

Finding The Fort: A History of an African American Neighborhood in Northern Virginia, 1860s-1960s



Krystyn R. Moon
University of Mary Washington
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Introduction

In her 1994 interview with Patricia Knock on “The Fort” community, Dorothy Hall Smith spoke about the importance of remembering one’s past and sharing it with others. In it, Smith implored: “if you can remember anything at all about the past, try and tell someone.... A lot of us know about things but we hate to tell it. Some of us are ashamed.... Please let someone know.” Smith was interviewed alongside her cousin, Barbara Ashby Gordon, whose family had a long history at the Fort, an African American neighborhood that existed from the 1870s through the 1960s in the western portion of present-day Alexandria, Virginia. The purpose of Knock’s interview was to document the history of this community that many—although not all—had forgotten. Smith continued to explain her and her cousin’s role in the Fort’s history: “[w]e’ve done the best we could. We’ve left some things out, of course, but someone will be able to fill this in.”¹

Smith’s words of the need to remember and to complete the history of the Fort community are the central driving tenets of this research. Smith, who frequently visited her relatives at the Fort, spoke eloquently about the people who lived there and their community. However, her memories focused primarily on her childhood during the late 1930s and 1940s, and cannot be seen—as she herself notes—as the complete history. Other sources—archival and archaeological—as well as additional oral histories develop a fuller picture. Unfortunately, even with these resources, the possibility of recording all aspects of the Fort’s existence is an impossible task. That is not to say this analysis will not attempt to document as much as

¹ All oral histories are available online at Alexandria Archaeology’s website unless otherwise stated. Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview with Patricia Knock, transcription, May 25, 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA; <http://alexandriava.gov/historic/info/default.aspx?id=29562> (accessed May 20, 2012).

possible about the Fort's residents. Like all histories, this interpretation of the past is limited by available evidence.



"The Fort," named after its location on the remnants of a Civil War fortification known as Fort Ward, emerged as a small neighborhood sometime in the early 1870s in what was then eastern Fairfax County, Virginia. Because of its proximity to Fairfax Seminary (today consisting of two institutions, Episcopal High School and Virginia Theological Seminary), the Fort was also part of the larger Seminary community, which consisted of both black and white residents, many of whom were connected to the school. Five roads delineated the area--Leesburg Pike (known today as King Street or Rte. 7), Braddock Road, Quaker Lane, Seminary Road, and Howard Lane (now Street). Both Braddock Road and King Street were major thoroughfares, connecting Alexandria to Virginia's farming communities and smaller towns to the west.

Records and oral histories indicate that a handful of the first African American residents at the Fort were in Fairfax County during the years immediately following the Civil War. Based on tax records from 1866, they were living somewhere between Little River Turnpike and Columbia Pike in the eastern portion of the county, a large area that included the future site of the Fort neighborhood. Unfortunately, these tax records include few geographical markers making the precise location of these African Americans difficult to ascertain.² A personal history written by Dick Daniel recalled that one resident, James

² Personal Property Tax Records, Northern District of Fairfax County, Virginia, 1866; Fairfax County Circuit Court Historical Records, Fairfax, VA. Transcription by Elizabeth Drembus, Fort Ward History Working Group.

Jackson, was living at and employed by Episcopal High School as early as 1866.³ In 1870, federal census-takers recorded a number of African Americans living in the area of Fort Ward.

During this period, opportunities to work at Fairfax Seminary along with jobs in domestic service and agriculture facilitated African American settlement at the Fort and elsewhere in the region. The rise of segregation and the continuance of racist attitudes among local whites, however, greatly limited their position within the broader community. Nevertheless, African Americans at the Fort had families and built their own institutions—including schools, churches, and civic organizations—to provide alternative social and cultural outlets. A handful of these individuals developed more permanent connections to the Fort by purchasing land. Several of the descendants of these original landowners stayed at the Fort for three-or-four generations, and many are still living in the area today.

While a few families had become permanent fixtures of the Fort by the beginning of the twentieth century, others moved to various parts of the country. Access to jobs and education mostly dictated African American migration, first to cities in the South and then to urban centers in the North and Midwest. During World War I and World War II, many men and women became part of wartime mobilization and moved to find new jobs or join the armed services. Washington, D.C., located only a few miles away and experiencing rapid job growth in the early twentieth century, was a popular destination for Fort residents. Parts of the Fort were also sold off in the 1920s and 1930s for suburban development that never materialized. By the 1940s, new families—both black and white—

³ John White, *Chronicles of the Episcopal High School in Virginia, 1839-1989* (Dublin, N.H.: William L. Bauhan, 1989), 135.

came from other parts of the country to rent or purchase homes. When the City of Alexandria began to purchase land at the Fort, a small number of the descendants of the original settlers continued to live at the Fort or in other nearby African American neighborhoods, most notably Macedonia/Seminary, which was located along three nearby main thoroughfares: Braddock Road, King Street, and Quaker Lane.

The story of the physical presence of the Fort community ended, ironically, with the establishment of a historic park and museum to commemorate the event that had brought many African American refugees to Alexandria and eastern Fairfax County in the first place: the American Civil War. The Civil War had led to emancipation (13th Amendment) and, later, recognition of African American rights through the passage of the 14th and 15th Amendments. Equality, however, never truly emerged, and by the late nineteenth-century segregation defined almost all aspects of daily life in Virginia and elsewhere in the South. One hundred years later, the United States was still struggling to fully recognize those rights as African Americans took to the streets, lunch counters, and pulpits demanding equality.

By the 1950s, Alexandria—which was greatly affected by the Civil Rights Movement—was preparing to commemorate its involvement in the Civil War. The Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia was first to express interest in the remains of Fort Ward as part of a scenic drive around Washington, D.C. in the post-World War II era. Local white citizens, inspired by the Round Table, lobbied city government to preserve what they saw to be an important part of Northern Virginia's heritage. In 1952, the City of Alexandria annexed a large portion of eastern Fairfax County that included the Fort neighborhood. The City then began buying Fort land in 1955 to establish the park as part

of the City's 100th anniversary celebrations. What white city leaders and activists did not recognize was the historical significance of the area's African American neighborhoods, which were established by former slaves and free blacks.

In the end, families were scattered, but found ways to stay in touch. Some lived down the street at Woods Place and Woods Avenue, a development created from African American owned properties between King Street, Quaker Lane, and Johnsons Lane. This community included some of the uprooted families who were also displaced by the construction of T. C. Williams High School in the early 1960s. Others moved to Washington, D.C. or elsewhere in northern Virginia and beyond. Oakland Baptist Church and Meade Memorial Episcopal Church, which residents had attended since the 1890s and 1940s respectively, continued to bring former residents together. Local African Americans still buried their loved ones at Oakland Baptist Cemetery (which is bordered on three sides by the Fort Ward Historic Park) through the 1990s. Since the late nineteenth century, African Americans buried friends and families throughout this area that is now Fort Ward Park.

For all of these men and women and their descendants, the Fort neighborhood was never forgotten. Nor did they forget the need to recognize and preserve the region's African American heritage, including the community their ancestors had first established in the years following the Civil War.



To better understand the history of the Fort community, I have turned to the conceptual frameworks of microhistory and ethnographic history. These forms of historical analyses are two ways in which historians can uncover people's everyday lives by greatly limiting physical scale while exploring multiple aspects of their subject. As with

other forms of history, regional and national trends are still important as they can potentially reinforce micro-level patterns; however, by exploring these larger forces and structures through the lives of a relatively small group of people, one's analysis can complicate broader histories that portray the human experience as monolithic.⁴ Historian George G. Igger further notes that writers of microhistories are often critical of "social scientists [who] have made generalizations that do not hold up when tested against the concrete reality of the small-scale life they claim to explain."⁵

Along with the spatial limitation and analytical depth tied to microhistory and ethnographic history, it is important to analyze the ways in which a neighborhood related to the areas around it.⁶ The development and interaction between African American and white neighborhoods around Fairfax Seminary is central to understanding the Fort community. In the 1870s, the founding members of the Fort community established themselves on land peripheral to the more developed properties around Fairfax Seminary. This enabled these African Americans not only to purchase lots and build homes, but also to pass their properties to later generations for almost a century. The physical proximity between African American and white households also meant they were usually well acquainted with each other, especially in the workplace. From the inner workings of white homes to large-scale construction projects on the grounds of Fairfax Seminary, local

⁴ Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni, "The Name and the Game: Unequal Exchange and the Historiographic Marketplace," in *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe*, ed. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, trans. Eren Branch (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 1-9; Gordon S. Wood, *The Purpose of the Past: Reflections on the Uses of History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 119-132.

⁵ Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1997), 109.

⁶ For further discussions of the organization of space and power relations, see Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Reprint; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 91-110; Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

African Americans and whites were brought together in what can be seen as reciprocal—although hierarchical—relationships.

Fairfax Seminary, however, was not always central in the lives of local residents, and many other white and black centers of power superseded it. Alexandria, which was three miles to the east of Fairfax Seminary, was the region's commercial center and included a large number of black and white businesses, which Fort residents frequented. The Seminary area was also twelve miles from the Fairfax County seat, which administered local access to social services, such as public education, and political and legal life through the collection of taxes, control of voter registration rolls, and the courts. Finally, across the Potomac River was Washington, D.C., the political center of the nation. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Washington, D.C. attracted both blacks and whites interested in federal employment and political activism. A vibrant African American community also existed there, with numerous educational, economic, and social opportunities that many residents of the Fort embraced.

While African Americans at the Fort worked interdependently with local whites and traveled to places such as Washington, D.C., Alexandria, and the City of Fairfax, they also created their own centers of power to serve their distinct needs. By the late nineteenth century, African Americans at the Fort had established various institutions to bring people together and to provide communal and personal sustenance. Many of these institutions lasted for several generations (and two continue today—Oakland Baptist Church and Meade Memorial Episcopal Church). The Fort and other African American neighborhoods in the area also relied on each other. Green Valley (also known as Nauck) was located a mile or two to the northeast of the Fort in Arlington County near present-day Shirlington.

It was established in 1887 with the closing of Freedmen's Village, a community created by the federal government during the Civil War to accommodate African American refugees on the grounds of the Robert E. Lee estate (now Arlington National Cemetery).

Macedonia/Seminary, which was established in a similar manner as the Fort, was located farther east along King Street, Braddock Road, and Quaker Lane near present-day T. C. Williams High School. Nearby, a small community of African Americans lived along Howard Street. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, residents of the Fort went to school, worked, and attended church and other social functions with their African American neighbors around the Seminary and in nearby Green Valley.

While connections between neighborhoods brought people together, the caustic forces of Jim Crow segregation circumscribed the lives of people living at the Fort. In fact, the years in which the Fort community existed directly correlated with the rise of segregation after the Civil War and its formal collapse during the 1950s and 1960s. Marriage, job opportunities, schooling, transportation, and voting—among other things—were limited because of the racial attitudes pervading both the public and private spheres. Nevertheless, segregation was not always uniform. Over time, new Jim Crow laws were passed, and popular attitudes shifted. Even the practice of Jim Crow varied greatly within the region, particularly in comparison to Washington, D.C. or Virginia's Southside.⁷

⁷ There are many histories of the rise and fall of segregation in the American South. The following list contains only a handful of them. Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage, 1999); C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Vintage, 1999); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

Gender, as argued by Joan Scott, will also be a key part of this analysis, especially the ways in which it intersects with the social and cultural constructions of race.⁸ The roles of men and women cannot be understood without attention to their historic context, including the gender conventions of the time. Several women who lived at the Fort went beyond gender and racial norms through their control of land, pursuit of education, and leadership in local churches.⁹ So too, the lives of many men who lived at the Fort defied stereotypes created to control blacks and limit their economic autonomy and political activism. By using a variety of archival materials, archaeological findings, and oral histories, historians can access the world in which these men and women lived and analyze the complexity of their social relationships on their own terms.



The purpose of this history is to contextualize and document the African American residents of the Fort from the end of the American Civil War through the 1960s. The first chapter looks at the origins of the community and the two forces that brought former slaves and possibly free blacks to the area—jobs and land. The second chapter explores the institutions these men and women founded and the influence these churches, schools, and stores had on their lives. The last chapter looks at the establishment of Fort Ward Historic Park and Museum and its impact on the Fort’s last residents. Finally, the conclusion briefly discusses the renewed interest in the Fort’s history since the 1990s and acts of remembrance among its descendants and the City of Alexandria.

⁸ Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review* 91.5 (Dec. 1986): 1053-1075.

⁹ bell hooks, *Ain’t I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1999).

In the end, it is hoped this history fills some of the gaps surrounding what is known about the Fort community and brings the lives of those who lived there into a broader conversation about our past. This document also creates a narrative and timeline for interpreting history at the Park on which descendants and other members of the public can comment, and provide counterpoint and personal perspective.

Chapter 1: The Fort Community: Family, Land, and Work

After the Civil War, two major factors contributed to the decision among newly freed African Americans to reside on the remains of Fort Ward: access to land and jobs. Families and extended kin came together on this large parcel of land to start their lives as free men and women when the Union Army finally closed Fort Ward in fall 1865. Much of this land was later available for sale, which some were able to purchase. White owners of local farms, mills, and large estates in eastern Fairfax County also needed unskilled and semi-skilled laborers as they had prior to the war. Once again, they turned to African Americans—although no longer enslaved—to fulfill their needs. Fairfax Seminary and Episcopal High School, which reopened a few months after the end of the Civil War, also required a large pool of laborers to rebuild facilities and later expand their campuses.

The newly created Fort neighborhood saw both consistency and change in its population over the next few generations, not unlike other African American neighborhoods in the American South. A few were able to purchase land and pass it down through the generations. These families also invested in local schools, churches, and organizations to support the spiritual, cultural, and educational needs of the community. By the twentieth century, some African Americans continued to own land at the Fort although they had moved elsewhere. Despite opportunities in other places, these men and women were still connected to the Fort and the struggle for freedom that it represented for their families.

Not all residents, however, were able to remain tied to the Fort. Like many African Americans, they too were looking to move out of domestic, agricultural, and construction work with its low pay, grueling hours, and physical toll on the body. New jobs, especially

with the federal government during World Wars I and II, drew some residents of the Fort to Washington, D.C. where they hoped to find further economic security. The effects of Jim Crow segregation also drove some residents further north to Pennsylvania and New York in what historians have called the Great Migration.¹⁰

This chapter includes information on the ownership and use of the land prior to the construction of the fortification and explores in depth the origins of the Fort community before, during, and after the Civil War.¹¹ It will also look at the dynamics that influenced these men's and women's decision to stay in eastern Fairfax County: jobs, land, and family. Although job opportunities were greatly limited in variety, they supplied enough wages for some families to find economic stability and social standing. The ability to purchase land and build homes was also central to the settlement and continuance of African American neighborhoods in eastern Fairfax County in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The forces of migration will also be addressed, including suburbanization and job opportunities in the federal government and northern cities.

Pre-Civil War Land Ownership and Use¹²

With English settlement, the land that was to become the Fort community would have been part of the Northern Neck Proprietary, originally granted by King Charles II to seven of his supporters in 1649, the year of his exile after the execution of his father. As originally designated, the proprietary encompassed all of the geographical area between

¹⁰ Ronald Takaki, *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America during World War II* (New York: Little, Brown, and Co., 2000), 22-57; John Jeffries, *Wartime America: The World War II Home Front* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998), 107-117.

¹¹ There is some evidence for limited Native American occupation of the Fort Ward landscape in the centuries prior to colonial settlement. This aspect of the history of Fort Ward Park will be addressed in a forthcoming report on the archaeology on the property.

¹² Section reprinted from *Inventory of Cultural Resources, City of Alexandria, Alexandria Archaeology, Alexandria, VA*, draft, in process, written by Matthew Palus.

the Rappahannock and Potomac from the Chesapeake Bay to the headwaters of the rivers. Rights to this property remained complicated even after the restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660. However, by 1681, Thomas, Lord Culpeper, had acquired all rights to the land, confirmed in 1688 by patent. With the death of Lord Culpeper in 1689, the proprietary passed to his daughter, Catherine, who married Thomas, fifth Lord Fairfax. It remained in the Fairfax family for another ninety years.¹³

Fort Ward Park is situated on lands that were conveyed to Henry Awbrey by a land grant in 1729 from the proprietor Thomas, sixth Lord Fairfax, the son of Catherine and Thomas.¹⁴ Awbrey's original grant consisted of 1,261 acres of land bounded on the north by Four Mile Run. This tributary of the Potomac River connected a series of plantations in the Northern Neck that depended upon the waterway for trade and provisions. Beth Mitchell writes that Four Mile Run was so named because of this distance between it and Great Hunting Creek further south.¹⁵

The entire 1,261 acres of Henry Awbrey's grant was conveyed to William Ramsay in 1749 through a lease and release instrument.¹⁶ Ramsay received a lease to the land for one year in exchange for five shillings and "one ear of Indian corn;" later that year, the land grant was conveyed to him through a release, in exchange for 12,000 pounds of tobacco and £20. In 1768, a more formal deed was entered in the Fairfax County deed books, again with Awbrey as grantor and Ramsay as grantee.

¹³ Beth Mitchell, *Beginning at a White Oak: Patents and Northern Neck Grants of Fairfax County, Virginia* (Fairfax, VA: Fairfax County Administrative Services, 1977) 1.

¹⁴ Mitchell, 116-117.

¹⁵ Mitchell, 8.

¹⁶ Fairfax County Land Records, C-1:16-19; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

William Ramsay, born in Galway, Scotland in 1716, was a key participant in the founding of Alexandria. Around 1740, Ramsay along with John Carlyle and John Pagan established a warehouse on Hunting Creek, naming the settlement “Belhaven” after the John Hamilton (1656-1708), the second Baron Belhaven. Like many Scottish merchants, he was part of the tobacco trade, sending tobacco to Glasgow and then receiving finished goods from Europe and slaves from Africa.¹⁷ In 1748, local merchants and businessmen, including Ramsay, successfully petitioned the Virginia General Assembly to establish the town. Alexandria was incorporated in the same year that Awbrey’s land grant was released to Ramsay. William Ramsay was Alexandria’s first and only Lord Mayor, and his family was influential in the political and economic affairs of the city.

In 1784, a year before Ramsay and his wife, Ann, (née McCarty) both died, he made arrangements for numerous parcels of land in Alexandria to be deeded to his six children, or rented out for their financial support. Days before he died in February 1785, Ramsay granted power of attorney to his two sons, Dennis and William Jr., who were both successful Alexandria merchants. Ramsay’s executors sold the large property in Fairfax County, referred to in several late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century deeds as “Ramsay’s Old Field.”

In 1797, the land was deeded to Robert Allison, who was Ramsay’s son-in-law and married to his daughter, Ann.¹⁸ The property acquired by Allison contained 1,169 acres. In the metes and bounds for the land conveyed to Allison, there is a reference to “the road on

¹⁷ Preisser notes that Ramsay brought at least one shipload of slaves to Alexandria in 1751. Thomas M. Preisser, *Eighteenth-Century Alexandria, Virginia Before the Revolution, 1749-1776*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, College of William and Mary, 1977), 93.

¹⁸ Fairfax County Land Records, O-1:425; P-1:9; P-1:10; P-1:12; P-1:256; P-1:348; P-1:380; Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

the height above Ramsey's [sic] quarter," which probably indicates that William Ramsay housed enslaved workers at his farm on Four Mile Run.¹⁹ Beth Mitchell's interpretive map of Fairfax County in 1760 also indicates thirteen enslaved Africans working at William Ramsay's property on Four Mile Run.²⁰ Ramsay's 1785 will, however, mentioned only seven slaves.²¹ Dated January 7, 1785, the will details his wishes in regards to the disposition of his slaves. The will names seven slaves and distributes them between Ramsay's wife, son, daughter, and granddaughter, among other details:

Item. I give and devise my Negroes – Peter the Carpenter and Moll unto my wife Ann Ramsay for and during her natural life, and should they survive my wife, it is my will and desire that they do go to such of my children as they themselves may choose to live with, and it is my wish and desire that they may be better cloathed both in the winter and summer than is common for slaves, and that they be particularly taken god care of as a reward for their long and faithful services.

