high school game, football. I miss all of that and it started weighing on me when I started having children and I wanted my children to live that life, not miss out on anything. I wanted them to have that whole experience that was denied me. So, then after all that, because as you get older, you tend to reminisce. You reminisce, as you said, you have done, raised your children, you've done all you could do, and then you have time on your hands, and you think, and it's vivid.

Kerry Reed [00:56:07] Absolutely.

Reese Chandler [00:56:08] So it was like, God. But see, I had plenty of family. I had a mother who just protected us fiercely. And it's just amazing.

Kerry Reed [00:56:24] Yes. Absolutely

Reese Chandler [00:56:24] It really is amazing. But if I could have, I would have completed that whole high school experience, but it was just too cruel for me. So, then I went and got my little college and did the 38 years in the federal

government. You know, but like you said cousin, as time progressed, things became a little bit better. But it did not ease the pain and suffering you endured getting there. It is, you know. But I wanted my children to enjoy all cultures, all races. So, I had just as many White kids, me and my husband, at my house. They would just die to get to the Chandler's house. I had all different culture kids, because whomever my children befriended, they were welcome.

Kerry Reed [00:57:37] Absolutely.

Reese Chandler [00:57:38] Yeah, so this that was life for me really was.

Ann Samuels [00:57:45] But, you know, like I said, I think Alexandria sort of moved into, you know, we didn't have, you know, some places had race riots and all this kind of stuff. But Alexandria sort of moved into integration, you didn't you had to be, you had to, you just, you know.

Reese Chandler [00:58:05] Disagreements.

Ann Samuels [00:58:06] But I think for the most part, it was easy, but it was good, and it was bad during segregation. Blacks knew that if you wanted something you had to go get it for yourself. Wasn't anybody going to give it to you. When we got, okay, so many places you couldn't go, things you couldn't do and stuff. After integration, that all did away. So then, you know, sometimes you want things and when you get it, you don't know what to do with it. I put it like that because once they got to the place where Blacks got to, and I'm not ashamed to say it, they forgot how to live for themselves. Oh, we can go this place, we could go that place. What happened to the places you went to before you could go there? In that place, in other words, way back.

Reese Chandler [00:59:22] When it comes to names, my mother used to always say, "don't ever forget where you came from." That's what she would always tell us.

Ann Samuels [00:59:33] And that's the truth. Don't forget how hard it was for you. It might not have been hard for you, but it was hard for somebody. Did nobody just say, here, here it is? You should still have been able to have your own business, your own hotel, everything. When integration started, boy, you couldn't. Blacks, all the Black places, I say, what for all the Black people? I remember when the only time you could go to the beach, remember they had Sparrows, you had to go to Maryland to the beach, had to catch the bus and go to Sparrows and Carrs Beach and Sparrows Beach because there's nowhere no swimming pool or nothing. You know what, the only place they could go was down at the Potomac River, you know what?

Reese Chandler [01:00:36] Yeah, we had to swim in the river.

Ann Samuels [01:00:38] We used to go down to the wharf and watch the fellas jump in the Potomac River and swim. That was the only swimming pool they had.

Reese Chandler [01:00:45] Yeah, all my brothers, they learned to swim in the Potomac River. The Potomac River, that's the only place you could swim.

Ann Samuels [01:00:56] That was the only place they had to swim, unless they went to Maryland. And Maryland did have two Black beaches, Carrs and Sparrows.

Kerry Reed [01:01:05] Sparrows, and what was the other one? Carrs.

Reese Chandler [01:01:06] Carrs, C-A-R-R S, and Sparrows, S-P-A R-R, I think O-W-S, yeah, and they were Black-owned.

Ann Samuels [01:01:18] Anyway.

Reese Chandler [01:01:19] Yeah.

Kerry Reed [01:01:22] Ms. Samuels, how did you meet your husband?

Ann Samuels [01:01:26] Through a couple of friends of his. Yeah, a couple friends of his.

Kerry Reed [01:01:32] Do you remember y'all's first time going out together?

Ann Samuels [01:01:39] Not really, because the first time I think, I think the first time he asked me, "I don't want to go nowhere, where would you go?" The only place you could go was to the movies, "I don't want to go." I think I told him, "I don't want to go." What do I ask? I think I'm asking him "what's playing." I said, "I don't like no westerns."

