THE ALEXANDRIA ORAL HISTORY CENTER
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Oral History Interview

with

Kathy Simpson

Interviewer: Francesco De Salvator

Narrator: Kathy Simpson

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Lloyd House, Alexandria, VA, 22314

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Transcriber: Robin Reeder, Reeder Transcription Services

Summary:

Ms. Kathy Simpson talks about growing up in Alexandria from the 1960s through the present day. Ms. Simpson reflects on living in different housing projects and attending Alexandria schools during times of segregation and integration.

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General	Childhood, Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA), segregation, integration
Places	Westover, Samuel Madden, Cameron Station, Ficklin Elementary School, Parker-Gray Middle School, Frances C. Hammond High School, T. C. Williams High School

Kathy Simpson [0:00:02.5] My name is Kathy Cross Simpson. I reside here in Old Town, Alexandria.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:00:15.2] Great. My name is Francesco De Salvatore, and I'll be interviewing Miss Simpson today. We're at the Lloyd House, and it's November [September] 25, 2025. I'm really excited to be with you here, Miss Simpson. I know you have a lot of history here in the city that you want to share with us. And so, let's start from the beginning. So, can you describe where you grew up here in Alexandria?

Kathy Simpson [0:00:40.6] Yes. I grew up at 1104 Colonial Avenue in Old Town, Alexandria, which I resided with my stepfather and my mother and four siblings. I went to school when there was school of Ficklin—Ficklin Elementary School. And from kindergarten to fifth grade, I went—I left there, and I went to Parker-Gray—Parker-Gray Middle School. That was my fifth and all the way up to eighth grade, and from eighth grade, I went to Francis C. Hammond High School. And from what's that—eighth and ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth was at T.C. Williams High School. I grew up after going to school—finishing school, I got a job. I worked doing several part-time jobs. I worked at the National Airport which is now called Reagan National as a waitress, and I left there. And then I got elected to honor the federal government, which I worked with the federal government—oh I guess about 20 years actually. And in between that time, I've had private industry jobs. I've had, you know, my family. I had my own family. I married. Yeah. Had two kids. Then I remarried, and I have another kid. [Inaudible 0:02:43.5]

Francesco De Salvatore [0:02:43.8] That's great.

Kathy Simpson [0:02:44.6] Yeah.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:02:44.9] That's great.

Kathy Simpson [0:02:46.1] So now—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:02:46.8] Could you—could you describe a little bit more about 1104 Colonial Avenue? So, like what was—like what do you remember about that house? What are your memories of that house?

Kathy Simpson [0:02:59.0] That house is where I grew up at. And I think my parents purchased that house—I was 3 years old. And we were transitioning from living on they say the Southside. I remember living on the Southside. And my mom—my mom married my stepfather. And I mean a normal typical family. My mother worked. She worked at Cameron Station. Cameron Station is now—I don't know what they call it—it's called Cameron something. But it's homes there. It's condominiums there now. So, she worked there and retired. My father worked at Victory Van Lines which he traveled outside of the states every now and then driving an 18-wheeler. My mom, you know, she worked. We went to school. I was basically the babysitter cause I had two siblings—younger siblings. And I also had an older brother and an older sister that were living with relatives. And I was like the middle—I was the middle child.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:04:18.8] Yeah. What like for those who've never seen the house, like can you describe? Like what did it look like? What did it yeah what—

Kathy Simpson [0:04:25.0] Oh man. Beautiful brick home. It was attached to two other homes which families lived. We had next-door neighbors that—I mean they bought their house as well as we did. And there was a playground in the back. When we walked out of our back door, I guess it's the recreation. They were in charge of—it's called "Westover." It was the Westover Park. And I mean that's where I played. I met my schoolmates. You know. We had a good time at Westover Recreational Park. There was a bridge, and the bridge is changed now. And then railroad tracks. And it was railroad tracks from that park that we went to. There were trees and railroad tracks. And on the other side there, I'm trying to remember if the—I can't kind of remember what—all that was on the other side because my radius was limited. My parents were very strict. We had rules and regulations as children to go by. When them streetlights came on, we were supposed to be in the house, on the porch, close by or, you know, those were the moral standards of my family's rules. And when we got in from school or when school was out, we had to stay in the house, do our homework, and wait for our parents to come home from work. And we didn't open the door up for nobody, and we had to congregate brothers and sisters whether we fought and fight, argued, disagreed, or whatever. And when Mom and Daddy came home, everything was good. You know. It was good. Okay. So, my upbringing was very, very strict and disciplined. I had a very disciplined childhood with my parents. And like I said, when I left my parents, I basically married to a sheltered, you know, my father was sheltered, and I married a sheltered man. Then from there the marriage didn't work out. So, I left my marriage for problems that, you know, we couldn't work out. However, then I experienced different, you know, having different jobs, experience being away from the family home.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:07:10.0] How old were you when you got married?

Kathy Simpson [0:07:12.0] I married at 22.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:07:14.7] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:07:15.0] Yeah 22. So, I was very young. And again, it had to be approved. My father had to be in compliance with it. It's always very strict—it was a strict moral standard upbringing.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:07:30.0] What did you call the area? Like what was the neighborhood called?

Kathy Simpson [0:07:34.4] Westover.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:07:35.9] So you just called it Westover?

Kathy Simpson [0:07:38.1] Yeah.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:07:38.2] Yeah, yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:07:38.3] Yeah. We called it Westover.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:07:40.4] And like what are your memories of that neighborhood? Like who were the neighbors? Like what were the businesses there? Like what—

Kathy Simpson [0:07:46.2] There was a Dixie Pig, and the Dixie Pig is still there on Slaters Lane. And it had a pig with like a fluorescent light in which that is still there. And I remember that was—the families they were basically all African Americans throughout the whole community. Okay. Again, the families were structured. They were disciplined. We had there was—we all was like a big family in that neighborhood all up and down Colonial Avenue. Everybody knew each other's family pretty much. We know the kids we grew up over on Westover. And then there were a lot of kids that ventured to Westover because of the park. Okay? There used to be puppet shows, and there were activities there at the recreation site. It was just homes there was, you know, we had a Giant Food and that was by Ficklin School. And now that Giant Food—where that Giant Food is like businesses and homes. And then behind that I can remember trees and railroad track. You know. There was nothing there. Water the other side—and then the railroad tracks separated. I remember going trick-or-treating, and the railroad—we got stuck on the other side of the railroad track. And I got in trouble. That's why I remember it so good because trick-or-treat we had to be back home at a certain time. Well, I was on the other side of the tracks when—and the train had come. And there's no way that we could get back on the side where I lived until that train had depleted. Well, [laughs] it took a long time—it was after midnight when that train—yeah.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:10:00.4] Wow.