Item. I give and devise my Negro Boy David unto my son William, his heirs and assigns.

Item. I give and devise my Negro Cynthia the daughter of Moll who has lived with my daughter Ann a long time and is used to her Children to my Granddaughter Catherine Craig Allison, her Heirs and assigns to be delivered to her together with the increase of the said Cynthia on her Marriage or her attaining full age which ever shall first happen unless my Wife shall choose to keep the said Negro Girl until my said Granddaughter shall marry or come of age, and I hope that my children will not consider this as a partial gift, as their mother has it in her power to make them all Gifts of the same kind and of equal value.

Item. I give and devise my other Negroes, Caesar, Peter the Younger & Winny to my wife during life or to be disposed of in such other manner as she & my other Executors may think proper.

¹⁹ Fairfax County Land Records, Z-1:318-322; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

²⁰ Mitchell, 64.

²¹ Fairfax County Will Book E-1:69-73; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

This group of slaves may include one married couple, Peter the Carpenter and Moll, who were to remain together in the household of Ann Ramsay, and go together to whichever of Ramsay's children they wish should they outlive Ann; they almost surely did, as Ann Ramsay died within two months of the passing of her husband. The enslaved Moll was also potentially separated from her daughter Cynthia, who was willed to Ramsay's granddaughter, Catherine Craig Allison, the daughter of Robert Allison, Ramsay's son-in-law who, as noted earlier, acquired title to Ramsay's farm outside of Alexandria. At that time, Catherine Allison was not yet married, and it is likely that she and Cynthia were near to the same age. Ramsay's will indicates that Cynthia was "used to her [daughter Ann's] Children," suggesting a close relationship between the enslaved child, Cynthia, and Ramsay's granddaughter.

The disposition of these enslaved people following the deaths of Ramsay and his wife is not known. Moll's daughter, Cynthia, seems to have been living in Alexandria with Robert Allison's household at the time Ramsay's will was recorded. The other enslaved Africans mentioned in the will may also have been located in Alexandria, or they could have been divided between Alexandria and Ramsay's farm in Fairfax County. The mention of a quarter in "Ramsay's Old Field" in the deed transferring that land to Allison is tantalizing. The description, however, seems to describe the slave quarter on Ramsay's farm at a lower elevation than the heights, whereas Fort Ward Park itself occupies one of the highest elevated landforms in the area. Thus, it seems likely that the slave quarter on Ramsay's farm was situated outside of the current boundary of Fort Ward Historical Park.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Robert Allison subdivided the 1,169-acre parcel sold to him by Ramsay's executors (Table 1). The plat showing this subdivision was

recorded in a book that is missing from the Fairfax County land records, and it is not known how many lots the subdivision contained. Between 1835 and 1846, a portion of the land subdivided by Allison was reassembled through a series of purchases made by Isaac George, probably a land speculator who resided in Prince George's County, Maryland. Through purchases documented in five deeds, George assembled a single parcel measuring just less than 86 acres in area.

Table 1: Sale of Land that Became Fort Ward, 1700s – Early 1800s

Grantor	Grantee	Date	Book	Page	Price	Acreage
Original land grant from the proprietor Thomas Lord Fairfax to Henry Awbrey		February 17, 1729	NN C	30	-	1261 ac.
Henry Awbrey, Francis Awbrey, & Thomas Awbrey, Fairfax, VA	William Ramsay, County and Colony Aforesaid, Merchant	March 8, 1749	C-1	16-17	S5 sterling and "one ear of Indian corn"	1261 ac.
Henry Awbrey, Francis Awbrey, and Thomas Awbrey, Fairfax Co., VA	William Ramsay, same, Merchant	March 9, 1749	C-1	17-19	12,000 lbs Tobacco and L20	1261 ac.
Henry Awbrey of Fairfax Co., VA	William Ramsay, Alexandria, VA, Merchant	March 21, 1768	H-1	4	L25	"upwards of 1200" ac.
Dennis Ramsay, Michael Madden, surviving acting executors of the last will and testament	Robert Allison of Alexandria	February 25, 1797	Z-1	318-322	L360	1169 ac.

Grantor	Grantee	Date	Book	Page	Price	Acreage
of William Ramsay the elder late of the town of Alexandria						
May 25, 1848 deed from George to Hooff references 5 deeds for metes and bounds on land sold via this instrument – these five parcels trace back to subdivision of Ramsay’s Old Fields by Robert Allison: 1. From Thomas Vowell, C-3:207 (16 Oct. 1835) 31ac. + 50 poles (less therefrom 47 poles sold and conveyed by the present grantor [Isaac George] to William F. Alexander) 2. From Jno. C. Vowell & Mary J. (?) Vowell, E-3:114 (18 Jan. 1839) 18 ac., 2 rods (roods?), 50 poles 3. From William F. Alexander & Anna Maria, his wife, F-3:107 (1 May 1839) 5 ac., 3 rods (roods), 38 poles 4. From Samuel A. Smith & Ophelia A. Smith, his wife, G-3:111 (20 Sept. 1841) 19 ac. even. 5. From William A. Pendleton, K-3:368 (19 June 1846) 11 ac., 16 perches TOTAL 86 ac., 34 perches, less 47 poles to William A. Alexander.						
Isaac George	Philip H. Hooff	May 25, 1848	M-3	355-357	\$3,000	86 ac., 34 perches less 47 poles to Wm. A. Alexander

Each parcel acquired by Isaac George has its own history of use. One of the five parcels, identified in the land records as Lot 28 on Allison’s plat, contained eleven acres and sixteen perches. Allison sold this land to Eliza Magruder in 1799.²² Fairfax County Circuit Court then ordered the same land to be sold, which Isaac George acquired in 1846 for \$120. Other parcels ranged in size from approximately 5 to 31 acres. These 86 acres of land were conveyed to Philip H. Hooff for the sale price of \$3,000 in May 1848 (see Table 1). This land remained in Hooff’s possession until after the Civil War and included the Fort Ward Park property. Activities on these large tracts of land throughout the eighteenth century would have been tied to the plantation economy of the colonial period. Planting tobacco or

²² Fairfax County Land Records, B-2:319; Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

large fields of grain on the coarse gravelly soils of the uplands within the Fort Ward property would have proved difficult. So, it is not a surprise that the slave quarters for the Ramsay farm were likely below “the height,” at the lower elevations where agriculture was more feasible. Given the soil conditions, it is possible that Fort Ward remained a wooded upland area or perhaps pastureland throughout much of this period.

Origins of The Fort Community

Philip H. Hooff acquired the land in 1848, retaining it for over thirty years. The Hooffs were a prominent Alexandrian family, owning a large tract of land to the west of the



Figure 1. Photo of Philip H. Hooff, ca. 1870's. Courtesy of Ronald L. and Barbara M. Hooff.

city. By 1802, Philip's father, Lawrence Hooff, owned 280 acres in Fairfax County near present day Hooffs Run.²³ By the 1850s, Philip H. Hooff was a merchant and advertised foodstuffs such as flour, grain, and other groceries for sale in the *Alexandria Gazette*.²⁴ He never developed or lived on what would become the Fort, but stayed in Alexandria (Figure 1).²⁵

Although the role of slavery was in flux during the antebellum period, many white families, including the Hooffs, depended on slave labor in their homes,

²³ *Final Documentary Study of Lots 1604-1614 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia* (Alexandria, VA: Greenhorn & O'Mara, Inc., 2007), 18; Kurt P. Schweigert, *West End Village/Carlyle Project, approximately 1500-2400 Blocks of Duke Street*, (Alexandria, VA: Norfolk Southern Corporation, 1998).

²⁴ Advertisement—P.H. Hooff Adv. Grocery Merchant, *Alexandria Gazette* July 31, 1854, 1.

²⁵ His nephew, Charles R. Hooff, lived on his own land near Fairfax Seminary and was active in its operations. A prominent banker, he would eventually become the president of the First Bank of Alexandria. Advertisement—Bank Statements, *Alexandria Gazette* October 8, 1888, 3; Constitution and Minutes of the Ladies Missionary Society, 1888-1895; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

businesses, and farms.²⁶ In 1860, Phillip H. Hooff owned six slaves, three females and three males. They are listed in the Slave Schedule for Alexandria and probably worked either in his home on Prince Street or in his mercantile business.²⁷ Unfortunately, none of the names of these men and women were recorded. Census enumerators, with few exceptions, only listed the name of owners in the 1850 and 1860 Slave Schedules. The 1860 U.S. Federal Agricultural Census also does not appear to list Hooff's property near Fairfax Seminary as producing any crops or animals, which would have possibly used slave labor.²⁸ The Hooffs were not the only prominent family to own land bordering Fairfax Seminary who owned slaves. Cassius Lee, a cousin of Robert E. Lee, maintained a large estate known as Menokin on the Seminary's north side adjacent to land that would become Fort Ward. Five enslaved Africans are recorded under Lee's name in 1860; his property also had one slave dwelling. Of these men and women, only two appeared to be owned by Lee, with the other three demarcated as "E," meaning they were hired out from someone else. Hiring out was a common way of retaining enslaved people even though owners did not need their labor.²⁹

²⁶ Many smalltime farmers were selling their slaves because of decreasing crop yields and competition from western farmers. Because of these changes, Alexandria became a hub of slave trading by the antebellum period. The region's Quakers were also active in manumitting slaves and helping them migrate north. Michael A. Ridgeway, *A Peculiar Business: Slave Trading in Alexandria, Virginia, 1825-1861* (MA Thesis: Georgetown University, 1976); A. Glenn Crothers, "Quaker Merchants and Slavery in Early National Alexandria, Virginia: The Ordeal of William Hartshorne," *Journal of the Early Republic* 25 (Spring 2005): 47-77; A. Glenn Crothers, *Quakers Living in the Lion's Mouth: The Society of Friends in Northern Virginia* (Gainesville: University of Press of Florida, 2012).

²⁷ 1860 Federal Schedule of Slave Inhabitants, Alexandria, VA, 9; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 22 2012).

²⁸ Many parts of this census are illegible, and it is possible that Hooff was listed on one of these pages. 1860 Selected U.S. Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880, Fairfax County, VA, 1-14; www.ancestry.com (accessed December 18, 2012).

²⁹ 1860 Federal Schedule of Slave Inhabitants, Fairfax County, VA, 28; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 22 2012).

There was also one free black family who lived close by—William and Julia Jackson. Whether they are related to the future Jacksons who settled at the Fort, is unknown. By 1870, William and Julia Jackson had either left the area or did not survive the war. What is curious about the listing of the Jacksons is that the census taker placed William, who was reportedly only twelve years old, in the head of household position on the list. Julia is listed as thirty-five years old, and is presumably his mother or perhaps a sibling or cousin. If

During its first thirty-four years of existence prior to the Civil War, Fairfax Seminary (established in 1823 in Alexandria and relocated to Eastern Fairfax County in 1827) and Episcopal High School (1839) also relied on slave labor. A theological seminary to train future Episcopalian priests combined with a private, all-male high school, the Seminary and High School needed a large support staff to maintain its grounds and buildings and to cook and clean for its students and faculty. The Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, which managed these institutions, did not officially support slavery, but many of its members, including its ministers, were slave owners. Reverend Joseph M. Constant in his *African American history of the Virginia Theological Seminary* notes that the Seminary frequently hired slaves to work on the grounds.³⁰

Phillip Brooks, a student from Massachusetts who attended the Seminary in the 1850s, wrote to his family not only about the large number of slaves on the campus, but also about threats received by students who had expressed interest in proselytizing among them.³¹ In a letter to his father dated December 18, 1858, Brooks wrote:

One Northern student who has held a meeting once a week for the servants of the seminary and the neighbors, has received notice that it must be given up, or he will have to suffer.... Another, who has preached some in the neighborhood, has been informed that there was tar and feathers ready for him if went far from the seminary. And in general they have been given to understand that their tongues were tied and they were anything but free. A pretty style of life, isn't it?³²

he was older, then he might possibly be her spouse. 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Fairfax County, VA, 136; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 22 2012).

³⁰ Joseph M. Constant, *No Turning Back: The Black Presence at Virginia Theological Seminary* (Brainerd, MN: Evergreen Press, 2009), 17-19.

³¹ Alexander B. G. Allen (ed.), *Life and Letters of Phillips Brooks*, vol. 1 (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1941), 149-158.

³² *Ibid.*, 158.

Five faculty members (William Wilmer, Oliver Norris, Edward R. Lippitt, Joseph Packard, and William Sparrow) were found in local records to have owned slaves, with two (Wilmer and Lippitt) choosing to manumit theirs in 1827 and 1846 respectively.³³

In her diary, another Seminary resident mentioned slaves in her household on the eve of the Civil War. On May 25, 1861, Judith McGuire, a wife of a faculty member, described the appearance of a “servant” (presumably a slave) named Henry who told her of the Union occupation of Alexandria. She then gave the keys to her home to the cook—who was probably also a slave—and fled South with her family.³⁴

There is plenty of Civil War documentation on the general migration of African



Figure 2. Cumberland Landing, Virginia Group of “contrabands” at Foller’s house, 1862. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

Americans to Alexandria and eastern Fairfax County and their experiences there (Figure 2). By the beginning months of the war, African Americans were fleeing to the Union line located in

³³ Another faculty member, Reul Keith, might have owned slaves, but Constant was unsure based on his research. Constant, 19.

³⁴ Judith W. McGuire, *Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War, By a Lady of Virginia* E-Book, EBSCO-Host, (1867, Reprint; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 19.

Alexandria and, a few months later, eastern portions of Fairfax County. Alexandria, which was occupied by Union forces starting on May 24, 1861, remained a Union stronghold for the entire war and a safe haven for former slaves. Many documents describe large numbers of former slaves living in Alexandria who had fled from the countryside. In a letter to the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, Dr. John R. Bigelow wrote about the daily arrivals of newly freed people to Alexandria, noting that forty-one people had arrived on the previous day and that 300 people had streamed into the city in the last week or two. He ended his letter describing his feelings towards these refugees: "[a]nd now here comes one hundred and fifty more of these suffering ones this very night and places are all full and our hearts too, but we will do all we can and hope on."³⁵ A medical doctor from New York City, Bigelow was originally commissioned to the 83rd New York Infantry (9th New York State Militia). By 1863, he was working in Alexandria, overseeing the medical treatment of African American refugees.³⁶

Living conditions in Alexandria were hard, with men, women, and children finding shelter in abandoned buildings or constructing homes out of whatever they could find. To meet the needs of the growing number of refugees, churches, schools, and a hospital were established. The federal government supplied rations, although they were neither consistent nor substantial. Many former slaves took odd jobs or worked for the federal government, which was sometimes delinquent in paying wages to both black and white

³⁵ J. R. Bigelow, Alexandria, VA, to A. F. I. Commission, May 8, 1863; James Morrison MacKaye Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

³⁶ "African-American Civilians and Soldiers Treated at Claremont Smallpox Hospital, Fairfax County, Virginia, 1862-1865," 10; <http://www.freedmenscemetery.org/resources/documents/claremont.pdf> (accessed April 15, 2013).

workers.³⁷ By the beginning of 1863, African Americans in Virginia were signing up for service in the Union army and navy. Many of these men trained at Camp Greene on Mason's Island (also known as Analostan Island and today called Roosevelt Island) or Camp Casey along the Georgetown and Alexandria Road near Robert E. Lee's estate in present-day Arlington, Virginia.³⁸ For example, James Montgomery Peters, who was born in



Figure 3. John Montgomery Peters. Date unknown. Courtesy of Adrienne T. Washington.

Loudoun County, Virginia, joined the 1st U.S. Colored Infantry (Company E) in 1863 at Mason's Island (Figure 3). His son, John H. Peters, eventually became a landowner and a farmer at the Fort.³⁹

The construction of the Defenses of Washington after the Union's loss at Bull Run in July 1861 helped to push the boundary between the Union and Confederacy into eastern Fairfax County. Fort Ward, which would be the future site of the Fort neighborhood, began in the fall of 1861 and was

³⁷ There are many primary sources that describe Alexandria during the Civil War. For eyewitness reports on the conditions in Alexandria and Washington, D.C., see D. B. Nichols, Camp Springdale, VA, to Commissioners of Inquiry for the Freedmen, September 8, 1863; Testimony of J. R. Bigelow, Alexandria, VA, May 4, 1863; James N. Glencester, Brooklyn, N.Y., to Robert Dale Owens, James MacKaye, and Dr. Howe of the Freedmen's Inquiry Committee, July 1863; United States American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Records, 1862-1864, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

³⁸ There are numerous books on the USCT. Here are a few of them: Dudley Taylor Cornish, *The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1867* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1987); Hondon B. Hargrove, *Black Union Soldiers in the Civil War* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1988); John David Smith, ed., *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Kent Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom: Black Soldiers During the Civil War* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2002).

³⁹ Based on his military records, he was also free by April 1861 and was working as a farmer during the early years of the war. He left military service in September 1865 at Roanoke Island, North Carolina. James Montgomery Peters, U.S. Colored Troops Military Service Records, 1861-1865, www.ancestry.com (accessed April 15, 2013).

constructed by New York troops and members of Newton's Brigade (Figure 4). John Gross Barnard in his *Report on the Defenses of Washington* described the land as empty of human habitation and cultivation.

The work was commenced (about September 1) simultaneously with the appearance of the rebel forces on Munson's hill, and it [Fort Ward] was thrown up very hastily. A part only of the site was clear; the right half of it and the slopes to the front, to the right towards Leesburg road [now known as King Street] and, to the rear, were covered with a second growth of young trees and bushes. The portion on the cleared ground was paced off and commenced while the clearing of the rest of the site and its surroundings was going on....⁴⁰

Other forts were located nearby, including Forts Williams, Worth, Garesche, and Reynolds, all of which were the last line of defense to keep the Confederacy out of Washington, D.C. Following the flight of its students and faculty, Fairfax Seminary also became a U.S. military hospital within the first few months of the war (Figure 5).⁴¹

Government correspondence and memoirs speak to African Americans living and working in and around the forts and hospital. Jobs for these former slaves ranged from cooking and doing laundry to nursing the sick and grave digging. By June 1862, there were twenty-six men, six women, and ten children living at Fairfax Seminary who were

⁴⁰ John Gross Barnard, *A Report on the Defenses of Washington: To the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1871), 38.

⁴¹ United States Department of Interior, *A Historic Resources Study: The Civil War Defenses of Washington, Part 1* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2006), 8-10; Benjamin Franklin Cooling, *Symbol, Sword, and Shield: Defending Washington during the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Archon Books, 1975), 66-72, 175.



Figure 4. Barracks of 1st Battalion Company C E L 1st CT Heavy Artillery at Fort Ward, ca. 1863. Courtesy of National Archives.