Reese Chandler [01:01:58] Didn't y'all have a juke joint, what they call the juke joint called Big Daddy somebody?

Ann Samuels [01:02:05] This guy we called Daddy Murphy. It was nothing but a place with a [unintelligible] in there. You could go in and play the records and had a big dance floor in the back. And he had a little Dew Drop In restaurant in the front.

Reese Chandler [01:02:26] So Robert, did he take you to Daddy Murphy's for your first date?

Ann Samuels [01:02:31] I guess that's where we went. I don't think there was no place else. I think the American Legion was there. I think that the American Legion was there. I'm not sure about the Elks because I didn't get familiar with the Elks until years later.

Reese Chandler [01:02:52] Oh, okay. The Legion was there.

Ann Samuels [01:02:56] But I understand that the Elks was there a long time too, but I didn't hear about it, but I did hear about the American Legion.

Kerry Reed [01:03:03] Oh, okay. Okay. Did you ever go to the USO at all?

Ann Samuels [01:03:12] One time we were at the U.S.O in Fort Belvoir. You know, because, you know, well, during that time, you know Fort Belvoir was one of the places where a lot of people were able to get the job. This was during World War II, you know, all the soldiers was in service, and so they had to hire civilians to fill the jobs that the soldiers had. That lasted until the war ended, and then the civilians were let go, because the soldiers were back, because my husband didn't go in service, but he worked at Fort Belvoir during the whole time, this was World War II. But when the war ended and all the civilians were dismissed, then he had to look for another job, but he was lucky because he got a job at the Pentagon, so he still was able to have his government service. And, of course, he worked at the Pentagon as a driver until he retired.

Reese Chandler [01:04:13] Well, didn't they move the USO?

Michael Johnson [01:04:15] Well, that's what I'm going to say, the USO is...Well, just like we said, the USO, he's talking about, he probably talking about the one on Pendleton Street.

Reese Chandler [01:04:19] Yeah, that's the-

Michael Johnson [01:04:20] The rec, the rec, Pendleton Street rec.

Reese Chandler [01:04:23] Oh, yeah, they opened up a USO. And so, but I was born, I had to be about eight or nine because I remember Shirley and Carlotta in it and Mettie even going over there. Verlette, they all, what was it, Pendleton and what?

Michael Johnson [01:04:41] Pendleton and Patrick.

Reese Chandler [01:04:42] I remember that U.S.O.

Ann Samuels [01:04:44] Oh, where was it now?

Michael Johnson [01:04:46} Pendleton and Patrick, the old rec center.

Reese Chandler [01:04:48] Yeah, that's where they had it.

Michael Johnson [01:44:50] The Parker Gray kids from Parker Gray would graduate from there, back then.

Ann Samuels [01:04:55] Oh, I forgot about that!

Reese Chandler [01:04:56] Yeah, that was there, baby! Yeah, but I was never old enough to participate. I would hang out with Carlotta. Carlotta would take me over there.

Kerry Reed [01:05:12] What did you do during the Second World War, Ms. Samuels?

Ann Samuels [01:05:17] The Second World War? I worked for Marriott. I worked with Marriot all over.

Kerry Reed [01:05:26] What do you remember about Alexandria during the Second World War?

Ann Samuels [01:05:33] I don't know, you know, I think the way I think about it, Alexandria sort of went with the times or whatever. I can remember because of what happened on the job. You now, my company, Marriott, didn't have no problem being integrated. He had all Blacks working in the back, all Whites working in front and he made it plain, he said, "those of you that can't deal with the situation," he said, "then you all have to find another job because this is going to be it." And that was it. Blacks are welcome, because in other words he's saying, "if you feel, if Blacks come in and you don't want to wait on them, okay? There's a door," he said, "but this is what, this is the way it's going to be. Everybody's, everybody's a person." he said. So, we didn't have no problem. We didn't have no problem on my job. That's why even today Marriott is a good company to work for. Very good. And you could advance with the company. If you were a worker, they paid attention to what you were doing. Because like I said, when he first told me, he said, "Ms. Samuels, you've been a wonderful worker." You were evaluated every five years. He said, "no, you've been faithful, and maybe it's time for you to do something else." And then you start learning the business part of it. You knew the work part of, but you didn't know the business part of how to keep your books, and open and close the stores, and how to all the things that managers have to do. I eased into that because I'd have to work two days with the day manager and work two nights with the night manager. Then, I would have to have one night that I had to close by myself, or one day I had open by myself. You know, it was one of those things. I didn't have no problem. I would tell everybody it was a wonderful company to work for.