Kathy Simpson [0:10:00.4] And I got in trouble in that. I remember it so good. But that was Slaters Lane area. Slaters Lane and that's where the water—where the Potomac—I'd say Potomac Yards and Potomac—and that was the name—the sailing marina. That was a whole other side of the track. We didn't suppose to go in that side of the track, but I can say this particular time we were kids being hardheaded and doing what parents say. "Well Kathy, you go trick-or-treating—you be back by such and such a time." Okay. Well, there was just woods, you know., we got stuck over there on that other side. Well, it really wasn't nothing over there other than woods and the railroad tracks. You know. [Inaudible 0:10:48.1]. You know. Empty railroad cars and that kind of stuff over there. But and then you go further, there was the water. And today they call it the Sailing Marina or Potomac something—Potomac Yards. That's where Potomac Yards pretty much got their name. But really it was nothing there but water and trees. I mean I had a wonderful childhood growing up here in Old Town, Alexandria. It was family oriented. It was, you know, we had a togetherness as I guess African Americans living in the area because that's all it was pretty much in this area—African Americans all up and along Washington Street. I think as you crossed over—and then we had a Southside also. But it was a certain area you cross over, and then you were in I guess you want to say the rich people's world? You know. Because we never saw—I didn't anyway. I never saw Caucasian people walking in our area. You know. I never saw that. And as I got older, and things started changing when our able to—we were able to congregate together on the same side of the street.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:12:27.3] Do you remember like the names of the families who lives in near you? Like what—like are there any families that stick out or any individuals?

Kathy Simpson [0:12:37.5] There was the—on my street on that corner house, who was down in that corner house? The Drummonds I remember. Anyway, you had the Clarks—you had the Clarks. You had the Galloways. You had the Houstons. Charles Clark? The Galloways? You had the Dunbars, the Dennys. And I'm going by last name pretty much. And we had the Newmans, the Bests, the Newmans, the Clarks, Dunbars, the Hubbards. And pretty much I done named a whole lot of people on there.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:13:41.1] Yeah, yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:13:41.6] You know.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:13:42.5] Who were some of your friends? Do you remember your friends' names that—

Kathy Simpson [0:13:44.7] Oh absolutely. Veronica Galloway, Angela Clark, Linda Denny.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:14:02.1] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:14:03.5] I—yeah.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:14:04.4] Do you remember like what you did with them? Like what games or—

Kathy Simpson [0:14:07.5] We were on the playground.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:14:09.2] That's like—yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:14:09.3] We played—we had double Dutch, you know, with the rope. We played jacks. We had hopscotch. We played hide-and-seek. I mean there were—we had a good time. We had, you know, standards—moral standards. And we had discipline. It was very disciplined amongst, you know, you had your roughnecks too, however. You know. You—oh man, the Wanzers, the Wigglesworths. And we just—we would just get together, and we'd create fun—create fun. Jump rope, we got—okay, we have enough people we can play, you know, double Dutch. We could play hide-and-seek, and that was the gist. In my family we had dinner, you know, once our mom got home from work. I may have started the sides or helping for the preparation for dinner. And we all sat down at the table, ate together, prayed together, went to church on Sundays. I mean [laughs] it was structured there. You know. It was definitely structured, disciplined, and it was a great experience coming up as a child. You know.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:15:31.7] What was it like to remember these memories that—like how does it feel for you?

Kathy Simpson [0:15:37.8] Now I wish that the world and the families were like it was when I came up.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:15:43.6] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:15:46.2] The children—it's like the children now not growing up with the parents on the same level. You know. There's no structure. The family structure today doesn't have the moral standards like it was when I grew up. The families are not united together tightly.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:16:19.6] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:16:19.7] You know. There's a big difference now—the world. Even I mean in the universe itself is nothing with the unity of "love thy neighbor as thyself." I'll put it like that.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:16:38.3] Yeah. You've mentioned a little bit about your parents, but can you describe more about them? Like who—maybe start with your mom? Can you describe like who she was and—

Kathy Simpson [0:16:49.0] My mom was a lady from the country. Her parents were Indian. They were Indian—their heritage was Greenhow—the last name carried Greenhow. It was an Indian tribe. I don't know too much about it, but I have pictures that, you know, that I can show that can describe some of my grandmother's heritage as an Indian native. My mom was very independent. She was an independent mom. She went through a whole lot of, you know, to get where she was with my stepfather. That's when her life became a lot more stable, but she had a run for her money [laughs] from what I understand.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:17:44.9] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:17:45.0] She had two other children other than myself, and the house caught on fire right there on the Southside. The house caught on fire. She lost two kids. She jumped out the window with my oldest brother. There was a funeral. There was a—I just heard, you know, I don't think I was even born at that time. But that's some of her history.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:18:07.9] Wow.

Kathy Simpson [0:18:08.1] And she—she had a, you know, moving around here in the Alexandria area from Washington. She lived on Payne Street. She lived on Alfred Street, and then I think that's when her and my father had established enough revenue to purchase their own home on Colonial Avenue. So, they had a rocky road trying to go through I guess the segregation times, the, you know, the hard times of coming up as in that slave trade environment. So anyway, they made it through. We came—like I said, we became a middle class family—African-American family. And we stayed united.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:19:01.3] What was her name? Her—

Kathy Simpson [0:19:01.9] Her name was Josephine Robertson. Very, very respected lady here in Alexandria. And then my father—my father—my stepfather—cause that's all I knew. I didn't know my biological father. I knew my stepfather which he and my mom raised me, and he drove a truck. You know. He was an 18-wheeler truck driver which he would go and drive to different states. We wouldn't see him sometimes for a week. He wouldn't stay no more than I guess three weeks out of town doing, you know, his job. And he was like the overseer—right there off of South Pickett Street. That was their headquarters. And he had a group of men that he supervised, and they took order from. And he was, you know, he had a real preserved job where he made pretty good money. And my mother again, she worked for Cameron Station—like the exchange region. I think it was like the PX for the military. She did their accounting. With both of them working—their salaries—we were able to, you know, purchase a home here in the Alexandria area. Okay.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:20:30.4] Can I ask about the fire? I mean do you—you obviously don't have—you didn't live through it?