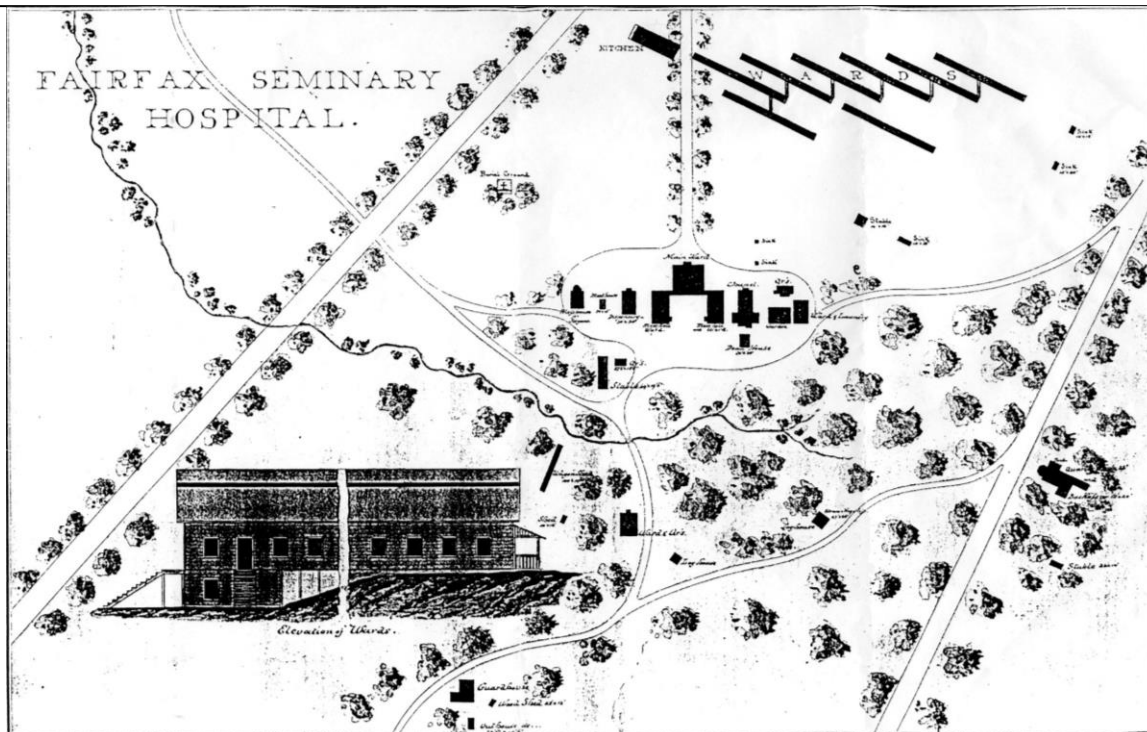


Figure 5. Fairfax Seminary Hospital, ca. 1860s. Courtesy of Special Collections, Alexandria Public Library.

described as “contraband,” a term created at the beginning of the war to justify the taking of property that could be used in aiding the Confederate cause, including slaves.⁴² With the enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, the term “freedmen” appears more frequently in government correspondence.

Even with thirty-two men and women assisting at Fairfax Seminary hospital, doctors needed more people to help with the large number of soldiers in their care. In an anonymous letter written on June 18, 1862:

I have the honor to report there not being sufficient number of ‘Contrabands’ here to comply with Genl. Wadsworth’s Telegram of the 16th inst[.] to send thirty to Fairfax Seminary, in accordance with instructions from you, I yesterday visited the camp of the 2nd NY artillery for the purpose of obtaining some, it having been reported to these Hd Qrs. what their work a number near then (them?) anxious to obtain work, all that could be found had employment on the Rail Roads

To day I visited the Hospital and discovered that twelve (12) had arrived Ten had been sent to day from here. – The assistant surgeon states that the twenty, now (22) would be sufficient for present purposes.

P.S. Since writing the above I have received a letter from Surgeon Armstrong Making requisition for 20 more which I have not the means of filling.⁴³

Almost a year later in May 1863, Dr. John R. Bigelow, who, as noted earlier, was a Union army surgeon who provided medical care to African Americans, wrote to one of his supervisors that there were twenty-four freedmen and women at the Seminary who had not been paid.⁴⁴ The names of these workers are not known.

Another letter describes the emergence of an African American community somewhere near Fairfax Seminary, but the exact location of this settlement is unknown. In

⁴² Anonymous letters, June 13, 1862; Memorandum of Events as They Transpired; RG 393, Entry 6760, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴³ Anonymous letters, June 13, 1862 and June 18, 1862; Memorandum of Events as They Transpired; RG 393, Entry 6760, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁴ J. R. Bigelow, Alexandria, VA, to A. F. I. Commission, May 8, 1863; James Morrison MacKaye Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

fall 1864, George R. Alvord, an officer in the Michigan First Cavalry Regiment, wrote extensively about a “colony of negroes” living near the hospital in response to another letter by Surgeon H. Allen criticizing their presence. Based on interviews with local whites, Alvord wrote that these men and women were:

...an industrious community and almost all the males are at work, one place or another, for the Govt. Some of them have little garden spots with vegetables yet in the ground and it would be, in my opinion, rather hard to eject them from the premises at present. They seem clean, orderly, and well disposed.⁴⁵

Alvord went on in his letter to note that African Americans also preferred not to work at Fairfax Seminary because of the low wages, much to the frustration of Allen and the hospital’s white staff. It is also possible they were not paid at all, as Bigelow noted in his letter mentioned earlier. Alvord writes: “Surg. Allen says he offered them work which they refused, probably because they could get better wages at Fort Ward and the block houses on the rail road which have been building all summer and wher [sp.] most of them say they are at work.”⁴⁶ It was around this time that Fort Ward was enlarged and reconfigured as part of an integrated system of defense “to establish crossfire on any enemy position.”⁴⁷ This work required numerous laborers, and it is possible that Alvord is referring to the fact that African Americans were needed on this project.

A letter written by a Union soldier, William S. Armstrong, to a friend from Fredericksburg, Ohio also documented a larger number of African American men hired to

⁴⁵ 1st Lt. George R. Alvord, to Capt. W. W. Winship, November 1, 1864; RG 393, Records of the Provost Marshal, ser. 1468, National Archives, Washington, D.C. as cited in *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867*, ed. Steven Hahn et al., vol. 1, series 3 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 352.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 353.

⁴⁷ Benjamin Franklin Cooling II and Walton H. Owen II, *Mr. Lincoln’s Forts: A Guide to the Civil War Defenses of Washington* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2010), 41-42.

work on Fort Ward in spring 1864. On May 27, 1864, he wrote: "Our fort occupies 48 guns and some very heavy ones[.] [I]t is not yet finished[.] [T]here is over one hundred Darkies working on it now[.] They say it will take six months to complete it[.]"⁴⁸ The 166th Regiment Ohio Volunteers, Company G, served on the Defenses of Washington as "Hundred Days Men," replacing the Heavy Artillery regiments that General Ulysses S. Grant used to replace casualties for the Overland Campaign. Fort Ward, simultaneous to its occupation by the 166th, was in the midst of major repairs and expansion. The fort had been hastily constructed in fall 1861; by 1864, the U.S. Corps of Engineers realized that it needed renovations. John Gross Barnard, in his *A Report on the Defense of Washington*, recalled the changes to Fort Ward that year:

The revised plan not only afforded a better command of the ravine in front, but the entire work was, by the new arrangement, thoroughly flanked. By this modification the perimeter was increased from 540 to 818 yards; the number of emplacements for guns from twenty-four to thirty-six. All of the interior structures of the old work were taken down and replaced by those represented in the plan; thus it will be seen that an entirely new work was made.⁴⁹

The hundred African Americans who worked on Fort Ward were probably organized at an Engineer Camp close to the Long Bridge and the Freedmen's Village on Robert E. Lee's

⁴⁸ William S. Armstrong, Fort Ward, to Daniel Casper, Fredericksburg, OH, May 27, 1864; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁹ John Gross Barnard, *A Report on the Defenses of Washington: To the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army* (1871), 38. See also United States Department of Interior, *A Historic Resources Study: The Civil War Defenses of Washington, Part 1* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2006).

Arlington House. African American work crews—usually of 100-150 men—worked under a white superintendent on various construction projects in northern Virginia.

The majority of the correspondence about Fort Ward was vague about the presence of African Americans. When work needed to be done in September 1862, an anonymous author noted that “400 men tomorrow at 8 A. M. [are] to report at Fort Ward where I will have some one to put them at work.”⁵⁰ By the end of the war, another writer spoke of the need for repairs at Fort Ward by “hired laborers” and “enlisted men.” This type of work was typically assigned to African Americans, but without racially specific language, these letters are ambiguous. Other letters mention former slaves working at other forts in northern Virginia, but with no specific locations listed.⁵¹ It is clear, however, that African Americans contributed to the war effort through their employment in construction and maintenance all along the Defenses of Washington.⁵²

Memoirs written after the Civil War also discuss the presence of African Americans around Fort Ward and Fairfax Seminary. Oliver Otis Howard, who later headed the Freedmen’s Bureau and is the namesake for Howard University in Washington, D.C., was stationed in a farmhouse three miles west of Alexandria after the Union’s defeat at Bull Run on July 21, 1861. In his memoir, Howard describes the conditions former slaves faced in the area and the moral quandary their presence created prior to the establishment of “contraband” by the federal government. He retold a story of a slave woman with a two-year-old son who came to his picket and asked for protection. Her owner, also a woman,

⁵⁰ Anonymous letter, September 19, 1862; Memorandum of Events as They Transpired, RG 393, Entry 6760, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁵¹ Anonymous letters, July 11, 1862 and July 18, 1862; Memorandum of Events as They Transpired, RG 393, Entry 6760, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁵² Chandra Manning, “Refugees from Slavery: Contrabands in Washington, D.C. and Northern Virginia” [Presentation], November 8, 2012, Alexandria Black History Museum, Alexandria, VA.

demanded that Howard not only return her property but also provide her with Union soldiers to force this woman and her son back into bondage. Howard refused, and the woman and child escaped to Washington, D.C.⁵³

Jane Stuart Woolsey, who worked as a nurse for the Union army, wrote a memoir about her experiences and described the presence of African Americans at Fairfax Seminary. She noted “the men being employed in policing and the women as laundresses, all receiving Government rations.”⁵⁴ Since they were not supplied with housing, they made their own:

The huts about us, first homes of the wandering sorrowful race, were strange patchwork; bits of shelter tents and blankets ends of plank, barrel staves, logs and mud, but most of them were neatly whitewashed and with the likeness of a little fenced garden behind, and near many and many, by the roadside, was a rough grave with a red-wood cross at its head. The huts and the gardens are gone, and the forlorn graves were trodden long ago into the fine, white dust of the Virginia highway.⁵⁵

Based on Woolsey’s account, it is possible that the Fort neighborhood was established on land that was once filled with these huts, gardens, and graves. Unfortunately, Woolsey gave no individual names, so we cannot connect these workers to the Fort’s first African American residents.

By the end of 1865, the federal government abandoned its use of Fort Ward and Fairfax Seminary. In September, the High School was reopened; the Seminary opened within the year. On November 30, 1865, the federal government auctioned “[t]wenty-one Frame and Log Buildings; also the Timber, Lumber, &c., inside the Fort, and Abattis around

⁵³ Howard also mentioned a male slave coming through his picket and asking for protection. Oliver Otis Howard, *Autobiography of Oliver Otis Howard, Major General, United States Army*, vol. 2 (New York: The Baker and Taylor Company, 1908), 165-166.

⁵⁴ Jane Stuart Woolsey, *Hospital Days: Reminiscence of a Civil War Nurse* (n.p.: Edinburgh Press, 1996), 55-56.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

the same” at Fort Ward.⁵⁶ The property was then returned to Philip H. Hooff, who was pro-Unionist at the beginning of the war and remained in Alexandria for its duration. Whether African Americans living in this area during the Civil War decided to remain is unknown. It is only through the 1870 U.S. Federal Census that one can clearly confirm the presence of African Americans in the Fort Ward area. Based on research conducted by volunteers working with Alexandria Archaeology, there were four surnames in the general vicinity of the Fort in the 1870 U.S. Census: Page, Shorts, Perkins (who was also a McKnight), and McKnight.⁵⁷ A decade later, the number of surnames increased to twenty: Bell, Shepherd, Dangerfield, Moore, Smith, Strange, Nelson, Corbin, Garner, Green, Butler, Miller, Terrell, Ellis, Adams, and Jenkins.⁵⁸ Two men, James Jackson (1848-1923) and Samuel Ashby (1860-ca. 1917), initially lived at Fairfax Seminary and eventually bought land at the Fort. Dick Daniels noted that Jackson, whom he believed was a former slave, began working at Episcopal High School by 1866.⁵⁹ These names do not appear on free black registers, and it is likely that these men and women were former slaves.

For some, we do have specific information about their status and location before and during the Civil War. The majority of the early residents seem to have migrated from Fauquier County, Virginia. Based on the death certificate for Willis (1825-1865) and Harriet (also spelled Harriett) (ca. 1825-1917) McKnight’s daughter, Maria (McKnight)

⁵⁶ Advertisement—Large Sale of Government Buildings, Lumber, Timber, &c., at Forts Around Washington, D.C., *Daily National Republican*, 29 November 1965, 3.

⁵⁷ There are many individuals who have been working on Fort Ward genealogies and deserve recognition. They are the following: Catherine Cartwright, Maddie McCoy, Elizabeth Drembus, Tom Fulton, Adrienne Terrell Washington, and Stephanie Gordon.

⁵⁸ 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church, Fairfax County, VA, 20 and 25; 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church, Fairfax County, VA, 13-15; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 21, 2012).

⁵⁹ White, 135.

Blackburn (1849-1925), she and her parents were born in Fauquier County, Virginia.⁶⁰ Burr (also spelled Burrell) Shorts (1837-1898), who was Harriet McKnight's second husband, was also from Fauquier County, migrating to the Fort area with his brother, Lewis (also spelled Louis) (1830-ca. 1892), by 1870.⁶¹ Based on vital records created after the Civil War, both James Jackson and Samuel Ashby were also born in Fauquier County.⁶²

Others might have been from Fairfax County. Frank Bell (1850-?) was born in Fairfax County in 1834 on a large plantation owned by James and Mary Fallon. He later married Lavenia Jackson (1853-?) from Fauquier County, who may be a sister of James Jackson. In 1860, he had been hired out to work for a merchant in Washington, D.C., but eventually came back to Fairfax County by the 1870s.⁶³ Little is known about the Adams family prior to the Civil War; however, by 1862, Annie Vowell (1842-1894), also known as Ann or Ann M., and George Adams (1825-?) gave birth to their daughter Sarah (1862-1879) in Fairfax County. Like many families coping with the disruptions caused by the Civil War, the Adamses moved frequently. By the war's end, they were living in Alexandria where their son, Robert (1866-1930), was born (Figure 6). Later, he would marry Clara Shorts

⁶⁰ Maria Blackburn, File No. 26690, Certificate of Death, VA, November 2, 1917. Fauquier County is also listed on Lavinia Miller's and Burney Terrell's death certificates. Burney Terrell File No. 15728, Certificate of Death, VA, July 4, 1930; Lavinia Miller File No. 23794, Certificate of Death, VA, October 15, 1920.

⁶¹ 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Scott Township, Fauquier County, VA, 51; 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church Township, Fairfax County, VA, 27; Fairfax County Virginia Marriage Licenses Index [CARS] as cited in Maddie McCoy, "Descendants of George Shorts," no date.

⁶² James F. Jackson, File No. 13800, Certificate of Death, VA, February 19, 1923; Marriage License of Samuel Ashby and Louise Jackson, July 26, 1883, Fairfax County, Virginia Marriage Licenses Index.

⁶³ "Frank Bell," *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves*, ed. Charles L. Perdue and Thomas E. Barden (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 23-28; Fairfax County Virginia Marriage Licenses Index [CARS] as cited in Maddy McCoy, "Descendants of Starlin Bell," no date.



Figure 6. Robert Adams, ca. 1900.
Courtesy of Joyce C. Sanchez.

(1866-1952).⁶⁴ The death certificate for Amanda Terrell (1822-1887), the second wife of Joseph Terrell, listed Fairfax County as her place of birth.⁶⁵ They had no children. Aside from these families, the whereabouts of the other early residents before the Civil War is uncertain.

Other residents came from elsewhere to the south and west of Fairfax County. John William Terrell (1853-1925), whose father, Joseph (1823-1904), was listed as living at the Fort in the 1880 census, was born in Orange County, Virginia.⁶⁶

Robert “Archie” Strange (1853-1920)—whose mother, Fanny (1840-1900), and brother, George (1865-ca.1905), lived at the Fort—was born in Clark County, Virginia.⁶⁷ Both John William Terrell and Robert “Archie” Strange would purchase land along King Street in the 1880s and 1890s.

Information gathered on former slaves and their children buried at the Freedmen’s Cemetery in Alexandria provide insight into where some of the original residents of the Fort were during and immediately after the Civil War. Several deaths were recorded occurring near Fort Williams and Fairfax Seminary of family members who were probably

⁶⁴ Elizabeth R. Frain, *Fairfax County, Virginia Death Register, 1853-1896* (Westminster, MD: Willow Bend Books, 2002); Fairfax County Virginia Marriage Licenses Index [CARS], as cited in Maddy McCoy, “Descendants of Ann M.,” no date; Robert W. Adams, File No. 25644, Certificate of Death, VA, November 20, 1930.

⁶⁵ Mandy Terrell, Certificate of Death, VA, June 20, 1887.

⁶⁶ John William Terrell, No. 10957, Certificate of Death, VA, May 25, 1925.

⁶⁷ Virginia, Select Marriages, 1785-1940; www.ancestry.com (accessed April 16, 2014).

related to the original settlers at the Fort.⁶⁸ In September 1864, one-year-old John Henry Shorts (1864-1865) died at Fort Williams, which was less than a mile to the south of Fairfax Seminary. This child could possibly be the son of Burr Shorts, who appeared in the 1870 U.S. Census as living at or near the Fort. Burr's brother, Lewis Shorts, also may have been the father.⁶⁹ Rachael Terrell (also spelled Terrill) (1837-1867) died at Mrs. Peyton's near Fairfax Seminary and was buried at the Freedmen's Cemetery in Alexandria. She was married to Philip Terrill (1818-1892), one of the heads of household listed in the 1880 U.S. Census at the Fort. Mrs. Peyton's might be the home of Jane E. Chichester, a local matriarch and widow who lived on her Falls Church farm with her extended family.⁷⁰ Philip Terrell's brother, Joseph Terrell (1823-ca.1904), was married to an Amanda (1830-1887) by the 1880 U.S. Federal Census, but he also might have been the husband of Mary Tirrell (?-1867) who died near Fairfax Seminary. Both brothers were living in the Falls Church District of Fairfax County in 1870, not too far from the Fort neighborhood.⁷¹

Birth and tax records immediately after the Civil War are also useful sources for tracking the movements of individuals. Clara (Shorts) Adams (1866-1952) and Warren Garner Jr. (1868-?), for example, were born in Fairfax County just after the Civil War.⁷² As

⁶⁸ Email correspondence from Pamela Cressey, City Archaeologist, April 15, 2010.

⁶⁹ 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church, Fairfax County, VA, 21 and 27; 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church, Fairfax County, VA, 15; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 21, 2012).

⁷⁰ Chichester's maiden name was Peyton. Email correspondence from Pamela Cressey, City Archaeologist, April 15, 2010; 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church, Fairfax County, VA, 10 and 27; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 21, 2012); Horace Edward Hayden, *Virginia Genealogies: A Genealogy of the Glassell Family of Scotland and Virginia* (Wilkes-Barre, PA: E. B. Yordy, 1885), 517; "Contrabands' and Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial: The People," <http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/recreation/freedmens/Names.pdf> (accessed April 15, 2013); Wesley E. Pippenger, *Alexandria, Virginia, Death Records: 1863-1896* (Berwyn Heights: MD: Heritage Books, 1995).

⁷¹ Email correspondence from Pamela Cressey, City Archaeologist, April 15, 2010; 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church, Fairfax County, VA, 27; 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church, Fairfax County, VA, 15; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 21, 2012).