Michael Johnson [01:08:07] How long did you live on Duke and Patrick?

Ann Samuels [01:08:15] How long was that? 65 years.

Reese Chandler [01:08:16] I told you she was there when I woke up one morning, she was already there.

Ann Samuels [01:08:22] Well, what happened, we had to move after the war. They had, the projects had, what they call rent ceiling. You could only make so much money and live in the projects. I was working, Rob was working. So, you had to sign the contract every year. So, the last year, they said we were making too much. I said, "when in the world do you get to the place to make too much money to live in a house?" That was in the contract. So now you're looking for a place to stay. Couldn't find no house to rent. So, this friend of ours had a house, and he had bought a house. And he said, well, "you could stay here and have use of it, of the whole house and have your own property." So, we stayed with him for a while. I guess we stayed for him about six months. I think him and I was going to the same church and he said, "Ms. Samuels, I heard y'all were looking for somewhere to stay." He said," stay in my house." He said, "nobody at my house but me." He said, "a couple stay upstairs." He said, "but nobody downstairs." So, we stayed with him. It was, "be sure you turn off the lights. Be sure you don't run no water, don't waste water. Be sure that you don' go to sleep with the TV on." I got tired of the don't do, so I told my husband, I said, "oh, this isn't going to do." So, at that time, he was still working at Fort Belvoir. And he would come on Patrick Street and he said he saw this house. He came home one night, one evening, he said, "I think I found us a house." I said, "You did?" He said, "Yeah." I said "Where?" He said, "On South Patrick Street." I had never lived on the south side. I said, "On South Patrick Street?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "I have never lived on the southside!" He said, "Do you want to live in the house or not?" So, I said, "Yeah." And when I saw the house, I said "I know this is not the house you were talking about because it looked like to me the house needed everything from soup to nuts." I said, "Oh my God." So, he said, "Ann you got to start somewhere." He said, "We've looked at houses and white people don't want you in that neighborhood and so you better start."

And this, I don't know, just for some reason, people would start moving, the White people would start moving out and the Blacks would start moving. Do you remember Clarence Baker, Addie Baker? Well you know, his, I didn't know that

was his, his mother was living in the house next door, but I didn't know it was his. Clancy and his wife were living a couple of doors up. And so, we moved in and we had to, we papered and painted and knocked and nailed. Somebody came in and said, "This where you all moved to?" And I'd say "yes." "Why are you moving into this old house?" I said, "Well, I got to move some place." And you know, I said, "Well, you learn by your mistakes." We paid for the paint till we had some money so we could hire somebody to do what we couldn't do. And we stayed in that house.

Reese Chandler [01:12:17] Everybody wanted that house on that corner.

Ann Samuels [01:12:23] It was a well-known house. And what really helped us out, go back, Alexandria had a policy to help elder people that want to stay in their own house. They would repair the house or do anything that needed to be done to the house. They had, it was something like an insurance, I guess. As long as you stayed in the house, you did not have to pay this. No, it was like a loan. As long you lived and stayed in that house, you did have to pay the loan back. But, you know, since Robert and I didn't have any kids, he said, "If your husband died, you can stay. But if both of you be dead, the property will have to be sold because no matter how long it is, this loan will have to be paid back." It was called a home loan, that's what it was, because it was included in your insurance on your house. So, if anything happened to the house, the insurance company would still get their money. So that's what happened when I'd taken sick, well I was over 100 years old, and I was still living in the house by myself, because Robert died in 2003. And I'd taken sick, and I had one of those, you get a scan with all this, I had a button, when you get sick, or anything happens, all you got to do is push the button. Got sick in the middle of the night, push the buttons, and nobody answers. I said, "Oh, Christ." But you know what, something said "Call 911." So, I called 911 and they came right away. And at first, they thought I had a heart attack. And I told them what happened, I couldn't breathe. I couldn't catch my breath. And so, he said, okay, "We're going to have to rush you to the hospital." He said, "Okay, well tell whoever's here with you, we're going to take you." I said, "Nobody's here." He said, "You in the house by yourself?" I said, "yes." He said, "At your age?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Oh my God." He said, "Okay, hurry up and get her in the ambulance so we can get her to the hospital. We'll call your family later."