Kathy Simpson [0:20:37.3] I wasn't born. Yeah.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:20:37.8] You weren't born yet, but do you remember the stories that were told about like—like what happened?

Kathy Simpson [0:20:43.9] Well my Aunt Blanche told me. You know. And I come as a little girl when we bought the house, I would see pictures. There was a picture of a little boy, and a picture of a little girl. And they favored me—they looked like me. And I asked my mother—I thought they were, you know, pictures—I thought they were myself and my brother. But they were my brother and sister that got burned up in a fire. And when I would ask my mother about it, she wouldn't, you know, she'd just say, "Well put the picture back in the drawer," or something. You know. So, it was—I don't think it was something that she wanted to talk about, and it was before my time.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:21:25.9] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:21:26.0] So I ain't got—I don't know how I got on the subject with my Aunt Blanche, and Aunt Blanche said, "Oh Kathy. Your mother had a rough time. I can—" And I'm imitating how Aunt Blanche—she was shaking her head and feeling sorry for Mama. She'd say, "Oh Josephine jumped out that window with them two babies in her hand, and she broke both her"—no, "she jumped out the window with one baby in her hand. Them other two children" that's what she said. "Them other two children—they was in there, and them children got burned up in that fire, Kathy." And she'd say, "I never forget. At the funeral them two little caskets—them two little caskets, and Josephine sitting there with two casts on her leg. And she had Reginald in her arm." Okay. So that's all I know about that.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:22:14.7] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:22:15.0] So it sounded to me was a sad, you know, that was a sad time for my mother. And she went through something which caused my brother to have to go live with my biological father which I never—I can't remember my biological father. And he lived in Washington, D.C. And from what I understand, he didn't have time for no boy. You know. He doing him—he, you know, maybe like Superfly. So, but I don't know? You know. I'm just—but he didn't have time to really care for my oldest brother. So, my oldest brother was fending for himself. He had a roof over his head, but father wasn't there all the time. Father was—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:22:59.7] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:23:00.2] —you know. So, he kind of raised his self. And then as he got in his adolescent years—teenage years—he started getting in trouble, and they had to bring things to my mother's attention. So, Mama living here on in Alexandria, and my brother and my father residing in Washington, she had to get him. And so, my brother came into the home with us. So, at that time there was me and a younger sister and a younger brother. And this was the two younger ones were siblings from my stepfather. Reginald, my older brother, and older sister were by different fathers. Okay and so was I. I didn't have the same father, so. Anyway. Reginald came into the household.

Okay. Which—disaster! [Laughs] You know. Because we had a moral standard in the way we were coming up and living in the household, as opposed to how he was living coming into our household. So, disaster!

Francesco De Salvatore [0:24:13.8] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:24:14.0] Okay. And we made it through. We got through that and everything, and that was the gist of that. I mean I cared pretty much for my younger sister and brother while my mom and my father worked. The history was, you know, I was my mother's helper. My mother's keeper. While she—and she worked for Caucasian families here in Old Town. She worked for a lawyer—Thomas that lived somewhere down here, and she also worked for a judge that lived somewhere down here. I remember the judge in Alexandria City was Judge Petticoat. She—it was right there on King Street. Judge Petticoat—oh, man—anybody get in trouble whatever, you going to Judge Petticoat, and she's [inaudible 0:25:04.0] judge whatever. When my mother worked for a lot of the well-to-do here in Old Town as the domestic, she did the domestic work in their homes. And they had—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:25:17.2] This is before Cameron Station? Working at Cameron, or was she also doing that while she worked at Cameron Station?

Kathy Simpson [0:25:23.3] It was after Cameron Station.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:25:24.2] After okay.

Kathy Simpson [0:25:24.5] Cause she retired—she retired at Cameron Station, and my mother she—my mother had room in the house. She would rent rooms out, and so my mother was a hustler. She was a go-getter. You know.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:25:36.8] Yeah. She sounds like it.

Kathy Simpson [0:25:38.3] Yeah. She was a very independent woman. She took care. She worked hard. She got what she wanted and had what she wanted.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:25:47.1] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:25:47.2] You know. She wasn't a flashy woman. She was peaceful, and she always kept a roof over our head. I know that much, and she took care of us. And my father he—there was a hospital right down here off of Columbus Street. I forgot what that hospital. But anyway, my father passed away at that hospital. Sugar diabetic—sugar diabetes.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:26:19.6] When did he pass?

Kathy Simpson [0:26:21.1] He—oh man. My daughter was—Keisha was three. So, he passed—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:26:26.3] Much later.

Kathy Simpson [0:26:27.0] —in 1986—1983—1983/1984. 1986. Yeah. It was between 1983 and 1986. I can't remember.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:26:41.9] That's good.

Kathy Simpson [0:26:42.0] But it was in between that time. He passed away at that Alexandria Hospital—diabetes. You know. That sugar diabetes. And he was like 59—he died young. He was very young—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:26:58.1] Yeah. He was young.

Kathy Simpson [0:26:58.2] —when he passed away. Diabetic—diabetes had ran in his family, and my father didn't pay—didn't listen. He, you know, I remember I had to get the needle and push the needle in his fatty tissues all the time for his shot—his insulin shot. And sometimes when Mom was at work, I may have to boil the eggs and make sure he's fed the proper food. Cause if not, he would eat what he want to and draw the sugar. So, I kind of looked over my father health while Mom had to work sometimes. You know.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:27:33.5] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:27:35.6] Anyway.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:27:37.8] You were starting to talk—earlier you were talking about all the schools you attended. Do you want to maybe list—maybe we can return to that? And you can talk a little bit about—