⁷² Clara Adams, File No. 2466, Certificate of Death, VA, February 1, 1952; Robert Adams and Clara Shorts, Marriage License, Fairfax County, VA, December 30, 1885.

noted earlier, Robert Adams was born in Alexandria in 1866, but his sister Mary, born two years later, was born in Fairfax County. Whether they were living near or on the Fort, however, remains unknown.⁷³ Burr and Lewis Shorts were also paying personal property taxes in 1866 and 1867 in the northern section of Fairfax County, an area that covered a large swath of eastern Fairfax County from Columbia Pike to Little River Turnpike and included Fort Ward. According to the tax records, Burr Shorts owned two mules, two hogs, and a carriage; Lewis owned one mule, two hogs, and a carriage. George Adams (1825-?), who would become a resident of the Fort by the end of the nineteenth century, was also on Fairfax County's personal property tax list for 1866. No property was listed for Adams.⁷⁴

The former slaves who settled at and around the Fort were probably a mixture of refugees who lived in the area during the war and later migrants. The majority of these men and women came from other parts of Virginia, most notably the aforementioned Fauquier County. Those who came during the Civil War were part of the mass migration of African Americans searching for freedom behind Union lines. Others who arrived in the years afterward were part of the migration of African Americans out of rural areas and into southern cities in the decades following the war. The increased number of families at the Fort noted on the 1880 U.S. Census is evidence that migration to the area continued during the 1870s. As these newly freed people migrated, some chose to stay, planting family roots on the remains of Fort Ward and the surrounding area.

⁷³ Robert Adams and Clara Shorts, Marriage License, Fairfax County, VA, December 30, 1885; Maddy McCoy, Descendants of Ann M., no date.

⁷⁴ Fort Ward Personal Property Tax Lists, 1866 and 1867, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; Transcription by Elizabeth Drembus, Fort Ward History Working Group.

Land and Family

The land on which Fort Ward was built experienced a combination of constancy and change in occupancy after the Civil War. Returned to its previous owner, the land appears to have been treated as rental property, with the Hooff family permitting black families to live on their land by 1870 (if not sooner). Financial troubles, however, soon forced the Hooffs to auction off their property to pay debts. It was through this process that African American families at the Fort were able to purchase land. Over the next hundred years, not only was the land passed down through kinship networks, but also it became the final resting place for some local African Americans. For others, especially those who were unable or uninterested in buying land, their residency at the Fort was a brief respite before moving elsewhere. By the late 1920s, the area gradually transitioned into a suburb within the greater Washington metro area. New families, both black and white, moved into the community and made the Fort their home through the post-World War II era.

One of the many freedoms former slaves embraced after the Civil War was the ability to own land. As argued by Dylan Penningroth in *The Claims of Kinfolk*, African Americans throughout the nineteenth century had created a distinct system of property ownership recognized through kin and community. Slavery denied property ownership; however, slaves, through their ability to earn money and trade or purchase goods, had created their own understanding of what the ownership of things meant. With freedom, property ownership was formally recognized in the courts and law, reinforcing practices from earlier in the century.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Dylan Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 6.

Through custom, slaves had access to their masters' lands, many of whom permitted them to grow gardens, hunt, and fish to better feed themselves and their families. But slaves had little time—except on Sundays—to pursue these activities as they spent most days, from sun up to sun down, toiling for their masters. After the Civil War, some freed people signed contracts with their former owners to continue working for them and keep their homes and land. Others turned to the federal government in hopes of being able to acquire land improved by their unpaid labor, while another group of former slaves tried to obtain land that had been abandoned or confiscated during the war. All of these methods had limited success.⁷⁶

Besides the methods mentioned above, some African Americans were able to purchase land after the Civil War. Although historians note resistance among whites in selling land to former slaves, other scholars have found that white landowners (who had been negatively impacted by the Civil War as well as by several economic downturns in the 1870s) were willing to sell land to anyone, including former slaves.⁷⁷ In urban areas, the sale of land was even more common as it was seen as less socially and economically disruptive for local whites who had many more occupational options than rural farmers.⁷⁸ The majority of African Americans with money to purchase land often had other advantages prior to the Civil War. In Robert Kenzer's study of land ownership among African Americans in North Carolina, free blacks, especially mulattos, would later become

⁷⁶ Ibid., 144-145, 158; Foner, 158, 374-376.

⁷⁷ Robert C. Kenzer, *Kinship and Neighborhood in a Southern Community: Orange County, North Carolina, 1849-1881* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 104; Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 81-87.

⁷⁸ Robert C. Kenzer, *Enterprising Southerners: Black Economic Success in North Carolina, 1865-1915* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 24-27.

the largest group of African American landowners in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Many even owned land prior to the Civil War. Pamela Cressey's dissertation notes that Quakers also sold land to free blacks in Alexandria during the antebellum period.⁷⁹ Despite free blacks having the greatest advantage, land ownership increased among all African Americans throughout the late nineteenth century.⁸⁰

Immediately after the Civil War, former Union forts were popular places for freed people to build homes and reestablish their families. Most of this land, including Fort Ward, had been returned to its original owners, some of whom proceeded to sue the federal government for damage to their homes, outbuildings, and land.⁸¹ For African Americans in need of a place to live, the remnants of Union forts were an ideal place to find building materials and other supplies. George Alfred Townsend, a news reporter for the *New York World* and *New York Herald*, described hiking among unnamed Union forts in northern Virginia:

Needy negro squatters, living around the forts, have built themselves shanties of the officers' quarters, pulled out the abattis for firewood, made cord-wood or joists out of the log platforms for the guns, and sawed up the great flag-staffs into quilting poles or bedstead posts... Old boots, blankets, and canteens rot and rust around the glacis; the woods, cut down to give the guns sweep, are overgrown with shrubs and bushes.... Freedmen, who exist by selling old horse-shoes and iron spikes, live with their squatter families where, of old, the army sutler kept the canteen... Some old clothes, a good deal of dirt, and forgotten graves, make now the local features of the war.⁸²

⁷⁹ Pamela J. Cressey, *Alexandria Virginia City-Site: Archaeology in an African American Neighborhood, 1830-1910* (PhD dissertation, University of Iowa, 1985).

⁸⁰ Kenzer, *Enterprising Southerners*, 9-34.

⁸¹ Cooling, 234-236.

⁸² George Alfred Townsend, *Washington, Outside and Inside a Picture and a Narrative of the Origin, Growth, Excellences, Abuses, Beauties, and Personages of Our Governing City* (Hartford, CT: James Betts & Co., 1876), 640-641.

Although much of Fort Ward's building materials were sold at auction in fall 1865, Townsend's description speaks to the possible conditions founding families of the Fort might have faced.

Phillip H. Hooff, a prominent merchant in Alexandria, had owned the land on which Fort Ward was located since 1843 (Figure 7). Unlike many white Virginians, Hooff and most of his assets not only survived the war intact but also increased, even when taking inflation into account. Based on information collected in the 1860 and 1870 U.S. Censuses, the value of Hooff's real estate increased from \$50,000 to \$111,000. His personal property, which included merchandise along with slaves, had not seen similar gains, dropping from \$5,500 to \$500.⁸³ A reason for Hooff's favorable financial standing might be tied to his pro-Unionist stance and his decision to stay in Alexandria during the war, profiting from the influx of Union soldiers in need of goods.⁸⁴ In January 1861, he, along with several other white residents of Alexandria, signed a petition in support of Edgar Snowden to represent Alexandria at the Virginia Convention, the state's attempt to broker a compromise between the federal government and pro-secessionists.⁸⁵

With this failed compromise, many of the city's prominent families fled Alexandria to support the Confederate cause. One such family was the Hooe family, Daniel F. (Fitzhugh) and Mary. Hooe was a prominent merchant in Alexandria and, based on the 1860 census, owned \$5,500 in real estate and \$40,000 in personal property, which

⁸³ 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Alexandria, VA, 182; 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Alexandria, VA, 30; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 26, 2012).

⁸⁴ Whether Hooff continued to work as a merchant during the war is unclear. There are references, however, to him in the newspaper during this time that makes it clear that he had remained in Alexandria. "County Court," *Alexandria Gazette* October 13, 1863, 3.

⁸⁵ "Correspondence," *Alexandria Gazette* January 16, 1861, 1.

included both slaves and merchandise.⁸⁶ At some point between May 1861 (when Union troops occupied Alexandria) and October 1862, the Hooes' home on King Street was "taken possession of by military authorities."⁸⁷ By December of the following year, the U.S. Marshall decided to confiscate the Hooes' personal property and real estate in Alexandria under the Second Confiscation Act (1862) and, after a hearing in U.S. District Court, auctioned it off in June and October 1864.⁸⁸ The Second Confiscation Act, however, could only be applied to the lifetime of the owner and not his or her heirs, which could open up the possibility of a lawsuit by Hooe's wife and descendants once he died.⁸⁹ Daniel F. Hooe, did not live to see the end of the Civil War, dying at Edgemont in Albemarle County, Virginia on February 19, 1865.⁹⁰

From 1870 through 1875, Philip H. Hooff fended off numerous lawsuits—including from the Hooe family—in Alexandria's Corporation and Circuit Courts, presumably tied to his debts from business ventures. One lawsuit was worth over \$5,000.⁹¹ Based on the scale and duration of the court proceedings, *Hooe v. Hooff* (1871) appears to be a much larger issue than a business transaction gone wrong. It is speculation at this point, but perhaps the lawsuits instigated by Mary Hooe, Daniel F.'s wife, and later their estate (Mary died in 1872) can be tied to property losses during the Civil War. This, however, is

⁸⁶ 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Alexandria, VA, 108; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 26, 2012).

⁸⁷ "Local," *Alexandria Gazette* October 1, 1862, 2.

⁸⁸ [no title], *Alexandria Gazette*, December 21, 1863, 2; "U.S. District Court," *Alexandria Gazette* June 27, 1864, 2; "Confiscation Sales," *Alexandria Gazette*, June 28, 1864, 2; [no title], *Alexandria Gazette*, August 29, 1864, 2; "Confiscation," *Alexandria Gazette*, October 1, 1864, 2.

⁸⁹ Foner, 51 and 68.

⁹⁰ He was buried in Alexandria, Virginia at Ivy Hill. "Daniel Fitzhugh Hooe," <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=pv&GRid=5991860&PIpi=11270432> (accessed June 26, 2012).

⁹¹ *Harry T. Poor v. Lillie Poor Johnson* (1920), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

conjecture. The surviving court records do not explain the basis of the lawsuits. In order to pay this debt, the court first charged Charles W. Wattles followed by Rudolph[e] Cloughton, two Alexandria lawyers, to collect rents from Hooff's many properties to pay his debts to the Hooes in 1871, which included the Fort Ward area.⁹² By December 1875, it was clear that not enough money came from these rents. Therefore, given that Hooff's assets were concentrated in land, the court charged Wattles and Cloughton with selling Hooff's land at auction.⁹³ In 1876, his wife's (Elizabeth [Blincoe] Hooff) land, which was deeded to a relative and held in trust, was also transferred to Sidney Chapman Neale, one of the later commissioners as part of the agreement to sell Hooff land to pay debts.⁹⁴

Sales of Hooff's property occurred primarily in two locations—around Fairfax Seminary, including the former Fort Ward site, and the western portion of the City of Alexandria just north of King Street in the Uptown neighborhood. Many purchasers at both locations were African Americans who were living on Hooffs' property when it was auctioned. Starting in the 1870s and continuing through the 1890s, William Parker, Delilah Freeman (a widow), John Webb, Bunn Lee, and possibly F. [Fleming?] Pollard and Mary Jane Ewell purchased land and homes from the auctioning of Hooff's property in Alexandria. All of them were listed as either "black" or "mulatto" in the U.S. Census.⁹⁵

⁹² *D. Hooe's Executrix v. P. H. Hooff and Others* (May 27, 1871), Chancery Order Book No. 1, Alexandria Circuit Court's Research Room, Alexandria, VA.

⁹³ *D. F. Hooe's Admr v. P.H. Hooff et als* (December 18, 1875), Chancery Order Book No. 2, Alexandria Circuit Court's Research Room, Alexandria, VA.

⁹⁴ *D. F. Hooe's Admr v. P.H. Hooff et als* (April 26, 1876), Chancery Order Book No. 2, Alexandria Circuit Court's Research Room, Alexandria, VA.

Sidney Chapman Neale later caused further economic woes for the Hooff family when he defrauded Elizabeth Hooff out of \$5,000 in 1882. He had reportedly been involved in some kind of market speculation in New York City and the West Indies. "S. Chapman Neale's Failure," *The Washington Post* 25 January 1882, 4.

⁹⁵ *D.F. Hooes Admr v. P.H. Hooff et als* (4 June 1877, 8 March 1877, 9 July 1878, 7 April 1880), Chancery Order Book No. 2; *Hooe's Admr v. Hooff et als* (26 October 1885), Chancery Order Book No. 3; Alexandria Circuit Court's Research Room, Alexandria, VA; 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Alexandria, VA, 25-26, 44, 35, 48; 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Alexandria, VA, 41 www.ancestry.com (accessed June 20, 2012).

Simultaneous to the sale of properties in Alexandria were the first purchases at the Fort. Not all of the first residents listed in the 1870 and 1880 U.S. Censuses were able to purchase land; many continued to rent, living on land owned by either blacks or whites. Most lots were relatively small, and clearly no one planned to pursue farming as their livelihood on them. John A. Miller first began the process to purchase land at the Fort in 1878 and obtained the deed in 1886, possibly after the mortgage was paid (Figure 7).⁹⁶ Miller, a waiter at Fairfax Seminary, was married to Lavinia, one of the first residents of the area and a daughter of Harriet (McKnight) Shorts. The Millers' home, which was briefly mentioned in the diary of Launcelot M. Blackford, the headmaster at Episcopal High School, in 1904, was reportedly "comfortable."⁹⁷ Miller then subdivided part of his land and sold one small parcel along Braddock Road in 1887 to the Trustees of St. Mathew's Lodge, #220 Independent Order of Good Samaritans and Daughters of Samaria (Figure 8). Based on the deed, this organization included Burr Shorts, James Jackson, William Seawell, Abe (sp?) Somers, Wallis Moss, Brown Shepherd, and Searles (also spelled Surrell) McKnight. Others from the neighborhood may have been members.⁹⁸ The Good Samaritans was one of the most powerful African American fraternal organizations and secret societies in Virginia during the late nineteenth century, giving cash benefits to members for family burial expenses, insurance against sickness and death, and aid to widows and orphans. The land

⁹⁶ *D.F. Hooes Admr v. P.H. Hooff et als* (13 April 1878), Chancery Order Book No. 2; Alexandria Circuit Court's Research Room, Alexandria, VA; Fairfax Deed Book E-5-579, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

⁹⁷ Launcelot M. Blackford Diary, January 10, 1904; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

⁹⁸ Fairfax Deed Book F-5-608, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.



Figure 7. Early Fort community, ca. 1870s and 1880s. Courtesy of Alexandria Archaeology.

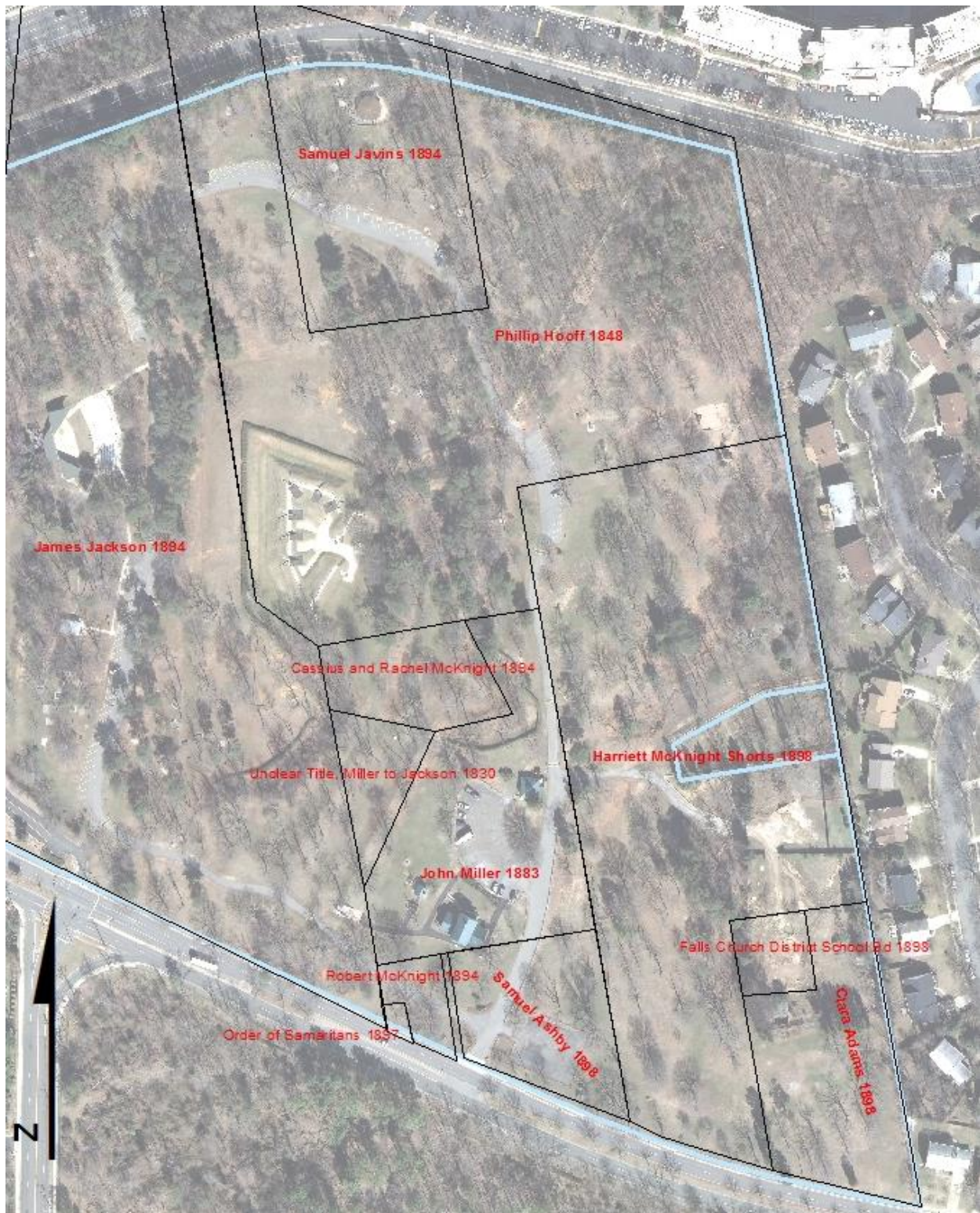


Figure 8. The Fort community, ca. 1898. Courtesy of Alexandria Archaeology.

that Miller sold to the Order might have been used or planned to be used as a cemetery.⁹⁹ Two additional lots of 0.75 acres each were then sold to Miller's wife's brothers, Cassius McKnight in 1890 (who built a home on top of Fort Ward) and Robert McKnight in 1894.¹⁰⁰ The last lot was sold to Samuel Ashby in 1898. Ashby had married a relative of James Jackson, who also had bought land on the remains of Fort Ward and worked at Episcopal High School.¹⁰¹

Other African American families bought land around the same time. Like Miller, it took several years for Burr and Harriet Shorts to purchase ten acres on the east side of Fort Ward. Shorts paid for a survey of the land in 1879, and the deed was recorded in 1884 (Figure 9).¹⁰² After Burr's death in 1898, Harriet gave two of their ten acres to their daughter Clara and her husband, Robert Adams (Figure 10). The Adams family appears to have rented a home on the Shorts property based on their proximity in the 1880 U.S.