And they told me. They told my family. Because they had tried to get me to move. But I said, "Well, I'm going to move all my house up. I don't have the money to move from my house. My house is paid for, been paid for." They said, "It's not healthy. You cannot stay in a house at your age by yourself. If you fall and get hurt, if the house catch's on fire." He said, "In the basement, too many steps." He said, "They're going to have to, your family will have to do something else." And I got to say, so that meant that if I wasn't staying in the house, the house would have to be sold. Man! Now, you know, if you want to go through some trouble, you go through selling your house here. Everybody will say, "Oh, your house ought to be worth a whole lot of money." I say, "Yes, it's worth a whole lotta money to somebody, but not to me," because this loan had to be paid. My lawyer stayed right next door to me, her office is in the next building. And so, I told my niece, I said, "You all get with the lawyer and let her tell you what you have to do." The loan had to be paid. Would you believe taxes had to be paid? For what the house would cost when you bought it and what it was worth when you sold it. [unintelligible]

Reese Chandler [01:16:33] You never own anything for real. You can pay for it; you can think you paid for it, but you pay until the day you sell it or die. But you don't own nothing.

Ann Samuels [01:16:51] But you know what I didn't know? When we bought the house, it was a two-way street. Patrick Street wasn't like it is It was just a two-way street. So, we thought the land right there in front of the house, and on the side of it; we thought that it went with the house. Nobody told us it didn't. We had a beautiful flower garden all the way down. I guess we've been there a couple of years when I think somebody from the city said, "If you want them flowers, you better take them up, because the city's going to widen the street." I said, "What that got to with us?" He said, "Lady, your property, the only property you own is what your house is sitting on. Everything else belongs to the city." I didn't know that. What you learn, you learn as you go. Did you know that?

Kerry Reed [01:17:52] I did not know that. I do not know you only own the property. So, when they came and told you they were going to make Patrick Street one way, right, what did you, so you didn't think they could because you thought your property extended to the road?

Ann Samuels [01:18:10] Yeah, I thought because there was a sidewalk there, I thought I could probably at least run out to the end of the sidewalk. I know I didn't own the sidewalk, but I thought that it went with the property. And he told me, "The only property you own is the one your house is sitting on."

Reese Chandler [01:18:33] We were on Patrick and then we were past the junkyard. We were on the other side of the junkyard. You were on this side. When they told Momma Nan, by then there were no more whites because whites were moving out when we moved down there. When they said, "Okay, we're going to build a bridge because people had to go through Washington, D.C. to get to Maryland." So, they said, "We're going to build the bridge, Woodrow Wilson, because we did have a bridge down there. The thing just dropped off and then you hit the river. And then they started making everything, like, one way. Then they said, okay, eminent domain. Everybody got to move off of Patrick up to where you were living. The junkyard had to go and all the houses, till they got to your block. That's where, that side, only a certain side of Patrick had to be evacuated. The side that the Bakers and everybody else was on, they tore all that down. Part of Duke Street was torn down. It was just a mass construction. That's when we moved over to Alfred. You were still allowed to live where you were. And I couldn't figure that out. I was a kid then, eavesdropping on the older people's conversation. That's what I was doing. I got to go; my church is out.

Michael Johnson [01:20:23] Yeah, no, they said no for some reason anyway.

Reese Chandler [01:20:24] Yeah, and they can really have lunch every day. It was nice meeting you. I'll see you another time.

Ann Samuels [01:20:34] Okay, love you. Okay, I'll be talking to you, we'll be in touch. And thank you all so much for stopping, I hope this will help you some.

Kerry Reed [01:20:47] Oh yeah, absolutely, it's a pleasure. I'd love to talk to you again, this was great.

Ann Samuels [01:20:51] Okay, okay, thank you. Thank you so much. Okay, Okay, you do it.