Kathy Simpson [0:27:48.1] Okay. I remember Ficklin, and we used to have May Day at Ficklin. May Day was a special day that everybody—we had to wear this—a uniform like a white shirt and maybe navy blue pants. And we did a skit. The classroom had a skit, and I remember we had a parachute. We had to unroll the parachute and open it up. All the kids—we were surrounded, and we had a certain part of the parachute we had to pick up. And then the parachute after we get it unrolled, there was a skit that we did. And then we had to—our parents came, and it was like an ordinary process. And they called it May Day—May Day, and it happened in May. And my father by him being a truck driver sometimes I wouldn't see him for two and three days or something. So, this particular day was May Day, and I don't know if he knew that it was May Day or—I'm pretty sure he knew because he showed up. And when I looked in the crowd—in the audience—I saw him. And I was—I remember being so happy, so grateful that he was there. I knew Mama wasn't gonna be there, and I had no clue that he—cause when I left home, I remember Mom getting all my little uniform out to be a part of the May Day. You know. We had to wear white shirt and navy blue skirt or whatever, but anyway. [Laughs] And then when I got over in middle school—in Hammond, I used to jump hurdles, and I was very athletic. I got with the athletic community, and I ran track, jumped hurdles. Football games—I mean I was like tomboy [inaudible 0:29:44.8]. I knew everybody, and everybody pretty much knew me because I was good. I was good in track, and I was good at jumping hurdles. So, I had a name for myself. I had a signature out there in my class. So, I grew up going to high school, hanging out with the football players, hanging out with the basketball players. Okay. We would bet on who is the fastest, and that's where I came in that. I would challenge the boys or—no—I really didn't have a lot of girl, you know, hung around with a lot of girlfriends. But I

hung around with the guys, and we got that—it's I was more challenging with them. And then my brother—my brother had a signature of his own, but in another, different world. Okay. So, we were well-known in this area.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:30:37.7] Yeah. What—can you—so just for the—just for people listening, like what years were you in elementary school? Do you remember like the—

Kathy Simpson [0:30:46.3] Okay. I graduated in 1978—I believe it was—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:30:52.4] From Parker—from Parker-Gray from—

Kathy Simpson [0:30:53.9] From T.C. Williams.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:30:55.4] T.C. Williams. What did I say?

Kathy Simpson [0:30:56.1] Yeah.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:30:56.4] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:30:56.8] From T.C. Williams. That was my graduation year.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:31:00.7] Okay. That's helpful. Are there any like teachers that stand out? Like a teacher that stands out from all those years?

Kathy Simpson [0:31:09.6] Yeah. Well, my coach was Miss Finney. Okay.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:31:14.0] I've heard.

Kathy Simpson [0:31:14.5] Mr. Hines.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:31:16.1] Mr. Hines, yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:31:17.6] Mr. Grey. Mr. Cordell—he was my social studies teacher. That's all I could—and I had a French teacher. I don't remember her name, but I used to love that French teacher. She would come in the room, "Bonjour, Madame. Comment allez-vous? [inaudible 0:31:41.6]?" You know. So, I had an experience with my fluent language teacher, and I mean I don't even know why they taught us French in this area when the migration is Spanish? You know. So, I think somebody had a concept that there—we would be more on a French-speaking diversity as opposed to Spanish. Because we were taught French coming up. That was our second language that they taught us in elementary school.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:32:19.7] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:32:21.1] And then from elementary school, like I said, I ventured out in the world a little bit. I worked at the airport. I made my own little money. My parents bought me my first car. I had to pay, you know, after mine I had to be responsible for the gas and—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:32:41.5] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:32:42.6] When my father had me on his insurance so that was cool.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:32:49.1] What did—what are your memories of and if—and we don't—if it's too painful we don't have to talk about it. But like what are your memories of in it cause you were like—Alexandria was integrating schools, right, while you were going to school. Like what—would you mind describing like what that was like for you?

Kathy Simpson [0:33:07.0] Yeah. Coming up as a child, we were never taught prejudice. I didn't understand it. You know. It wasn't, you know, I didn't understand it. I was like, "Well why can't we all, you know, go to this—go do this? And why all of us can't do that?" So, I really didn't understand it until I think when Martin Luther King—I think that was—when Martin Luther King died my mother and father got us all together, and we had to sit in front of the TV and listen to what happened to him and what he stood for. I would hear his speeches, you know, when I was a little girl because I think I had to be about 3 years old when he got killed. Yeah. 1961.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:33:54.2] Martin Luther King?

Kathy Simpson [0:33:55.5] I was born in 1961. So, I think he got—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:34:00.5] Sure about.

Kathy Simpson [0:34:01.3] —assassinated in 1962—or 196—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:34:02.6] So like—you're like 6 or 7 maybe?

Kathy Simpson [0:34:03.0] Yeah. Something.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:34:04.6] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:34:05.2] Yeah. So anyway, I was a young, young girl, and I didn't understand the segregation part of it. Why there was separation? And my parents never taught us until like I say Martin Luther King died, and we were—we had to sit in front of the TV and look at and listen to that particular eulogy. Okay? I remember that. Yeah. And then Kennedy also. There was something special about him that my parents had us focus on with the TV. We had to sit, and we had to watch the eulogy of that. So mostly the riots and all of that thing. I remember seeing it on TV, but we were here in Alexandria where that was actually happening in Washington. Those things that was rowdy were in Washington. And I just remember my parents really, you know, being strict with us, being in the house at a certain time. You know. We couldn't go outside without this or without that. So that's when the Ku Klux Klan—all that kind of stuff took place so things the world started changing. I remember the change. I remember that. But still I mean I just had to go with it. You know. I had to go—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:35:38.8] Like you remember the Klan in Alexandria? Or you mean just like around the country?

Kathy Simpson [0:35:42.7] Listening to some of the attributes. Okay. So, I don't remember them. You know.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:35:49.7] [Inaudible 0:35:49.7]

Kathy Simpson [0:35:50.2] I didn't understand it. I was too young to really understand it at the time. But there was caution. I can remember the, you know, the aggressive—the aggressiveness in this area. You know. And then they used to—George Washington and the parades of George Washington. And you know they would close down the streets, and all these things would come. The street right here actually. Actually, you know, Washington Street. So, I remember the celebrations of a lot of things that I didn't understand at the time. You know.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:36:30.0] What was it like in the schools? Like do you remember was there a tension with between black and white students? Ot nothing like that?

Kathy Simpson [0:36:39.5] It wasn't actually with the students. You could tell with the parents and the—you could tell the ones that were taught prejudice, and you could tell the ones that was just like us. You know. They didn't really—it didn't matter. You know. But you could tell. You know. You could tell the separation of this particular people thought that we were or we were less than or we, you know, we couldn't do this or couldn't be or, you know. You could—that started being. But in school that's where I guess we snuck to play with one another because when we got home we couldn't. So, at school—and then some teachers—I remember some teachers wouldn't allow us to play because maybe a parent had said, "Keep them away from this person," or whatever. But it was like a sneaking type of friendship with Caucasians. But again, it didn't, you know, I didn't—it didn't matter to me. It didn't, you know, that wasn't my intention. You know. I saw it, but I didn't practice it, so.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:38:05.4] I have a question maybe not related to schooling. We can come back to schooling if you want, but I had a quick question. Like did you as a child—did you ever interact with anyone who lived in public housing or was—did you have any awareness about public housing in Alexandria? No.