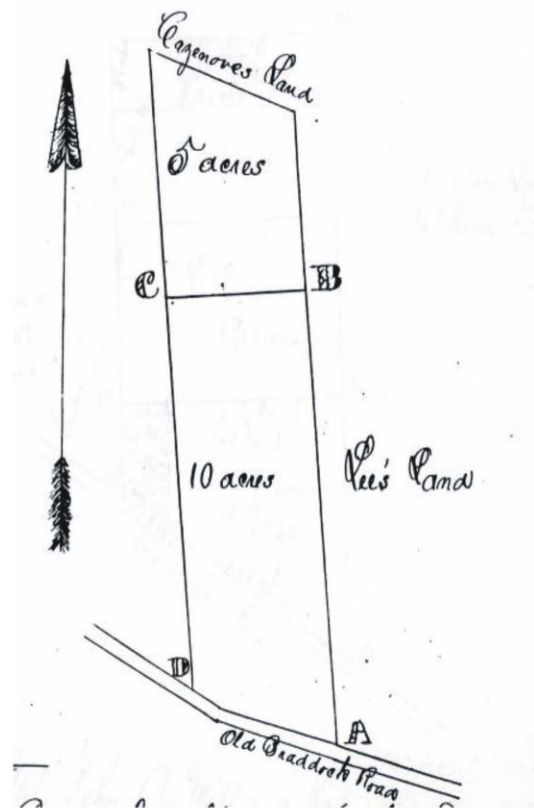


Figure 9. Burr Shorts Deed Plat, 1879.
Courtesy of Fairfax County Circuit Court's
Historical Records Room.

⁹⁹ "Good Samaritans," *Alexandria Gazette* 16 June 1893, 3; "Benevolent Societies," *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896 to the Present*, edited by Paul Finkelman, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 166.

¹⁰⁰ Fairfax Deed Book Z-5-99 and Z-5-101, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁰¹ *Hooes v. Hooff et al* (13 April 1878), Chancery Order Book No. 2, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Alexandria, VA; Fairfax Deed Book E-5; Fairfax Deed Book D-6, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁰² *Hooes v. Hooff* (20 March 1883), Alexandria Circuit Court's Research Room, Alexandria, VA; Fairfax Deed Book E-5, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

from her eight acres.¹⁰⁴

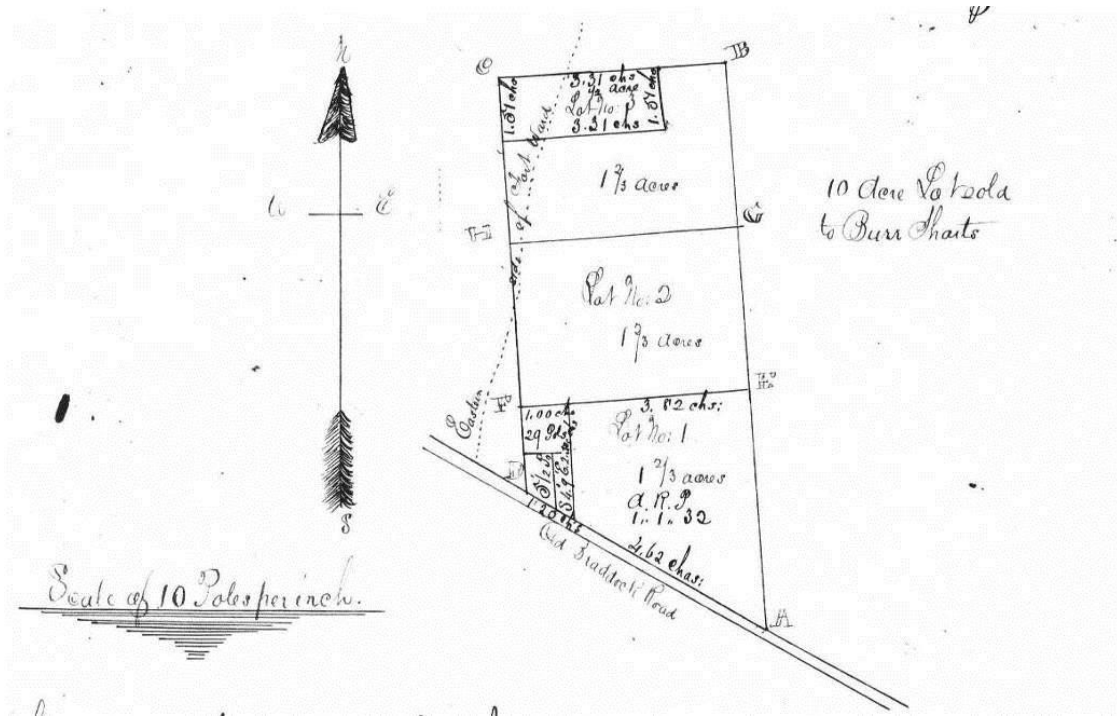


Figure 10. Burr Shorts division of 10 acres, 1886. Courtesy of Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room.

Other African American families bought land at the Fort Ward site in the late nineteenth century (Figure 11). Samuel Javins (also listed in the census as Arthur Samuel) arrived after 1880. His wife, Florence, was a daughter of Harriet (McKnight) Shorts from her first marriage to Willis McKnight. Javins purchased two and a half acres of Hooff's property in 1889. Like many others, it took until 1894 for the transaction to be recorded at

¹⁰³ Burr Shorts's will, dated June 26, 1898, gave Harriet sole control over his personal property and real estate and the responsibility to pay any outstanding debts. What is interesting about his will is that he stated that the county could not take an inventory of his property to pay his debts. On September 19, 1898, Harriet obtained an executor's bond to ensure that Burr's will was followed. Fairfax Will Book H-2-37 and H-2-48; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁰⁴ "Deeds Recorded," *Fairfax Herald*, September 27, 1912, 3; John White, *Chronicles of the Episcopal High School in Virginia, 1839-1989* (Dublin, N.H.: William L. Bauhan, 1989), 135.

Fairfax County Courthouse, most likely because he was paying for the property in installments.¹⁰⁵



Figure 11. G. M. Hopkins map of the Vicinity of Washington, D.C. with early Fort property owners overlaid, 1894. Courtesy of Alexandria Archaeology.

¹⁰⁵ Fairfax Deed Book R-5-413, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

James Jackson, a former slave who had migrated from Fauquier County before or in 1866, purchased the western portion of Fort Ward from another Hooff sale in 1894.¹⁰⁶ In 1913, Jackson gave a small portion of his land to his son, Robert M. Jackson.¹⁰⁷ John H. Peters Sr., who had married Samuel Ashby's sister, Ella and whose father was a soldier in the USCT during the Civil War, purchased a portion of James Jackson's land on the west side of the Fort a year later.¹⁰⁸ The Jacksons then deeded additional pieces of land to Peters and Frank Lewis in 1922 a few months before James Jackson's and his wife's death.¹⁰⁹ Based on the 1920 census, Lewis, who was originally from Pennsylvania, was a cook along with his wife, Leaner, at Episcopal High School. A decade later, they were no longer living together, and Lewis was living somewhere else along Leesburg Pike in Fairfax County with his son, Joseph. The census stated that he was still a cook at a high school, and it is possible that he was commuting to the Episcopal High School.¹¹⁰

In the late nineteenth century, a handful of white families also lived around and on the Fort, who either employed or were acquainted with local African Americans (Figure 12). To the east and west, the homes of John and Caleb Cleveland and Cassius Lee framed the boundaries of what was commonly considered the Fort in 1870. There were also three white families, the Daniels, Doves, and Gillens, and two single, white men who lived among African Americans in this portion of Fairfax County. By 1880, the Fort had become a clearly

¹⁰⁶ Fairfax Deed Book Q-5-466, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁰⁷ Fairfax Deed Book Q-7-272; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁰⁸ In April 1941, a John Peters (it is unclear whether it was the son or father) received a building permit to build a "5 room frame house" on this location. The newspaper does not state whether he tore down his home to build this new one. "Building Permits," *Fairfax Herald*, April 25, 1941, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Fairfax Deed Book R-7-539, Deed Book B-9-593, Deed A-9-573, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹¹⁰ 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 9B; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 22A; www.ancestry.com (accessed on June 27, 2012).

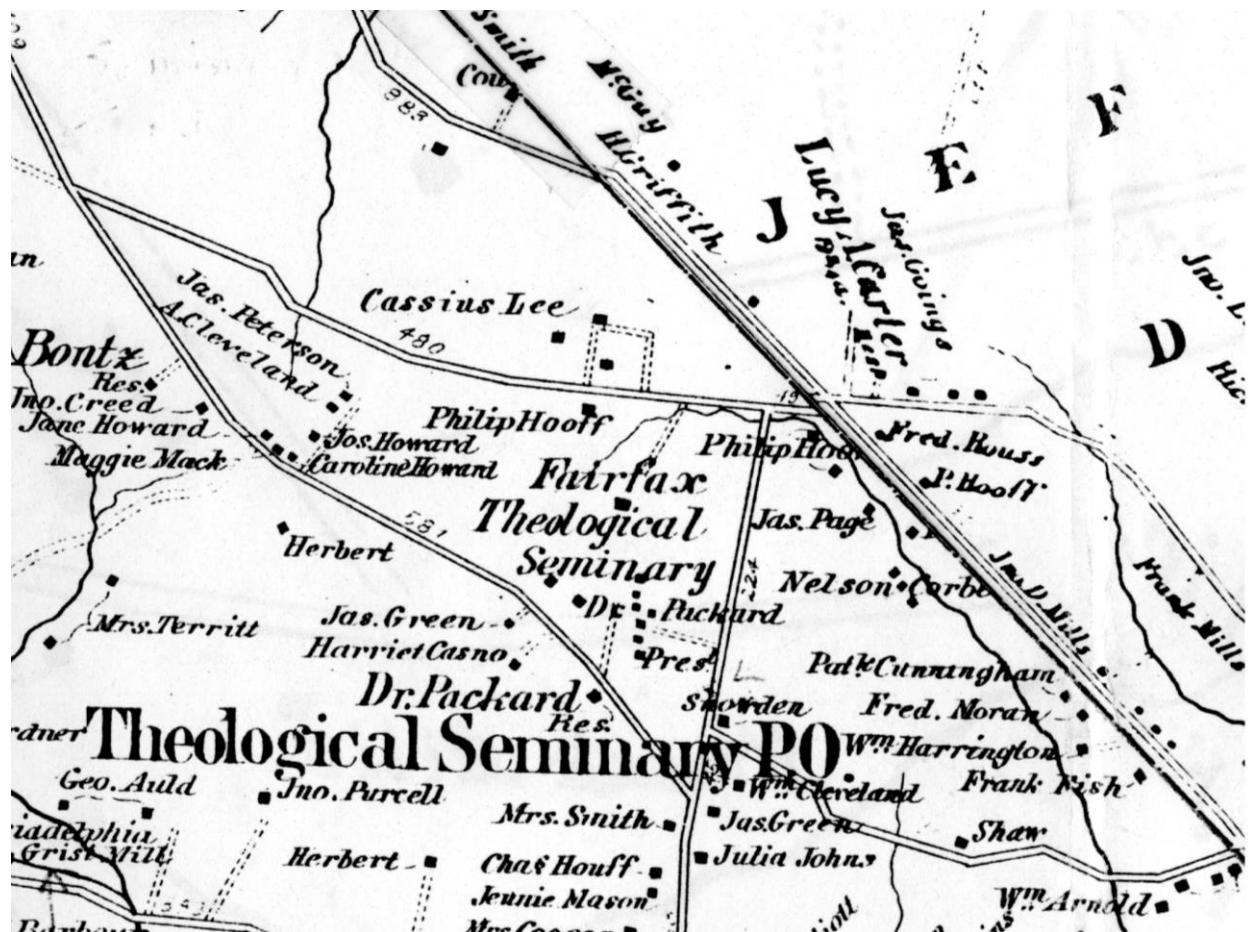


Figure 12. G. M. Hopkins map of Fort Ward and Seminary Area, 1878. Courtesy of Alexandria Archaeology.

delineated African American neighborhood; however, it became more heterogeneous again by the 1900 Census.¹¹¹ Changes in the racial composition of the Fort were indicative of population fluctuations in the larger Seminary area.

African Americans at the Fort were not the only ones purchasing land and building homes in this area. Many of their fellow church members, co-workers, and extended kin were able to buy land or rent homes around Fairfax Seminary. One group of landowners lived along the south side of Braddock Road to the west of the remains of Fort Ward and

¹¹¹ 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Fairfax County, VA, 20-21; 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church, Fairfax County, VA, 15; 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Fall Church, Fairfax County, VA, 5A-5B; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 27, 2012).

Fairfax Seminary. In fact, the first African American purchaser in the area was a man named William Massie (later Matthews) who bought two acres from Albert F. Howard in 1868, just across the street from the present-day Fort Ward Park.¹¹² Technically, this land should be seen as part of the Fort community; however, because it is outside the boundaries of the present-day park, it is treated separately here. Little is known about the Massies; however, by 1881, William and second his wife, Louisa, had moved to Washington, D.C. and sold this land to Vincent Hall.¹¹³ Hall and his wife, Maggie Brooks, had been living on this property by 1880 if not earlier.¹¹⁴

George and Elizabeth Watkins sold three, five-acre lots on the south side of Braddock Road just to the west of the Massie/Hall lot. George Watkins worked as a butcher in Alexandria during the 1880s, but had been purchasing and selling land in Fairfax County since the antebellum period.¹¹⁵ The first lot sold by Watkins was deeded to an African American man named W. J. Peters. He was also from Fairfax County and might be related to John H. Peters Sr., who purchased land across the street at the Fort in 1914; however, additional information to make this connection has not been found.¹¹⁶ Simon Harrid (also spelled Herrod, Herrid, and Herod) bought a lot next to W. J. Peters and built a home on the site. Based on information from the 1900 U.S. Census, Simon, his son, George, and

¹¹² Fairfax Deed Book J-4-276; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹¹³ In the 1870 Census, William Massey is twenty-eight years old and living with his wife, Mary J. Massey, who is twenty-six years old. They both own \$50 apiece in real estate. A George Peters, age seven, also lives with them. It is unknown whether this boy was related to the other Peters who lived at the Fort. 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 24 www.ancestry.com (accessed on December 15, 2012).

¹¹⁴ Fairfax Deed Book B-5-43; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 16; www.ancestry.com (accessed on December 27, 2012).

¹¹⁵ Fairfax Deed Book F-5-145 and Deed Book Z-4-14; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹¹⁶ Fairfax Deed Book 2-4, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

grandson, Ottoaway, lived there. Simon died soon thereafter, passing the property to George.¹¹⁷ Finally, George and Mary Ann Buckner bought five acres on the “Old Leesburg Road” (today known as Seminary Road) to the south of the W. J. Peters and Harrid lots.¹¹⁸ Based on the 1880 and 1900 Censuses, Buckner was a farm laborer.¹¹⁹

In the late nineteenth century, other African Americans bought land on the southeastern side of Fairfax Seminary along Braddock Road, King Street, and Quaker Lane (NOTE: Quaker Lane was sometimes called Seminary Road in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.) in an area that African-American residents called Macedonia and, later, Seminary. Like many original landowners at the Fort, it was a chancery case that made this land available to African American families to purchase. In *Lowe vs. Lowe* (1882), the court determined that the family needed to sell its property along Braddock Road and King Street at auction to resolve the family’s inheritance quarrels.¹²⁰ The first two purchases, both of which were a little over three acres, were by Robert James and Frederick Rust in September 1876.¹²¹ Based on the 1880 census, Robert James’s occupation was a “farm hand;” however, his own property was productive enough to be listed in the 1880 agricultural census. In that year, his farm was worth \$200, with one acre dedicated to the production of corn. He also owned four chickens and other livestock.¹²² Frederick and

¹¹⁷ *Mary C. Harrid, etc. v. V. C. Donaldson* (1933); Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹¹⁸ Fairfax Deed Book 4-5-80; Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹¹⁹ 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 5; 1900 Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 6; www.ancestry.com (accessed on December 27, 2012).

¹²⁰ Additional property in the City of Alexandria was subdivided among the heirs. *Juliana M. Lowe-v-Trustees of Sophia Lowe* (1882), Alexandria Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Alexandria, VA.

¹²¹ Alexandria County Deed Book C-4-266 and C-4-268; Arlington County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Arlington, VA.

¹²² 1880 Federal U.S. Census, Alexandria County, Jefferson District, 10; Selected U.S. Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880, Alexandria County, Jefferson District, 12; www.ancestry.com (accessed on April 11, 2014).

Mary Rust, along with their two sons, James and William, also appeared in the 1880 census, just a household away from the James family. Frederick's occupation was also a "farm hand," and he, too, was listed in the agricultural census. He owned seven chickens and other livestock, and dedicated one field to the production of corn and another to wheat. A small portion of his property produced potatoes.¹²³ In 1878, William and Maggie Smith bought five acres of land at auction as a result of the Lowe case. It is unclear, however, when they lived on the property. Based on the 1880 U.S. Census, the Smiths lived in Washington, D.C. where he worked as a cook. In 1888, Launcelot Blackford recorded "Uncle William Smith's" death, a servant of the Masons; dinner was held early the next day so that African American employees at Episcopal High School could attend his funeral.¹²⁴

By the 1880s, James, Rust, and Smith families subdivided their land and sold it to other African American families. In 1886, James sold two tiny parcels along King Street. The first was to Robert "Archie" Strange, an employee at Episcopal High School, whose mother, Fanny, and brother, George, were living at the Fort when the 1880 Census was taken. The second parcel was sold to the trustees of the Sons and Daughters of Canaan "for the use and benefit of the society," although no specifics were included in the deed. The trustees included Robert "Archie" Strange, Richard Ray (probably "Roy"), and John Butler; no information has been located regarding the organization, although it is possible that it,

¹²³ 1880 Federal U.S. Census, Alexandria County, Jefferson District, 10; Selected U.S. Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880, Alexandria County, Jefferson District, 12; www.ancestry.com (accessed on April 11, 2014).

¹²⁴ In 1895, Blackford also recorded that Smith's home was occupied by the Johnson family and that it had burned down. Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, May 28 and 30, 1888, February 14, 1895; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA; Fairfax Deed Book W-4-62, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; 1880 Federal U.S. Census, Washington, DC, S; www.ancestry.com (accessed on April 10, 2014). Smith later gives a portion of the land to a family member, possibly his son, in 1888. Fairfax Deed Book H-5-9, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

too, managed a small cemetery along King Street.¹²⁵ In 1899, William Carpenter, who had married Keziah Adams, a daughter of George and Ann Adams, bought about a half of an acre from Frederick Rust on the north side of King Street.¹²⁶ The property must have been vacant for at least a year. Based on the 1900 U.S. Census, the Carpenters were still living in her father's house.¹²⁷ In April 1900, Frederick Rust sold around a quarter of an acre to John Wesley and Ada (Adams) Casey, another daughter of George and Ann, on the south side of Braddock Street. They, too, were not living on their recently purchased parcel when the census taker came through the neighborhood, but in a home next door to her parents.¹²⁸ One of the last late nineteenth-century African American purchases in this area along the south side of King Street was one acre by John William Terrell (the son of Joseph who was also listed as renting at the Fort in the 1880 census) in 1897 from Maggie Smith. Two years later, the Terrells bought an additional half-acre from the Smiths.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Arlington County Deed Book G-4-306 and G-4-204; Arlington County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Arlington, VA.

John Butler, the son of Charles and Emma (Williams) was born in the Fairfax County portion of the neighborhood around 1892. By 1920, he is living in Green Valley, just across present day I-395, with his wife, Grace, and three children. His occupation is listed as "laborer." As of yet, I have been unable to find information on Richard Ray (probably "Roy") in the census. It is possible that this person was a nephew or an older brother of Smith Roy. 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Fairfax County, Falls Church District, 3; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Fairfax County, Falls Church District, 12; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Arlington County, Green Valley District, 47A; www.ancestry.com (accessed on April 11, 2014).

¹²⁶ Arlington County Deed Book 104-22; Arlington County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Arlington, VA.

¹²⁷ 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Fairfax County, Falls Church District, 9; www.ancestry.com (accessed on April 11, 2014).

¹²⁸ The Caseys bought another quarter acre from the Rusts in 1911. Arlington County Deed Book 102-225 and 127-352; Arlington County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Arlington, VA.

In 1915, the Rusts also sold a small portion of land to the trustees of the Sons and Daughters of Liberty, which included Frederick Rust, John Wesley Casey, and Rucker Pollard. It is unclear what the function of the organization in the community; however, it is about this time that a community building known as "Liberty Hall" was constructed in the area. Arlington County Deed Book 137-555; Arlington County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Arlington, VA.

¹²⁹ Fairfax Deed Books E-6-514; H-5-9; and W-4-62; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; *Juliana M. Lowe-v-Trustees of Sophia Lowe* (1882), Alexandria Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Alexandria, VA.

Arguably, the most intriguing land purchase involved John and Sarah Scroggins who bought ten acres to the east of the Rusts in 1899. The Scroggins were a middle-class African American couple in Alexandria where they owned their home along Henry Street and John worked as a carpenter. They seem to have done well for themselves; the Scroggins were also able to afford a housekeeper, Jane O'Banion, who lived with them in Alexandria and later in Macedonia/Seminary.¹³⁰ In 1899, the Scroggins bought land from George and Mertenea Poulton, a white couple who had moved to the eastern portion of the Macedonia/Seminary neighborhood around 1889 near what was then called "Chinquapin Hollow." George commuted to Washington, D.C. where he worked as a clerk, and later a lawyer, in the U.S. Patent Office. In November 1892, the *Alexandria Gazette* reported that George rode home in a coal wagon with William Rust, his neighbor's son, and two other African American men. He reportedly asked the men to take him to his home, which the men refused to do. At which time, he left the wagon, swearing at the men. The three men reportedly followed him, and out of fear of being attacked, George took out a pistol and shot William Rust. Searles McKnight, who lived at the Fort, then arrested George and brought him to Alexandria's jail. A special grand jury later dropped the charge of felonious assault, and Poulton returned home. In April 1893, the Poulton home was doused with oil and set on fire, destroying the building completely and almost suffocating his wife, Mertenea. George blamed his neighbors, whom he believed were seeking revenge over the previous incident. No charges were brought against the Rusts or any other family.¹³¹ It is

¹³⁰ 1870 Federal U.S. Census, City of Alexandria, 4th Ward, 8; 1880 Federal U.S. Census, City of Alexandria, 4th Ward, 8; www.ancestry.com (accessed on April 11, 2014).

¹³¹ Other members of the Poulton family purchased other parcels in the eastern Fairfax and Alexandria County region. "Property Sales," *Alexandria Gazette* 28 August 1889, 3; "Shooting Affair," *Alexandria Gazette* 8 November 1892, 2; "Admitted to Jail," *Alexandria Gazette* November 9, 1892, 3; "Incendiary Fire," *Alexandria Gazette* 13 April 1893, 2; "County Court," *Alexandria Gazette* 2 January 1893, 3;

unknown where the Poultons went after their home burn; however, they do appear in the Washington, D.C. city directory by 1900.¹³² That same year, the Scroggins, along with their niece and nephew (also named John and Sarah), moved to the Poultons' property, probably in a newly built home.¹³³ The Scroggin family lived in the neighborhood for many years.

Rosa Hooff, the daughter of Philip and Mary, became the trustee to eleven acres of her parents' land along Quaker Lane, another site of African American home and landownership on the southeast side of Fairfax Seminary. By the 1880s, she subdivided the property and sold it to neighborhood families.¹³⁴ In 1884, she sold a half-acre to Smith Roy at the intersection of Braddock Road and King Street.¹³⁵ Both Smith and Kate (Butler) Roy had migrated to the area from Fauquier County some time in the 1870s. By 1880, he was listed as a "farm hand" in the census, residing somewhere in the vicinity.¹³⁶ In 1887, Brook Johnson—a waiter at the Seminary—bought two acres from Rosa Hooff along King Street. About the same time Johnson bought his land, Douglass Wood, whose father, like John H.

"Fire in Fairfax County," *The Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.) 16 April 1893, 16; "County Court," *Alexandria Gazette* July 3, 1893, 3.

The problems surrounding the Poultons did not begin with the Rust murder and then the burning of their home. In 1865, George C. Poulton's mother advertised in the *Alexandria Gazette* that she would no longer pay her son's debts. By 1879, he was living with his brother-in-law, R.W. Johnson, when supposedly someone broke in to Johnson's home and stole an "unknown quantity" of clothing. In 1885, Mertenea Lee left her husband, Adolph A. Meaupou, whom she had married in Philadelphia in 1876, and moved in with Poulton. Lee was a Canadian immigrant, who came to the U.S. some time in the 1870s. A few months after her husband filed for divorce, Mertenea married George in Washington, D.C. "Personal," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.) 15 December 1865, 3; "Alexandria," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.) 18 July 1879, 4; "Marriage Licenses," *The National Republican* (Washington, D.C.) 19 November 1885; "Two Husbands Sue for Divorce," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 17 August 1885.

¹³² *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C.: W. Andrew Boyd, 1900). 811.

¹³³ 1900 Federal U.S. Census, Alexandria County, Jefferson District, 18B; 1910 Federal U.S. Census, Alexandria County, Jefferson District, 11B; www.ancestry.com (accessed on April 11, 2014).

¹³⁴ 1900 Federal U.S. Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 8; www.ancestry.com (accessed on December 27, 2012); Fairfax Deed Book G-5-347; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹³⁵ Alexandria County Deed Book F-4-391; Arlington County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Arlington, VA.

¹³⁶ 1870 Federal U.S. Census, Alexandria County, Jefferson District, 147; 1880 Federal U.S. Census, Alexandria County, Jefferson District, 23; www.ancestry.com (accessed on April 11, 2014).



Figure 13. William Wood, Soldier, ca. 1860's. Courtesy of Crozet Wood Johnson.

Peters', served in the USCT, purchased two acres from the Hooffs' on Quaker Lane (Figure 13).¹³⁷ A few months later, Robert Gray, a local African American farmer, bought four acres between the Johnson and Wood properties, and then promptly sold one acre along the border with Wood's property to James Adams, the eldest son of George and Annie (also known as Ann or Ann M.) Adams. James had grown up on the remains of Fort Ward.¹³⁸

Lewis Shorts's, the brother of Burr Shorts, acquisition of property along Quaker Lane also led

to increasing African American home and landownership by the late 1880s and 1890s. In 1889, he acquired eight acres after the family of Harmonia E. Powell auctioned it in 1889 to pay her medical bills. Lewis had lived on the property for some time, possibly as early as 1870 when he first appears on the U.S. Census in the area. He had also built a home on the property.¹³⁹ In 1891, Lewis subdivided his land, selling four acres to Alfred and Carrie

¹³⁷ William Wood was a mason and a slave in Fauquier County, Virginia before serving in the 39th U.S. Colored Infantry as a private, mustering in Baltimore in July 1864 as a substitute. He died in Alexandria on January 9, 1865 at L'Ouverture General Hospital and was buried two days later in the black section of Alexandria National Cemetery. Fairfax Deed Book K-5-504; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; U.S. Colored Troops Military Service Records, 1861-1865; U.S. Register of Deaths of Volunteers, 1861-1865; www.ancestry.com (accessed on March 21, 2014); Pension Files, Application # 232879, Certificate 46681; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹³⁸ 1880 Federal U.S. Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 308; www.ancestry.com (accessed on December 27, 2012); Fairfax Deed Book G-5-690 and H-5-271; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹³⁹ *J. O. Stanton-v-Admr. of Harmonia E. Powell* (1891); Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.



Figure 14. James Jackson (on right) with shovel; on left possibly Simon Reed; in middle possibly Wallace Wanzer. Date unknown. Courtesy of Adrienne T. Washington.

Lane, which probably helped Shorts pay his remaining mortgage. The Lanes never lived on the property, and instead remained in Alexandria. It is unclear whether Shorts was personally acquainted with the Lanes or whether this sale was merely a business transaction. A few weeks later, he sold two ½ acre lots to Wallace Wanzer (also spelled Wanser) and Charles Roy (Figure 14). Roy was one of Wanzer's sons-in-

law. Two additional acres were sold to Warren Garner Sr., who was a waiter at the Seminary. A year later, Lewis Shorts sold his last acre along with his home to Virginia Dixon in 1892. It is unclear what her relationship was with the other African American families in the area and whether she ever lived in the home.¹⁴⁰

In the late nineteenth century, African Americans at the Fort and elsewhere around Fairfax Seminary purchased land through a variety of means. In at least three instances local whites assisted African American workers at Fairfax Seminary or Episcopal High School to purchase land. Launcelot Blackford noted in his diary on July 10, 1893 that some

¹⁴⁰ Fairfax Deed Book L-5-43; I-4-115; M-5-22; I-4-184; K-5-350; 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 27; and 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 15; www.ancestry.com (accessed on December 27, 2012); Marriage License of Warren Garner and Mary Adams; May 2, 1889, Fairfax County Virginia Marriage Licenses Index (from Maddie McCoy Genealogical Research).

By 1899, Warren Garner was unable to pay for his property, which was sold at auction. Fairfax Deed Book 3-8-398; Fairfax Deed Book D-6-661; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

missing cancelled checks for James Jackson at the Fort were lost because of a fire, probably the October 1891 fire recorded in the *Alexandria Gazette* and Blackford's diary that destroyed Jackson's home (see Figure 14).¹⁴¹ He writes:

A night enjoyed some time with McClelland hunting up some checks amounting in all to \$306 among my cancelled reserve which proved the payment in 1887-89-90 for the land on which he [Jackson] now lives. The receipt had been destroyed when his house was burnt and Mr. H. O. Claughton the lawyer who received the money professed to McClelland that he remembered nothing of the transaction. It was James Jackson who bought the land and used checks.¹⁴²

In his undated memoir, Angus Crawford, a faculty member from 1887-1920 and the dean of the Seminary from 1898-1916, recalled assisting one of the early residents in obtaining a house and land at the Fort. Crawford believed that "[t]o have one's own home meant to have a chicken yard, pigs, and perhaps eventually a cow, and the processes of education would go along with the children to produce a happy and prosperous people."¹⁴³ Thus, he decided to help a former servant named "Sam," whom he had previously fired for reportedly stealing chickens. "Sam," most likely Samuel Ashby, was described as being married and having six children [the 1900 Census listed that Ashby had seven children, the last being born in 1894]. Although the precise date for this event is unknown, Crawford had become "responsible for a small vacant house" and decided to have it "moved up on a lot on the Fort Hill." "Sam" then paid for his new house in installments without interest, with the property deeded to him in 1898. Crawford reportedly did the same thing for

¹⁴¹ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, October 12, 1891; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA; "Local News," *Fairfax Herald* October 16, 1891, 3.

¹⁴² McClelland, who lived in Washington, D.C., worked for Blackford as the High School's accountant. Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, July 10, 1893; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

¹⁴³ "Life of Dr. Angus Crawford for his Children," no date, 69; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

Ashby's son-in-law, another servant in the Crawford household.¹⁴⁴ Ultimately, he believed that through home ownership the Ashbys became "models in that community," and "Sam" became known for his "honesty and good conduct in every way."¹⁴⁵

With or without help from local whites, these early land purchases can also be seen as the practice of "family land" ownership. Among African Americans in the late nineteenth century, land was often purchased through the wages of several family members who pooled money and resources together to survive.¹⁴⁶ This practice ensured the continued presence of their families at the Fort as well as a limited form of economic security for future generations. Burr and Harriet Shorts, it can be speculated, pooled resources with their children to buy their ten acres. John A. Miller also subdivided his land and sold portions to members of his extended family, the McKnights. The Jacksons made connections between kin and land too. On the southeastern and western sides of Fairfax Seminary similar patterns emerge among the Adams, Caseys, Carpenters, Garners, Halls, Henrys, Johnsons, Rusts, Scroggins, Shorts, Stranges, Wanzers, and Woods.

The matrilineal nature of the Shorts/McKnight's and, to a lesser extent, the Jackson's subdivisions at the Fort are equally interesting. For the most part, both families deeded or sold land to female offspring and their spouses; Harriet's two sons, Robert and Cassius, and one adopted son, Jacob Ball, acquired land through her or her daughter Lavinia's marriage

¹⁴⁴ Samuel Ashby had four daughters, but based on the census data that we have, only two of them married. Ella, the oldest, married a Butler and then John Peters. Peters did live at the Fort, so he is a possibility. Alice, who became a schoolteacher and later worked at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing had not married by the early 1930s. Ada married Fred Hogan, who also lived at the Fort and is another possibility. The youngest, Julia Virginia, went to the Manassas Industrial School where she worked for a few years. It is unclear whether she stayed in Manassas or returned to the Fort.

¹⁴⁵ Life of Dr. Angus Crawford for his Children," no date, 69; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

¹⁴⁶ Penningroth 160.

(Seal)

W. Herbert Caswell.
Notary Public, Washington County
Rhode Island.

N

School Road

Jacob Ball

Estate Adams

C. Stone

See Map at

Scale 1" = 60'

Harris Shortt Est.

H.T. Burrigas,

Surveyor

Jan 13, 1919.

In the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Fairfax County, Va., Nov. 17th 1919.
This deed with plat annexed was received, duly authenticated and admitted to record.
(No Stamp required)

Teste. F.W. Richardson
Clerk.

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mother, Clara (Shorts) Adams, often called “Aunt Clara” or “Miss Clara” in oral histories, was a powerful force in the community (Figure 16).¹⁴⁷ Finally, Harriet’s 1919 will carefully delineated parcels for all of her descendants, with sizable portions going to her female children. While little is known about Harriet, this phenomenon speaks to the power and influence she wielded in her household and among her children over her long life. Similarly, James and Kittie (Brooks) Jackson might have helped their sons-in-law, Samuel Ashby and Frank Bell, purchase land. For the Shorts/McKnights and the Jacksons, the importance of land as a form of economic security for their families did not exclude women as possible landowners.¹⁴⁸

Sometimes “family land” was conveyed to establish institutions for the betterment of the community or to keep kin together in life and death. Clara (Shorts) and Robert Adams, for instance, gave a portion of their recently acquired property to Fairfax County in December 1898 to build a



Figure 16. Clara Adams and unknown child (possibly Charles McKnight). Date unknown. Courtesy of Adrienne T. Washington.

school.¹⁴⁹ The “old Seminary school,” as a county document described it, was in use through the mid-1920s when it was sold to the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia and became a chapel for African American residents. Other residents set aside land for cemeteries. The

¹⁴⁷ Charles McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 28 March 1992; Sergeant Lee Thomas Young, interview by Pamela Cressey, transcription, 7 March 2009, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

¹⁴⁸ For a more thorough discussion of land and women, see Suzanne Lebsock, *Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985).

¹⁴⁹ Fairfax Deed Book, C-6-139, Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

Jacksons maintained a family plot on their property and sold lots to local residents. Oral histories and a 1925 chancery case mention many people, besides members of the Jackson family, who were buried in the cemetery. This list includes Arthur and Lee Henry; Carlyle and Kate Adams; members of the Glascoe family; a daughter of John Wesley Casey (possibly Annie (d. 1914) or Mary (d. 1920)); and William Carpenter, who had formally bought plots from Jackson. Archaeological investigations also point to at least 20 burials on Jackson's property, although the area has not been fully excavated.¹⁵⁰ Another "Old Grave Yard," the name for which comes from land deeds, emerged in 1897—if not earlier—on the Shorts/McKnights property on the other side of the neighborhood.¹⁵¹ By the 1920s, members of Oakland Baptist Church were burying their loved ones on the Samuel Javins' property, left to his wife, Florence, by her mother. He later conveyed the land to the church in 1929, although a deed was not officially recorded until ten years later.¹⁵²

The ability to keep "family land" in the family was often difficult. For example, almost all residents were listed in the newspaper as being delinquent in paying county property taxes.¹⁵³ One family's financial situation finally led to the auctioning of all of their

¹⁵⁰ *James Jackson and Anna Jackson v. Shadrach et al.* (1925), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; Elizabeth Douglas, interview with Frances Terrell and Glen Eugster (Fort Ward and Seminary African American Descendant's Society), ca. 2012; as cited in Francine Bromberg, "Cemeteries and Graves in Fort Ward Park: A Summary of the Archaeological Investigations in 2010 and 2012" [DRAFT] (Alexandria, VA: Alexandria Archaeology, 2013).

¹⁵¹ Fairfax Deed Book, V-10142, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁵² There are two deeds related to the sale of Javins land to Oakland Baptist Church. The first one, which is from 1929, was not officially recorded, possibly because the church was unable to pay the mortgage because of a fire that destroyed the church around this time. This document is also interesting in that it listed Oakland Baptist Church's trustees: Wilmer Henry Sr., John Crone, James Lewis, Douglas Johnson, Richard Nelson, and Joseph Lewis. Another deed from 1939 was officially recorded in Fairfax County. This deed also lists the Church's trustees: William Henry, Richard Nelson, Frank Nelson, Douglas Johnson, and James Lewis. Four men—James Lewis, Douglas Johnson, Richard Nelson, and Joseph Lewis—are mentioned on both deeds. Fairfax County Deed Book, I-13-515, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; Davis-Ruffner File 741-8100-8, City of Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

¹⁵³ There are too many examples to list them all here. Here a just a few examples. "List of Delinquent Town Lots, Etc.," *Fairfax Herald* December 2, 1910, 2 [Clara Adams]; February 19, 1943, 2 [John Peters]; December 13, 1929, 3 [Daniel Simms]; October 26, 1937, 2 [Kate Stewart].



Figure 17. Louise Sue (Jackson) Ashby.
Date unknown. Courtesy of Stephanie
Gordon.

property. In order to pay off his debts to the Peoples National Bank of Manassas and back taxes to the county, Samuel Ashby sold everything—furniture, foodstuffs, land, animals, and farm equipment at auction in 1909 (Figure 17).¹⁵⁴ The Ashbys, however, refused to leave their home and faced ejection by the sheriff in May 1910.¹⁵⁵ They then moved to another home on the southeastern side of Fairfax Seminary along Quaker Lane.¹⁵⁶ The Fort Ward land was

sold to Thomas Terrett Jr., a white farmer and storeowner who had grown up on his father's farm near the Fort.¹⁵⁷ Terrett must have been a friend of the Ashbys; in July 1910, he sold the land and house back to Samuel Ashby for \$200, the same amount for which Terrett bought it.

Another lawsuit led to the loss of Robert McKnight's (son of Willis and Harriet McKnight) land, which he had purchased from the Millers in 1894 and transferred to his son, Willis McKnight, and daughter, Freddie Simpson, upon his wife's (Susie McKnight) death around 1921. Freddie lived in Brooklyn, New York where her husband, Herbert Simpson, worked as a waiter; Willis and his family continued to live in his father's home.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ "Public Sale!" *Fairfax Herald* March 22, 1909, 3.

¹⁵⁵ *Peoples National Bank of Manassas, VA v. Samuel Ashby & Lou Ashby* (1910), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁵⁶ 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 14B; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 27, 2012).

¹⁵⁷ 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Providence District, Fairfax County, VA, 22A; 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, 6A; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 27, 2012).

¹⁵⁸ 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Brooklyn, New York, 22A; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 13, 2012).