Kathy Simpson [0:38:24.3] None.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:38:24.8] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:38:25.5] There was no awareness because again it was basically black families, and we owned this land. We owned these homes. We lived in these homes. So, there was no family without a home. You know. Because we all had our home. Our families either were buying their homes or maybe written as far as I know. But never saw homelessness and that type of thing. You know. Shelter. I didn't have any clue of it.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:38:56.5] Yeah. You weren't like aware of it. It was one.

Kathy Simpson [0:38:58.4] I wasn't aware of it.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:39:00.2] Yeah. And so, you graduate you say in 1978?

Kathy Simpson [0:39:03.5] 1978. Yeah.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:39:04.4] Yeah. And—

Kathy Simpson [0:39:05.8] Six, seven—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:39:08.2] And yeah. What—what happens after that? I know you mentioned you get married. You get married when you're 22, you said?

Kathy Simpson [0:39:17.6] Right. I wanted to be a cosmetologist, which I wanted to own my own barber shop. And I had a dream of doing so. And there was distractions there. There was distractions that caused me to—I guess my father passed away. And I met a sheltered man. I married him. You know. It was—Daddy wasn't dead yet. Daddy hadn't died yet before. Oh, I was—I had boyfriends, and I was working. I was just doing, you know, I guess adolescence, teenage, or young adult behavior. You know. Partying—that kind of thing. And at 22 I guess, I was dating my ex-husband for about—high school maybe—I don't know? Anyway, I got married at 22. I had a kid—had two kids. I stayed married to him I think for 17 years, and then it didn't work out. So, I ventured back out in the world. I think I was in my early—I want to say mid 30s maybe? When I, you know, when I got back out in the world.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:41:02.7] What are your kids' names?

Kathy Simpson [0:41:04.5] Keisha, Jenetta, and Annie. Yeah.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:41:08.2] What are your like earliest memories with them?

Kathy Simpson [0:41:12.2] I mean I had a ball with my kids. You know. I loved them. I was a good mom. I had some ups and downs, and I hit some snags. However, I still kept my children protected. They stayed in school. I kept a roof over their head. Kept them fed, cleaned, went to school. So, I played the mother role with my children, and today I'm proud of them. They are very successful young women. I have four grandkids and which I am—like I say, I'm proud. I'm a proud grandma, and I'm a proud mother. I married a second time. I married my husband, Daryl, and we've been together for 30 years almost.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:42:08.6] Wow.

Kathy Simpson [0:42:09.3] Yeah, 30 years. And he has helped me groom and raise my kids. And we have established our own, you know, being responsible for our family. Which he has a son outside of marriage before, you know, before our time. And we still contact—we stay in contact with our kids. It's nothing that we won't do for them.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:42:45.7] That's good. That's great. I want to fast forward a little bit in your life—

Kathy Simpson [0:42:52.2] Okay.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:42:52.3] —to—I think you—you mentioned to me that you lived in Sam Madden in like 2008/2009? Is that about right?

Kathy Simpson [0:43:02.1] No. I got there at 2010.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:43:05.7] 2010? Okay. And then you ended up living there for 12 years, right?

Kathy Simpson [0:43:10.5] 12 years.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:43:10.8] I remember you saying that. Yeah. What are your memories of Sam Madden at that time?

Kathy Simpson [0:43:16.3] At that time?

Francesco De Salvatore [0:43:16.7] Yeah, like—

Kathy Simpson [0:43:18.3] Well at that time when I moved there, again it was projects. It was all project. It was—you had your single family homes in one portion, and then you had—they always had a restaurant there. I remember when it was Roy Rogers. It was—man. [Laughs] I can take you, where you at? Roy Rogers. What?

Francesco De Salvatore [0:44:03.4] 7/11?

Kathy Simpson [0:44:03.8] 7/11 was on the other side. But right there where the McDonald's is, that always was a restaurant there.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:44:12.1] What was it called again?

Kathy Simpson [0:44:13.1] Gino's—it was Gino's. Oh yeah. It was Gino's—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:44:15.6] Gino's.

Kathy Simpson [0:44:15.7] —it was Hardee's, Roy Rogers, Kentucky Fried—so I watched a lot of franchise being right there in that spot—right there.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:44:35.3] Yeah. What did like Sam Madden look like? Like what are the buildings?

Kathy Simpson [0:44:40.5] They were brick homes. They were homes there. And they, I mean, they didn't really look like the projects, but they weren't fancy homes like if you went further north on Washington Street. Those big historic buildings now didn't look like that, however, they were brick buildings. They were well structured at the time, and the standards of living there—I you see I don't—when I got there, I had to have a voucher. And I had to go through a program. I had to meet a certain criteria. My kids had to be as, you know, everything had to be utilized in a structured manner. Okay. So, when I got there, I had got [inaudible 0:45:33.5] and I had to go [inaudible 0:45:34.7]. And I met all the guidelines, and I was able to live there. Okay. And depending on my

status, if I had a job, then I worked and I paid my rent just like a normal—I mean like anybody else. Okay. And it was basically African Americans there.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:46:01.2] What do you remember about your house? Can you describe like what it looked like or?

Kathy Simpson [0:46:06.7] It looked it looked [laughs]—it looked like a brick house. I lived on a corner on the end unit. So—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:46:15.9] What was the address just for—

Kathy Simpson [0:46:20.1] 1011. Right? 1-0 no. 1-0-0-1 Montgomery Street.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:46:24.7] Yeah. Right there.

Kathy Simpson [0:46:26.1] I'm sorry. My house on Colonial Avenue was 1-1-0-0—I mean 1-1-0-4.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:46:32.7] Four, yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:46:33.1] And the house that I'm in now is 1-1-0-0. So—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:46:37.1] A lot of 1s. Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:46:37.8] You know. So that—I mean to me is that a coincidence—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:46:42.0] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:46:42.1] —that it's always been 11 something?