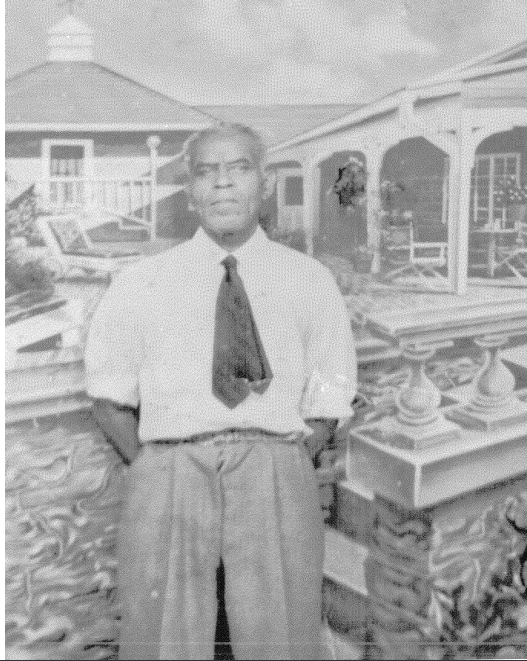


Figure 18. Willis McKnight Jr. Date unknown. Courtesy of Barbara Gordon Ashby.

In 1932, W. G. Hummer sued Willis McKnight for \$300 over an accident. Willis did not have \$300, and already owed money to the local storeowner, Victor Donaldson, and had not paid his taxes.

Willis McKnight was also supposed to pay Freddie rent, “[j]ust whatever I can spare.”¹⁵⁹ The court forced Willis to sell his and his sister’s land and home (Figure 18). In June 1936, the McKnight property was auctioned at Victor Donaldson’s store to Frank Allman for \$625. Perhaps unable to pay for the property, Allman released his claim on

the McKnight land within a week, which Fairfax County auctioned again and sold it to Max London. London, who was white, had recently moved to Alexandria from Brooklyn, New York and owned a coal company.¹⁶⁰ Less than a month later, London sold the land to Rose Rinich, who was probably also white, and her husband, Jacob, who appears to have owned a clothing store in Alexandria in 1923.¹⁶¹ Willis McKnight’s aunt, Clara Adams, took his family into her home after the sale and they continued to live there through the 1950s.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ There are no specifics in the chancery case explaining the accident. W. G. Hummer is probably William G. Hummer of Alexandria, Virginia. In 1932, when the accident occurred, he is listed in the city directory as a “helper.” *Hills Alexandria City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co. Inc., 1932), 193; *W. G. Hummer v. Willis McKnight, etc.* (1937); Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁶⁰ *Alexandria (Virginia) City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory, Co., Inc., 1936), 260.

¹⁶¹ I have found no information on Frank Allman. Fairfax Deed Book E-12-145 and P-12-154, Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; *Hill’s Alexandria City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory, Co., Inc. 1923), 310.

¹⁶² 1940 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 9B; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 13, 2012); *Hill’s Alexandria City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co. Inc., 1956), 407. Charles McKnight also mentions his aunt, Clara, taking his family in. See Charles McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.



Figure 19. James and Beatrice Jackson with unidentified couple, c. 1930's. Courtesy of Dorothy H. Smith.

With the death of James Jackson in 1923 and his wife Kittie (Brooks) a few months afterward, the Jackson family almost lost their “family land.”¹⁶³ Neither James nor Kittie had a will, and it would be up to the courts to decide whether the land would be subdivided

between their descendants or sold. The courts noted that James and Kittie had two living children—James and Shadrach (also known as Henry). Shadrach’s whereabouts was unknown, his last known address being in Homestead, Pennsylvania. Two other children, Maria Jackson Ashby and Robert Jackson, had already died, and each had four offspring (Figure 19). In the meantime, Robert Jackson’s widow, Mary (Wanzer) Jackson Hall, had remarried and was living at the Fort with her and Robert’s four children and her new husband, David Hall, on land that had been conveyed by her in-laws to her first husband (Figure 20). To complicate matters further, there was a cemetery on the property—the Jackson family-plot along with plots purchased by other families. Part of the cemetery had been sold to William Carpenter, who had married Keziah Adams, a daughter of George and Ann Adams. John Wesley Casey, who married Ada Adams, another one of the Adams daughters, had expressed an interest in purchasing a cemetery plot, but the transaction

¹⁶³ James’s death certificate has him dying on February 19, 1923. His wife, Kittie, died around April 19, 1923. James F. Jackson, File No. 13800, Certificate of Death, VA, February 19, 1923; *James Jackson and Anna Jackson v. Shadrach et al.* (1925), Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

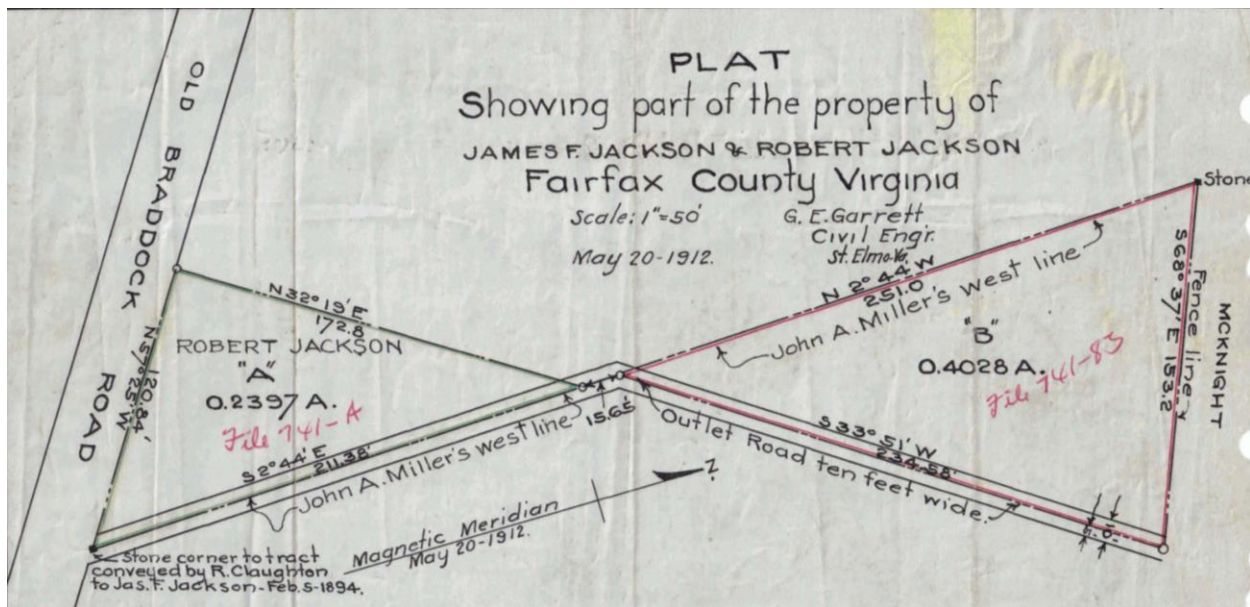


Figure 20. Plat showing part of the property of James F. Jackson and Robert Jackson, 1912. Courtesy of Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room.



Date unknown. Courtesy of Dr. Michael D. Casey and Joyce C. Sanchez.

was never completed. Casey, however, appears to have buried one of his daughters there. Both Ada (Adams) Casey and Keziah (Adams) Carpenter had grown up at the Fort, and were intimately connected to the neighborhood (Figure 21).¹⁶⁴

At least temporarily, family interceded. In the midst of the court's deliberations, Garnett Ashby, one of James and Kittie's grandsons, who lived "in an old dilapidated house on the property," wrote a letter requesting that he be able to purchase his grandparents land for \$1,000.¹⁶⁵ Previously, Garnett Ashby was living in

¹⁶⁴ *James Jackson and Anna Jackson v. Shadrach et al.* (1925), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Philadelphia with his wife, Gertrude. A decade later, he was a boarder in the Butler household to the southeast of Fairfax Seminary after selling his family's property to George Garrett in 1926. Although still listed as married, his wife lived someplace else.¹⁶⁶

John and Lavinia (McKnight) Miller's land transferred to their children, Bertha Tancil (also spelled Tansill and Tansil) and Reverend Emmett E. Miller upon Lavinia's death in 1920. The Millers and Tancils kept this property in the family through the 1950s, although they no longer lived there and probably rented out their home.¹⁶⁷ By 1920, Bertha and her husband, Herbert Tancil, boarded in Alexandria where he owned a barbershop and she worked as a dressmaker. In the next two censuses, Bertha was at home with their two children, Bertha and Herbert Jr., while her husband continued working as a barber.¹⁶⁸ Sometime around the turn of the century, Reverend Miller left the Fort to attend Wayland Seminary in Washington, D.C. and St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville, Virginia. By 1904, he had completed his studies at Bishop Payne Divinity School in Petersburg, Virginia. After two brief stints working in small parishes, Miller was called to serve in 1907 at St. Stephens Episcopal Church in Petersburg, the largest African American Episcopal congregation in the state, where he continued to work until his death. Besides his ministerial duties, he was the warden of Bishop Payne, dean of the Colored Convocation of Southern Virginia, and taught Latin at a local private school. Perhaps

¹⁶⁶ 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 14B; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Alexandria, VA, 15-A; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 27, 2012).

¹⁶⁷ *City of Alexandria-v-Annette, Inc.* (1973), Alexandria Circuit Court Research Room, Alexandria, VA.

¹⁶⁸ The 1930 U.S. Census lists Herbert's wife as "Francis" and not "Bertha." This is a typo. Based on this census, he and "Francis" were married in 1918, which is when he was married to Bertha based on the 1920 census. The age for "Bertha" and "Francis" align in the censuses. In 1940, he is listed as married to "Bertha" again. 1920 U. S. Federal Census, Alexandria, VA, 25B and 26A; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Alexandria, VA, 11B; 1940 U.S. Federal Census, Alexandria, VA, 6B; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 27, 2012).

because he was overworked, he died suddenly on September 9, 1936.¹⁶⁹ A few years later, his son, Reverend Emmett E. Miller Jr., followed in his footsteps and graduated from Bishop Payne in 1939. He returned to Alexandria during World War II and briefly ministered at Meade Memorial Chapel before joining the armed forces where he was a chaplain in North Africa.¹⁷⁰ Interestingly, his aunt and uncle, Bertha and Herbert Tancil, were members of Meade Memorial. In 1943, Herbert Tancil served as both a vestryman and a clerk for the church.¹⁷¹

Both Harriet and Burr Shorts had wills that delineated their heirs and who would receive their property. As noted earlier, Burr's 1898 will conveyed all of his property to his wife. When Harriet died in 1917, her will subdivided their land between their combined families. Again, focusing on her female heirs, Harriet gave the home she was living in to her daughter, Kate (Kittie) Stewart, along with one acre. Another daughter, Amanda Clarke,

¹⁶⁹ For more information on Miller's career, see "The Rev. E. E. Miller," *Southern Churchman* 26 September 1936, 816; "Throngs Mourn Death of Rev. E. E. Miller," *Norfolk Journal and Guide* 19 Sept. 1936; "Colored Dots—Dr. Emmett Emmanuel Miller Laid to Rest in Peoples Memorial Cemetery," *Progress Index* (Norfolk, VA), 14 Sept. 1936; Odell Green Harris, "The Rev. Emmett Emanuel Miller," (n.d.); St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Petersburg, VA.

¹⁷⁰ Although beyond the purview of this project, it should be noted that Rev. Emmett E. Miller Jr. married Harryette Frances Brown of Baltimore, Maryland a year after his ordination in 1940. Rev. Miller Jr. first worked in Chester, Pennsylvania, although their first and only son, Dr. Emmett E. Miller III, was born in Baltimore in 1942. After World War II, the Millers divorced and both remarried. Miller left the Episcopal Church and became a podiatrist, practicing medicine in Brooklyn from 1950-1953 and later Washington, D.C. until his death in 1966. Odell Green Harris, *A History of the Seminary to Prepare Black Men for the Ministry of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Alexandria, VA: Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary, 1980), 21; George F. Braff, *History of the Afro-American Group of the Episcopal Church* (Baltimore, MD: Church Advocate Press, 1922), 234 and 276; "Brown is Payne Divinity School Finals Speaker," *The New Journal and Guide* (Norfolk, VA), 27 May 1939, 20; "Smart Reception Follows Nuptials," *The Pittsburgh Courier* 6 July 1940, 9; Ruth G. Cooley, "Petersburg," *New Journal and Guide* (Norfolk, VA), 7 Feb. 1942, A16; "First in Forty Years," *Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), 21 Feb. 1942, 10; "Parochial Reports of the Colored Missionary Jurisdiction," *Journal of the 147th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (1942): 219; F.P. Thornton, "Report of the Chairman of the Board," *Journal of the 148th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (1943): 96; "A Christmas Prayer for a Loved One Overseas," *Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), 25 Dec. 1943; "Drink to Connubial Bliss," *Afro-American* 14 Feb. 1953, 10; Lulu Jones Garrett, "Gadaouting in the USA," *Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), 12 Nov. 1955; "Dr. Emmet E. Miller found dead in office," *Afro American* 29 January 1966, 18.

¹⁷¹ "Parochial Reports of the Colored Missionary Jurisdiction," *Journal of the 148th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (1943): 233.



Figure 22. Bernie Terrell. Date unknown. Courtesy of Adrienne T. Washington.

was given three acres on which she built a home at some point in the early 1930s.¹⁷² Instead of selling the rest of her land, Harriet partitioned it further. These long, skinny lots of less than half an acre were too small to build a home, but kept the Shorts/McKnight children (Searles McKnight, Cassius McKnight, Maria Blackburn, Bernie Terrell, Minnie Robinson, and Florence Javins) connected to the Fort (Figure 22).¹⁷³

Ironically, almost half of Harriet Shorts' children did not live in Virginia in 1918. Kate (Kittie) Stewart, along with her spouse, George, and Amanda Clarke were living in Washington, D.C.¹⁷⁴ Florence Javins and her family had recently moved to Steelton, Pennsylvania where her husband, Samuel, worked in a steel mill; Minnie Robinson was living in Brooklyn, New York with her husband who was working as a waiter. Searles, Cassius, Maria, and Bernie, however, were living at or near the Fort by the end of the 1910s.¹⁷⁵

One of Harriet Shorts' children from her first marriage, Florence (McKnight) Javins, along with her husband, Samuel, purchased an additional parcel of land from a local white

¹⁷² *Garrett-v-Creed* (1934), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Record Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁷³ Her horse (which died before Harriet's will was probated), cow, wagon, and harness were to be sold to pay for funeral expenses and any outstanding debts. Fairfax County Will Book 6-391 and Will Book 9-226, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁷⁴ Harriet's will noted that the Stewarts and Clarke were living in Washington, D.C. In the 1920 census, George was working as a messenger for the pension office. Their son, Dan, was at the Navy Yard. Mabel Robinson, their niece, and Lawrence (Larry) McKnight, their nephew, also lived with them. I have been unable to find Amanda Clarke in Washington, D.C. in the 1920 census. 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Washington, D.C., 10A; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 12, 2012).

¹⁷⁵ Fairfax Deed Book N-8; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

doctor. In 1919, Dr. Thomas F. Dodd, who lived in the area, petitioned the state to obtain a patent for land that he presumed had been abandoned and from which he wanted to harvest firewood. The land, however, had been passed down to the descendants of Philip H. Hooff's wife, and they turned to the courts to prove their ownership. After much legal wrangling, their ownership was proven, but the courts then appointed commissioners to sell the land in order to pay for the County's expenses and back taxes. Dodd bought it for \$1,200.¹⁷⁶ The Javins had previously purchased land at the Fort in 1889, completing the transaction in the early 1890s. In May 1921, Thomas F. Dodd, who possibly knew the Javins from living in the area, sold them a little over one and a half acres (Figure 23).¹⁷⁷ New to the Fort community, James Walter and Susie (Garnett) Craven also purchased a large parcel of land (almost nine acres) from Dodd in 1921.¹⁷⁸ The Cravens had migrated from Loudoun County, Virginia some time after 1910 to pursue employment opportunities during World War I with the Bureau of Engineering in the Department of the Navy. They only briefly owned land at the Fort between 1921 and 1926. By 1930, James Walter's brothers, George and Charles Craven, called the Fort their home and were renters in the

¹⁷⁶ *Harry T. Poor v. Lillie Poor Johnson* (1920), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁷⁷ During this period, Dodd had also left private practice and worked as a U.S. Army physician at Fort A. A. Humphrey (now known as Fort Belvoir) in Fairfax County. Meanwhile, Samuel Arthur (or Arthur Samuel) Javins, son of Samuel and Florence (McKnight) Javins, served in the 511th Engineer Service Battalion, a segregated troop that built military camps for wartime mobilization located in Petersburg, Virginia. Both Samuel Arthur (or Arthur Samuel) Javins (the son) and Dodd were buried at Arlington National Cemetery. 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 5; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 13B and 15B; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 27, 2012); *Alexandria Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory Company, 1917), 171; Fairfax Deed Book I-9-83; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Steelton Borough, Dauphin County, PA, 16A; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 15A and 15B; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Military Reservation Camp at Camp A. A. Humphrey, Fairfax County, VA, 1A; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 27, 2012).

¹⁷⁸ Fairfax Deed Book Deed Book Y-8-431; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; Alexandria Deed Book 368-134; City of Alexandria Circuit Court Records Room, Alexandria, VA.

neighborhood. James Walters Craven and his family do not appear in the 1930 U.S. Census; however, his son, also named James, eventually bought land along King Street in the Macedonia/Seminary neighborhood by the 1940s.¹⁷⁹

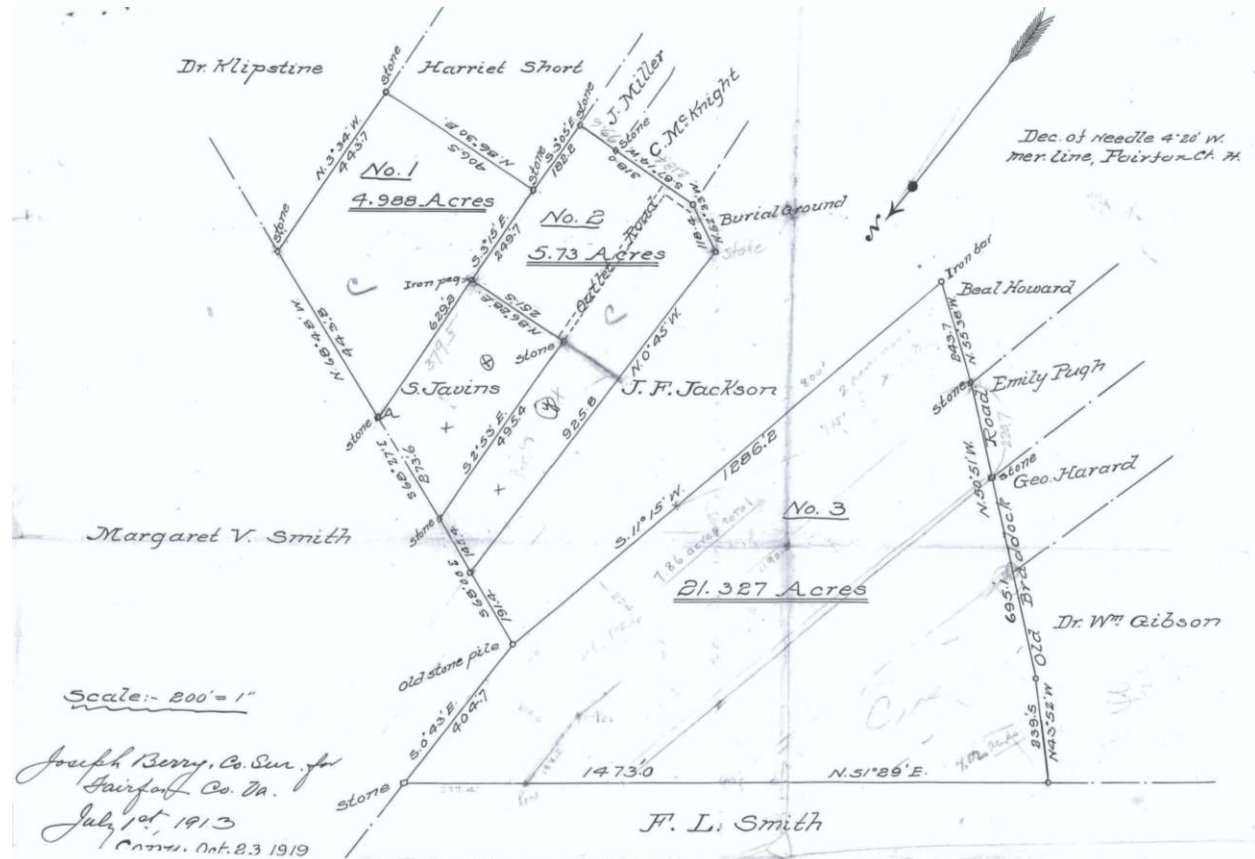


Figure 23. Plat of Shorts-McKnight Subdivision, 1919. Courtesy of Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room.