Francesco De Salvatore [0:46:46.3] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:46:46.4] Or those 1s and 0s always been there? 1104 was a high where I grew up. 1-0-0-1 is Samuel Madden, and I left Samuel Madden and went to 1-1-0-0. So, I mean I don't know that—something in the universe is talking. [Laughs]

Francesco De Salvatore [0:47:07.0] Yeah, yeah. [Laughs] Definitely. But yeah. I'm just curious like when you walked in your house like what did it—what was the layout? And like what did it look like as I guess—

Kathy Simpson [0:47:17.7] It was a duplex area. I had an upstairs and a downstairs. I had two bedrooms, kitchen, a living room area. Had a back yard. I had a front, you know, I had a little porch on the front. And there was a walkway. It was a nice little cottage I would say. And I—I was living in a shelter. I left the shelter—I stayed in a shelter because once I buried my mother in the family house that I resided in, I didn't have nowhere to go. I had to—we had to sell the house. The house had to go up for sale. So, we sold the house, and once I sold the house I went to a shelter. And I wanted to go. I had plenty of places to go, but I wanted to go to the shelter because I knew that my chances of having my own was greater than me shacking with somebody. And no—I didn't want to

do that—kids and, you know, so I settled for going to the shelter. And I settled for just waiting my turn to get my place. So, my number finally came up, and I always had, you know, a roof over my head for my—with my kids. I lived at Glebe Park in Del Ray. That was, you know, my first encounter with housing, and that was public housing up there. Yeah. Public housing.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:49:02.3] Oh yeah?

Kathy Simpson [0:49:02.5] And then when I left public housing, I took a break somewhere and moved to Baltimore. So, I had a break—a lot of the other things. But when I came back, I got back on the list. You know. Cause I always had a safe haven that was 1104 Colonial Avenue where I grew up at. That was the family house. So, I would take a break sometimes and get into the world. And come back to—and I would start at 1104 Colonial Avenue and make my preview. [Laughs] And fill out my paperwork. I had a steady address. So, housing I could always receive my mail. So, I got back on the list, and I got—I resided at Park View I think it was. I had a place at Park—[inaudible 0:49:56.2] lived [inaudible 0:49:56.8] Alexandria but through housing—with the housing's help. For my stationary spot was Samuel Madden which I spent 12 years. I spent 5 years at Glebe Park. I spent 12 years Samuel Madden, and I'm trying to think at Park View. I wasn't there for a long time, but I spent time through housing help. But and which I've been real blessed, fortunate, grateful and all those things here in the Alexandria community.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:50:33.3] So did you move into Sam Madden by yourself? Or were you—

Kathy Simpson [0:50:40.1] My kids.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:50:41.0] It was you and your kids?

Kathy Simpson [0:50:42.1] Yeah.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:50:42.2] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:50:43.1] Yeah.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:50:44.1] And what was the community like at Sam Madden at that time? Like what are your memories of the community?

Kathy Simpson [0:50:51.3] I mean people were friendly. It was projects across the street, and I knew everybody pretty much. So, you know, it was just—I just fit in. That's it because I knew everybody. Everybody knew me. I always stayed off to myself. I mind my business. There was friction there. You know. We would do the Wild, Wild West and all of that, but I always mind my business and stayed in my lane. I knew a lot of people. A lot of people knew me, but I mind my business. And like I said, if I could help somebody, I would help them. I wasn't a rowdy person. I didn't create friction. You know. I saw a lot of, you know.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:51:33.0] Yeah. Were there like community events at Sam Madden? Like annual events that you remember or?

Kathy Simpson [0:51:40.4] Yes, we—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:51:40.9] Or like social gatherings? Like what, yeah?

Kathy Simpson [0:51:43.9] Yeah. They would have meetings like what they call them—the neighborhood meetings. The community had to get together, and we would—they would vote on certain things that Alexandria wanted to project in the community. There was functions, you know, different holidays for the kids. They would have trick-or-treat Halloween scary haunted houses and that kind of thing. They would have Santa Claus come to the recreation center for the kids. So, there was a community gathering on special occasions. It was—yeah. It was a family togetherness community.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:52:40.3] Do you remember like who your neighbors were at Sam Madden?

Kathy Simpson [0:52:43.5] Yeah. At Samuel Madden—well actually when I moved there, I didn't have a neighbor. There was no—it stayed empty for years. I had no neighbor. And then when I finally got a neighbor, she was—this lady had—she had restructured some things in the place. I guess she had gotten permission, and she was paying a certain amount or whatever. But anyway, I don't remember her name cause she didn't stay long.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:53:22.1] Okay.

Kathy Simpson [0:53:23.0] And then once she moved out, an African family moved in. And they were there until we moved out. So, I really didn't—I didn't have a neighbor—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:53:35.5] In that area.

Kathy Simpson [0:53:35.7] —for a long, long, long time.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:53:37.7] Yeah. Now obviously things are changing at Sam Madden.

Kathy Simpson [0:53:42.5] Absolutely.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:53:42.9] There's redevelopment happening. How do you feel about all that that's going on?

Kathy Simpson [0:53:46.8] Well, it's all in trying to uniform the city to look a certain way. Okay. Because most of the original foundation of that area has been depleted in some way. So, it's now looking like it's more on a convenience, you know, and it's very expensive to live there now—very, very expensive. And that's because people are migrating here from other cities/states from disasters of, you know, so a lot of people now are coming into this community because it's being the facelift of it. You know. I can say this started off, it was nothing here really. It was really nothing here but a bunch of black people, trees, and railroad tracks. [Laughs] And beautiful homes and structure. It was, you know, and we were just a small community of people. The population wasn't really big like it is now. So, I don't know. The way that they're building it now, it's being overbuilt. It's too—it's

cluttered. You know. As opposed to when I came up, you know, there was space. You had more trees. You didn't have a lot of people. Everything is congested now. It's much busier now.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:55:27.4] Yeah. What's that—how do you feel about that? How do you feel about all that—like it sounds like some things been a lot of change—

Kathy Simpson [0:55:34.5] Tremendous.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:55:35.5] —and it's like what's that like if someone who's born and raised here and has really seen that change happen? What's that like for you?

Kathy Simpson [0:55:40.8] Well a lot of things has been I say taken from the community—taken from the city, the structure, the way it was. Because now everything is busy. Everybody is busy. Everybody is distracted. You know. There's a bunch of distractions here now because it's so much going on. It's a lot of noise, and it wasn't that way. You know. So, and the way I feel about it is I'm not at Samuel Madden anymore. They tore it down. They put me someplace else, and the someplace else where I am is way more peaceful, settled. It's more calm. You know. Because I was in the midst of a busy area. The streets itself, you know, I'm listening to the fire trucks—just accidents. You know. You could hear it's just noise, gunshots, fights. Where I was, I could hear all of that.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:56:51.2] Yeah, yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:56:52.0] You know, so.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:56:52.4] Can you just—what was the process of relocating? Can you talk about that? Like when like starting from when—like how are you notified that they were gonna tear down Sam Madden? What are your memories of it?

Kathy Simpson [0:57:05.3] They—housing—at first, they were gonna do—I mean a relift. They was gonna just come in and do upgrades. But then once they started building, the foundation began to move. The foundation of that land was moving. So, they had to tear it down and demolition it. So, when we found out about it, they had built it, you know, a whole bridge and everything. And I guess with moving that foundation caused a lot of wreckage in the ground for those homes. Even though they were well built, and I think that's why they didn't fall apart. [Laughs] But my place shifted. If you looked my front door, the front door is like that.

Francesco De Salvatore [0:57:58.9] Wow.

Kathy Simpson [0:57:59.0] That's how the foundation of it had moved, and they had to. You know. The ceiling had started cracking. So, you knew something was wrong. And then my place had been hit. Cars had accidents so from that place was prone for a car to be in the living room. So, they had to do something structure wise—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:58:29.1] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [0:58:29.6] —with that land and—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:58:32.7] How long did you live in those conditions with cracked like—a cracked ceiling like?

Kathy Simpson [0:58:41.3] For as long as I can remember, when they restructured that bridge there from Del Ray. Okay. That's when I noticed foundation structure. You know. Though you could see cracks in the wall. You know. And then my stairs—I had wooden stairs. They creaked. They started creaking and the stairs you could tell the stairs were either sunk in a little bit. You could feel the gravity of when you stepped. It wasn't a solid foundation anymore. So, they had to do what they—

Francesco De Salvatore [0:59:27.8] Do you feel like—do you feel like—do you feel like people were listening to these issues? People in the city, people at ARHA? Do you feel like there was—

Kathy Simpson [0:59:47.9] Well actually that was the point. You know. We were African Americans. We didn't even go to the meetings sometimes, cause I know I didn't. You know. Because of the literature—we weren't really aware like we should have been as a community in knowing when the meetings were held. It was like a certain side of Alexandria knew to go—like Mr. Yates. Mr. Yates would draw them. And I'm trying to figure out, "Well why he knew when the meetings is going?" Because he owned a lot of this. You know. And I feel like I could have been an owner of some stuff too had I known, [laughs] to go and vote and be a part of the structures that was going on here in the city of Alexandria. We weren't notified properly. We didn't have the proper representation to give us the will to attend the meetings. You know. Even with the moves, you know, we're not properly notified. You know. If you don't really go out and search it, and I'm not blaming no one for it. But things that needs publicized for a worthy cause for a certain group of people, well that certain group of people gonna get more notice of what's going on, as opposed to the people they're trying to weed out.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:01:17.9] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:01:18.5] So that's how I feel that the togetherness of this community or universe is. It gears and it goes to a certain group where they are more alert or enthused on a certain situation. And they will weed another group that they really don't want to know. And they gonna not—they gonna put less literature out. They gonna do less preparation for that. You know. So that's I think it's an unbalance of information that's being retrieved out into the area. You know. It's a certain side of people will get what they need, and then the other side is left in the dark. That's how I feel. It may not be that way, but it's that way from what I can see.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:02:17.5] How did you feel about being relocated?

Kathy Simpson [1:02:23.0] I was really unhappy. You know. I was unhappy because of some of the stipulations that housing had put before me. And I thought I had turned, [phone ringing] I'm sorry—

Francesco De Salvatore [1:02:35.4] It's okay.

Kathy Simpson [1:02:35.9] —but some of the stipulations that housing had put before me. Here I am. I done been here for 12 years in a two bedroom. Now they trying to give me a place or telling me to look for a place—a one bedroom. Okay. And I mean I'm ticked. I got a two bedroom, an

upstairs and a downstairs, and I accumulated my life in this place. And then they didn't prepare me for a one-bedroom.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:03:06.1] Right.

Kathy Simpson [1:03:06.6] Okay. They didn't prepare me for the things that I had to endure in leaving a place that I had been there for 12 years.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:03:18.7] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:03:18.8] So I was kind of disappointed. I was very hurt. I was very discombobulated. And then it made me want to get more involved in what was really going on, and I got involved. And I saw, you know, it was still out of my control—nothing I could do.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:03:43.8] What do you mean by getting involved? Like what do you mean by that?

Kathy Simpson [1:03:46.5] Going to the meetings.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:03:47.8] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:03:47.9] Finding out, you know, "Okay. What's gonna happen?" Okay. "And what we gonna do?" [Laughs] That kind of stuff. You know. And like the eyebrow being raised. You know.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:03:58.0] Yeah. What were those meetings like? What do you remember about those meetings?

Kathy Simpson [1:04:01.8] The meetings—they were very—they were detailed, but there were hidden clauses. There were hidden things in the meetings. And then again, that goes along with the meetings that you don't know about that comes up, and you miss it. And you're not a part of, so you can't voice your opinion. You can't give your side of the story. And then a person living in the conditions that we're living in, they couldn't—they don't know. You know. And if we don't go out and let them know the conditions, then they gonna formulate their own standard, their own format of what they want.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:04:48.1] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:04:48.3] Okay? Because even though we know these things are happening, we don't know how to sometimes communicate or get our point across if there's lack of communication on the hierarchy side. Okay. The chain of command, the literature, getting it publicized where everyone is informed—not just a particular group or a particular side or whatever. You know. It has to be equal. It hasn't been that way. You know. And then when you do run into a hiccup, now you have a hidden clause or it's—so it's a rule that's been added, you know, in the midst of a mistake that they made. And which is not fair. You know. But life is not fair either.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:05:47.1] Yeah. I'm sorry about that—I'm sorry about this, Miss Simpson.

Kathy Simpson [1:05:52.0] Yeah. I mean—

Francesco De Salvatore [1:05:52.4] Yeah. It's not fair.

Kathy Simpson [1:05:53.4] Yeah. Life is not fair.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:05:55.9] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:05:57.1] But it can be not fair. It's how you deal with the unfairness in some things that you can—you may not have control over, but you can get your point across in other ways. And it has to be lined up where it gets—it draws an attention of the person that needs the attention drawn to. Okay? And I think sometimes the way we go about handling situations sometimes can create more friction than good. You know. It's just the way that you represent it.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:06:43.4] Do you plan to move back to Sam Madden once they redevelop it? No?

Kathy Simpson [1:06:47.5] It's too busy, and I like the quiet. I like the quiet time, and I like the quiet space. I live by the water—by the little lake, and I can hear that—

Francesco De Salvatore [1:06:57.7] Where do you live now that?

Kathy Simpson [1:06:58.5] I live at Quaker Hill. Okay? And it's—I'm gonna tell you this. When I left Samuel Madden, I called "leaving the hood, moving to Beverly Hills." [Laughs] So the peace that I withhold now living by Quaker Lane, it's so much settled. It's so much—it's not that hustle and bustle listening to the fire trucks. Listening to, you know, I don't hear that. You know. So, some of the distractions of just living is so much calmer. It's more peaceful. I can concentrate on other things instead of all that noise, and I left, so. And that's not to say that it won't be quiet when they restructure for just the highway itself, just being there on that—

Francesco De Salvatore [1:07:57.2] It's close, yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:07:58.0] Yeah. It's just noisy.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:08:01.3] Yeah. I mean considering sort of the challenges that you faced with having to leave—having to move out and be relocated, and the challenges other people there have faced. What do you hope for the new development? Like what do you hope changes for people who are gonna be living there? What do you hope for that?

Kathy Simpson [1:08:22.0] I hope that they come together. They come together, and they keep it, you know, nice and clean. And they respect their neighborhood. You know. It takes a village to raise good sound kids or a family. You have to work together in everything that you do when you have no control. You know. You're gonna have no control. So, if that area is reconstructed and built up,

then the people that reside in there have to be on the same, you know, kilter as far as what they want from what they have. You know. If you want greater, you'll get greater.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:09:09.6] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:09:09.7] You know. If you don't want greater, than it's not gonna work. It's gonna be conflict there.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:09:19.0] That's great. Is there anything I haven't asked you that you want to share?

Kathy Simpson [1:09:27.1] It's just that being in a program, okay, in a program is I figure ARHA is part of a program because not everyone can qualify to reside in some of the housings that the Alexandria Old Town area offers. You know. Unless you have money, than you can't live in a big pretty house and, you know, have the space that you want. You know. Whereas ARHA, I think their approach in giving a person a chance. It's up to that person to do right with that chance, so the community can be built up better. It can stay structured. It could have a better face look. Because if you look at Samuel Madden when the projects were there and then look at the surrounding buildings, it doesn't—it was like a sore thumb. You know. So, it was like we were in a certain class. You know. And it was like a sore thumb. And to me that's a statement of it could be poor. It could be, you know, it makes a statement. You know. So, I'm sure when they rebuild it, they're gonna rebuild those places to look like what's across the street or what's in around it. Because if they put the same built up projects looking to—it's gonna look funny. It's not gonna look right. So, the people that move in there would have to be on a certain class level to uphold what they're building. Okay. And I'm sure they gonna be in a $400 dollar range. So, you gonna put—you mean to tell me you gonna put poverty and middle class or upper class, and you gonna merge them together? So, the property would have to have a certain standard in order to uphold because the higher class not gonna stand for it. So, I don't know what to say about it? You know. Say for instance the property is something—if something happened in their household that requires them to not to be able to upstand or uphold the obligations of that community. Then what? See. That's my question. So, I don't want to go back to Samuel Madden after they [laughs] rebuild it, because it's not gonna be like it was when I was there.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:12:21.0] Yeah, yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:12:21.5] So they can keep, you know, I wish it well. I really do, but the standards that it's gonna uphold now I'm too old to be able to keep up with it.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:12:34.9] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:12:35.9] You know. I'm sure there is elevators and stairs. Okay. My chances is say I can't get up—I can't walk down the stairs and something go wrong in the building? And I can't get—and the elevators don't work? I don't want to go through that. [Laughs]

Francesco De Salvatore [1:12:52.8] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:12:53.6] I'm too old for it. Now when I was a little younger, "Yeah. Let's do it. Yeah." But that doesn't—and it's now I have to live for what works for me, and what's gonna uphold my destiny from here. Because I'm not getting younger. I'm getting older.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:13:12.7] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:13:12.8] You know. So, it's life and death. So, the preparation for my life is the legacy that I leave behind. And the legacy at Samuel Madden has left behind when I was there. It'll never be Samuel Madden to me with the upgrades, or whatever they do to it now. You know.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:13:32.7] Be something else. Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:13:34.0] You feel what I'm saying?

Francesco De Salvatore [1:13:35.0] Mm-hmm.

Kathy Simpson [1:13:35.5] It'll never be that Samuel Madden.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:13:38.4] Yeah, yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:13:39.4] So I tilt my hat to the newcomers. You know. The new structure.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:13:47.6] Great.

Kathy Simpson [1:13:47.7] So.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:13:49.0] Great. I have one last question if there's nothing else you want to share. I have one last question, and it's what—if there's a memory you have that you could hold on for the rest of your life, what would that memory be?

Kathy Simpson [1:14:03.6] The togetherness that Samuel Madden held when we were all in cahoots together there. You know. It was family oriented, the recreation—they participated with the families. The people got along. You know. We looked out for one another. We shared, you know, we shared—[phone rings] I'm sorry.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:14:31.1] It's okay.

Kathy Simpson [1:14:31.2] Common, you know, we shared common interests with each other. We weren't, you know, it's just it has definitely changed. And I mean I'm not just gonna say was Samuel Madden. The whole universe has—the whole—the older structure. You know. People has changed through, you know, the way it was is not the way it is. Okay.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:14:58.6] Yeah, yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:14:58.8] And I'd rather have it back the way it was than the way it is. You know. Because the meaning represented more harmony and moral standards in the world.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:15:12.8] Great. Well, I want to thank you for doing this interview with me today and sharing some of these memories. I know some of them were not easy memories—

Kathy Simpson [1:15:21.8] No.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:15:21.9] —so yeah. I'm really honored to be here with you and listen, so.

Kathy Simpson [1:15:27.3] Thank you.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:15:28.3] Yeah. Thank you so much, Miss Simpson.

Kathy Simpson [1:15:29.7] Yes. Thank you.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:15:30.1] Yeah.

Kathy Simpson [1:15:30.9] And I wish ARHA and their destiny of restructuring Samuel Madden—I, you know, I'm looking forward to a greater structure.

Francesco De Salvatore [1:15:43.0] Great.