By the 1920s, two other white men, George E. Garrett and Robert R. Dye, were interested in the Fort area for the future site of a suburban, residential development and—within the next decade—purchased almost half of the Fort neighborhood.¹⁸⁰ George E.

¹⁷⁹ 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Broad Run District, Loudoun County, VA, 37; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Broad Run District, Loudoun County, VA, 13A; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 9A; World War I Draft Registration Cards; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 27, 2012).

¹⁸⁰ They also partnered in the purchasing of land at Roaches Run in Arlington, Virginia until the federal government claimed the land for the creation of George Washington Parkway. Gerald G. Gross, "District and Virginia Boundary Dispute Revived Anew by Suit," *Washington Post* February 21, 1932, M13; "Virginia Will Refuse U.S. Further Memorial Road Aid," *Washington Post* February 5, 1932, 9.

Garrett, a civil engineer and surveyor, had surveyed land throughout northern Virginia, including plats at the Fort, for development since the early 1900s. From 1919 until its annexation to Alexandria in 1930, he was councilmember representing the Town of Potomac in Alexandria County; in 1932, he was chosen to become a member of Alexandria's City Council.¹⁸¹ Robert R. Dye directed Arlington National Cemetery from 1918 through 1941 and owned Arlington's Columbia Gardens Cemetery. He also was heavily involved in Arlington and Fairfax Counties' commercial and residential development in the early to mid-twentieth century. Like Garrett, he was active in local government, at one time serving on the Fairfax County Board of Zoning Appeals and being briefly appointed County Supervisor for Fairfax County.¹⁸²

Starting in 1926, Dye and Garrett began purchasing land at the Fort (Figures 24 and 25). Garnett Ashby, who had previously saved his grandparents land from possible sale a few years earlier, sold most of the Jackson property to Garrett, Dye, and Dye's son, Robert P. Dye. That same year, James Walter and Susie L. Craven, who had bought land from Dr. Thomas F. Dodd at the same time as the Javins, sold their land to Garrett, Dye, and Dye's son.¹⁸³ In 1927, the Garrett and Dyes also purchased the two northernmost of the

¹⁸¹ Alexandria County Minute Book, sec. 5, p. 8; Virginia Room, Arlington Public Library, Arlington, VA; "George E. Garrett," *Fairfax Herald* October 24, 1930, 10; "Lamond Successor Chosen by Council," *Fairfax Herald* April 15, 1932, 15; "Alexandria News," *Washington Post*, May 1, 1902, 8; "Alexandria News in Brief," *Washington Post* September 10, 1901, 10.

¹⁸² Dye lived in the Arlington House, the former home of Robert E. Lee, while his own quarters were being built at Arlington National Cemetery. "Robert R. Dye," *Washington Post* June 19, 1957, B2; "Robert P. Dye," *Washington Post* February 1, 1976, 28; "Robert R. Dye Named Fairfax Supervisor," *Washington Post* May 16, 1948, M20.

¹⁸³ Fairfax Deed Book I-9-83 and Deed Book U-9-416; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

Shorts/McKnight parcels, which had been left to Harriet's children Lavinia and Searles in her will.¹⁸⁴ In addition, the Javins sold their land to the Dyes and Garrett in 1934.¹⁸⁵

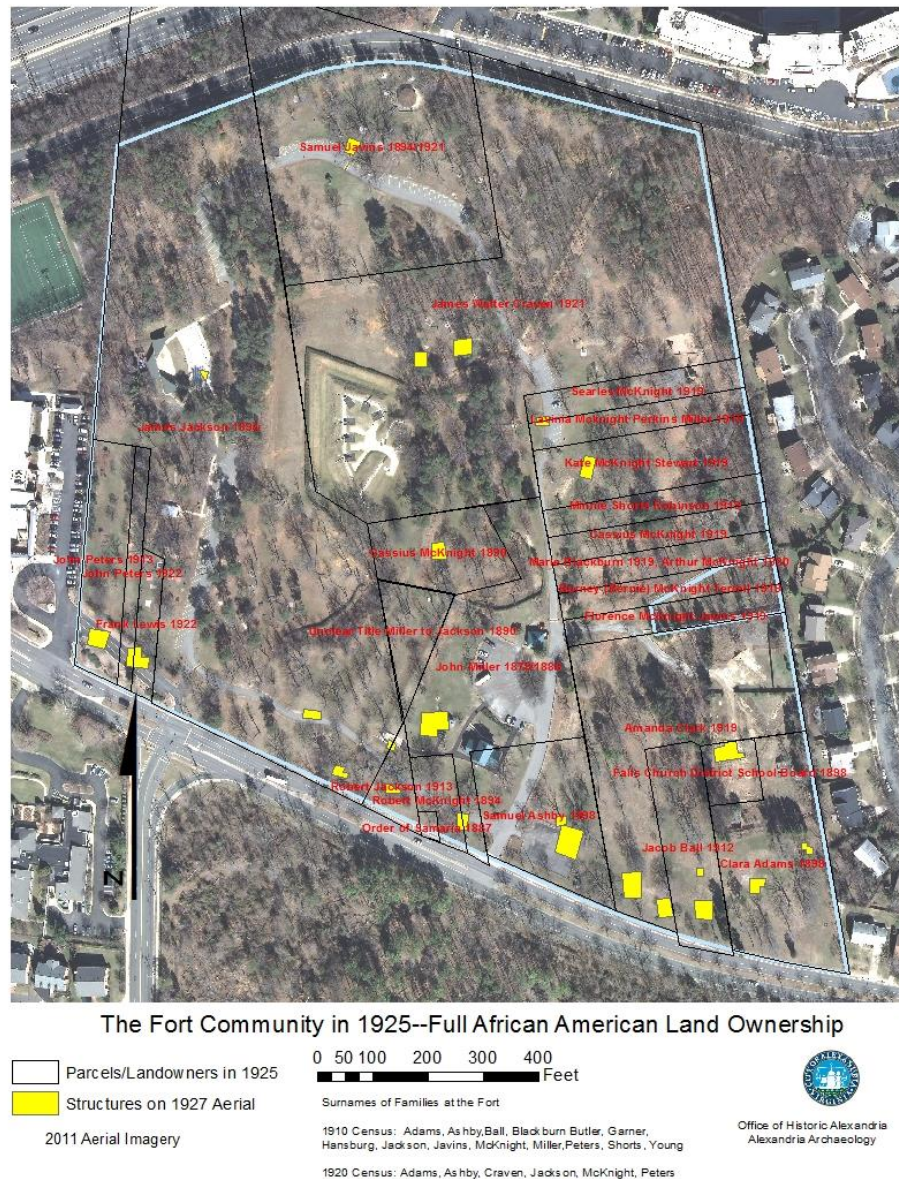


Figure 24. Landownership at the Fort ca. 1925. Courtesy of Alexandria Archaeology.

¹⁸⁴ Fairfax Deed Book B-10-328; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁸⁵ Fairfax County Deed Book Q-11-511; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.



The Fort Community in 1927

0 50 100 200 300 400 Feet

Approximate Fort Ward Park Boundaries
1927 Aerial Imagery



Office of Historic Alexandria
Alexandria Archaeology

Figure 25. Aerial map of the Fort community, 1927. Courtesy of Alexandria Archaeology.

Garrett and Dye's new subdivision was to be named Eagle Crest (Figure 26). It was to consist of single-family homes for the modern, suburban family on one-acre lots. Houses were to be moderately priced and no more than two buildings could exist on a given lot. If someone was to conduct business from his/her home, it could not be considered a "nuisance" by neighbors. Finally, it had, like almost all suburban developments in the American South prior to the late 1960s, a race-based housing covenant, allowing only members of the "Caucasian Race" to occupy homes at Eagle Crest.¹⁸⁶ By 1933, Garrett and Dye had allowed five white families to build what Dye described as "medium class homes" to the north of Eagle Crest in another development that Garrett and Dye owned named Fort Ward Heights.¹⁸⁷

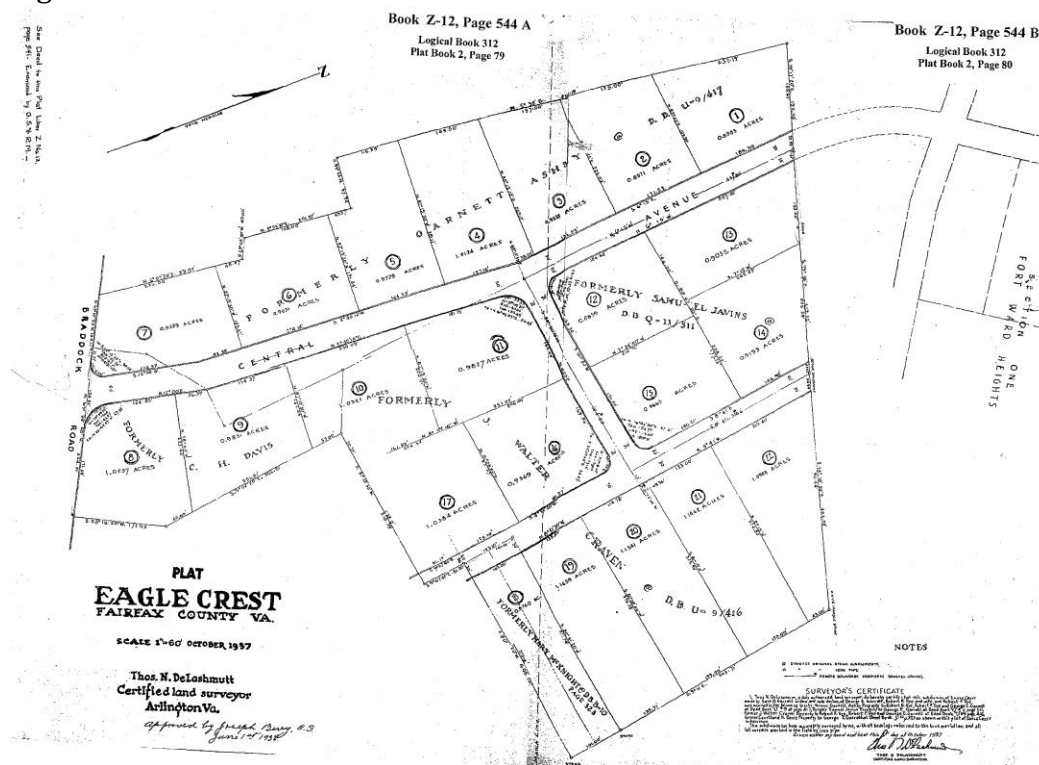


Figure 26. Eagle Crest Subdivision Plat, 1937-38. Courtesy of Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room.

¹⁸⁶ Fairfax County Deed Book Z-12-541; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁸⁷ *George E. Garrett-v-Lewis D. Creed* (1934), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

In 1934, Garrett, with Dye's support, sued a local pig farmer, Lewis D. Creed, to protest the noxious smells caused by his farm located just to the south of the Fort neighborhood and to the west of Howard Street along Braddock Road. Pig farms had been banned in Fairfax County, although neighbors could permit a farmer to maintain pigs as long as they were not seen as too troublesome. Garrett and Dye were very concerned about the smells and sights from Creed's property, which they believed would hurt their ability to make an upmarket residential development. Their testimony also provides insight into the suburbanization of eastern Fairfax County in the late 1920s and early 1930s. In his testimony, Dye stated that "[w]e bought the land with a view of opening a high class subdivision, and it was so well located up on a hill like, just a pretty view, you know."¹⁸⁸ Garrett, who knew the area much better than Dye, gave several lengthy explanations as to why he wanted to develop the area:

Q: For what purpose did you buy this land in 1926?

A: The area occupied by Fort Ward is the second highest in elevation of the original defenses of Washington City and Virginia. It occupies such a controlling point of observation from which all Washington City is very plainly apparent, and it was this wonderful view with this high elevation that was the controlling feature in my desire to acquire the property.

Q: Did you intend to reside on it?

A: I have given considerable thought to it, considerable favorable thought to it.

Q: Residing on the whole tract?

A: No; on a part of it.

Q: What did you intend to do with the balance?

A: The property is such that within my experiences I realized that it would adapt itself wonderfully, either for an institutional site, or location for an exclusive residential site; or a third consideration for a colony of a few selected people to locate.

Q: Are there any other factors other than the elevation and the view of Washington City which operated in your mind in acquiring this land?

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

A: Yes. There is an historical association there which appealed very greatly to me, and that is the name of the Fort and its association in the earlier history of this country.¹⁸⁹

Later in his testimony, Garrett noted that the large estates encircling Episcopal High School and Fairfax Seminary added to the potential exclusivity of the neighborhood.

Besides the sights and smells from Creed's pig farm, there was another aspect of the area that one witness believed hurt Garrett and Dye's plan to build an exclusive neighborhood at the Fort. George C. Stuart, the business manager at Episcopal High School, mentioned in his testimony the effect that having African American neighbors had on Eagle Crest:

Q: There are quite a few colored families around there?

A: Yes sir. That is harmful to it [the development], too, you see.

Stuart believed that the presence of African Americans impaired the area's potential exclusivity.¹⁹⁰ Of course, so did many other whites. As noted above, housing developments throughout the South, including Virginia, maintained restrictive housing covenants. The deeds for Eagle Crest clearly stated that these lots and future homes were for whites only.

Besides the five white homeowners in Fort Ward Heights north of the Fort Ward property, Garrett and Dye allowed a handful of African Americans to live on their land and pay rent. The reason behind permitting African Americans to remain on their land is unknown. Perhaps, since the land had not been developed for white suburban homeowners, they hoped to generate additional income. Seymour and Jane Slaughter along with their children were Garrett's tenants, living just across Braddock Road from Creed's farm and to the west of Fort Ward. Garrett had purchased this land on the west side of the

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

Fort from Wallace Smith, whose daughter, Edmonia Smith, married Charles McKnight, the great grandson of Willis and Harriet McKnight. Wallace Smith also owned land on the Fort, which he had purchased from Amanda (McKnight) Clarke in 1930.¹⁹¹ In her testimony during the Creed pig farm trial, Jane Slaughter claimed that her family was planning on moving because of the smell.¹⁹² Charles Craven, whose brother James Walter Craven had owned property at the Fort and sold it to Garrett, had been renting his brother's former home from Garrett and Dye for several years until 1932. Craven claimed that he moved out after Dye had told him not to plant a garden. In his testimony, Garrett stated that Craven was always late on his rent, collected firewood from his property without permission, and left trash all over the place, some of which he believed had been brought in from other places. After the Cravens moved out, Garrett tore the home down. The Cravens were renting another home in the area owned by a Bernard Townsend.¹⁹³

Despite their land purchases and well-made plans, Eagle Crest barely broke ground other than the laying out of lots and building a few of the main roads for the development. There were several possibilities for why this occurred. The Great Depression followed by World War II slowed—although did not completely halt—suburban development in the United States.¹⁹⁴ The lawsuit against Creed, which Garrett and Dye won, cost money and

¹⁹¹ Fairfax Deed Book V-10-142, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Record Room Fairfax, VA.

¹⁹² The Slaughters moved frequently. In the 1920 Census, they lived in the Mount Vernon District of Fairfax County. The 1926 and the 1954 city directories locate them in Alexandria. Neither Jane nor Seymour appears to be in the 1940 U.S. Federal Census. *George E. Garrett-v-Lewis D. Creed* (1934), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 14B; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Mount Vernon District, Fairfax County, VA, 17B; www.ancestry.com (accessed January 10, 2013); *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill's Directory Co., 1954), 466; *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill's Directory Co., 1926,), 344-345.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, 172-189; Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* (New York: Vintage, 2004), 97-127.

further delayed development. The 1935 suicide of Garrett, who owned a majority share in Eagle Crest, must have also contributed.¹⁹⁵ By the early 1940s, Dye and his family, who were then the primary owners of Eagle Crest, had shifted their development interests to their new hometown, Centreville, Virginia, also in Fairfax County. Ironically, Dye had received significant negative press for the destruction of a Confederate fort in Centreville to build an office building. Perhaps, this experience gave Dye additional pause in further pursuing the Eagle Crest project.¹⁹⁶

Other locals, both black and the white, purchased land at the Fort starting in the 1930s for investment or development purposes (Figures 27 and 28). In 1935, Richard L. Ruffner, who was the mayor of Alexandria from 1937 to 1940 and a prominent lawyer and banker, and his wife, Mary E. H. Ruffner, purchased Amanda Clarke's land from her estate after she died in 1933. That same year, Clara Adams conveyed a little more than a half-acre to Ruffner.¹⁹⁷ In 1937, Ruffner purchased land from Ada and Frederick Hogan, an African American family that had purchased land from Clara Adams in 1931.¹⁹⁸ In 1960, he also purchased Jacob Ball's property at auction and then promptly re-sold it to another white family, the Schrotts.¹⁹⁹ Finally, in 1962 Oakland Baptist Church sold a little less than 0.36 acre to Ruffner.²⁰⁰ Alfred Collins, a well-known African American lawyer who worked in

¹⁹⁵ "Ex-Councilman Kills Himself: G. E. Garrett Ends Life with Bullet in Alexandria Home," *Washington Post* May 9, 1935, 4.

¹⁹⁶ "Centreville," *Fairfax Herald*, July 22, 1943, 1; "Centreville," *Fairfax Herald*, October 14, 1943, 4.

¹⁹⁷ Fairfax Deed Book S 11-252; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁹⁸ Fairfax Deed Book W 10-514 and 308-279; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

¹⁹⁹ Alexandria Deed Book 511-307 and 558-289; Alexandria Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Alexandria, VA; Fairfax Deed Book 286-479; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

²⁰⁰ Alexandria Deed Book 549 P549; Alexandria Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Alexandria, VA.

Alexandria and lived in Washington, D.C., bought property from Wallace and Cynthia Smith in 1937. The Collins family, however, never lived at the Fort.²⁰¹ John Lorenzo Claiborne, who was a barber in Alexandria, and his wife, Clara, bought St. Cyprian's Chapel from the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia in 1943 when it closed. The Claibornes renovated the chapel, making it into a home and then sold it in 1947.²⁰²

From the 1930s through the early 1960s, descendants of the original Fort residents continued to own property at the Fort although few lived there. The continued connection to family land was especially prominent among the descendants of Burr Shorts and Harriet McKnight. A year after her mother's land was subdivided in 1919, Maria (McKnight) Blackburn deeded her land to Arthur McKnight, her youngest son. Although Arthur lived in Brooklyn, New York, he owned 0.47 acre at the Fort until the early 1960s.²⁰³ Kate Stewart, another daughter of Harriet Shorts, deeded her property to her son, Daniel Stewart and his wife, Maude Stewart, in 1930. Like his parents, Daniel and Maude lived in Washington, D.C. and rented out the Shorts' homestead. Based on oral histories, Leaneur (also spelled Lanear or Lanier) Randall and his large family rented the Shorts home in the 1930s and

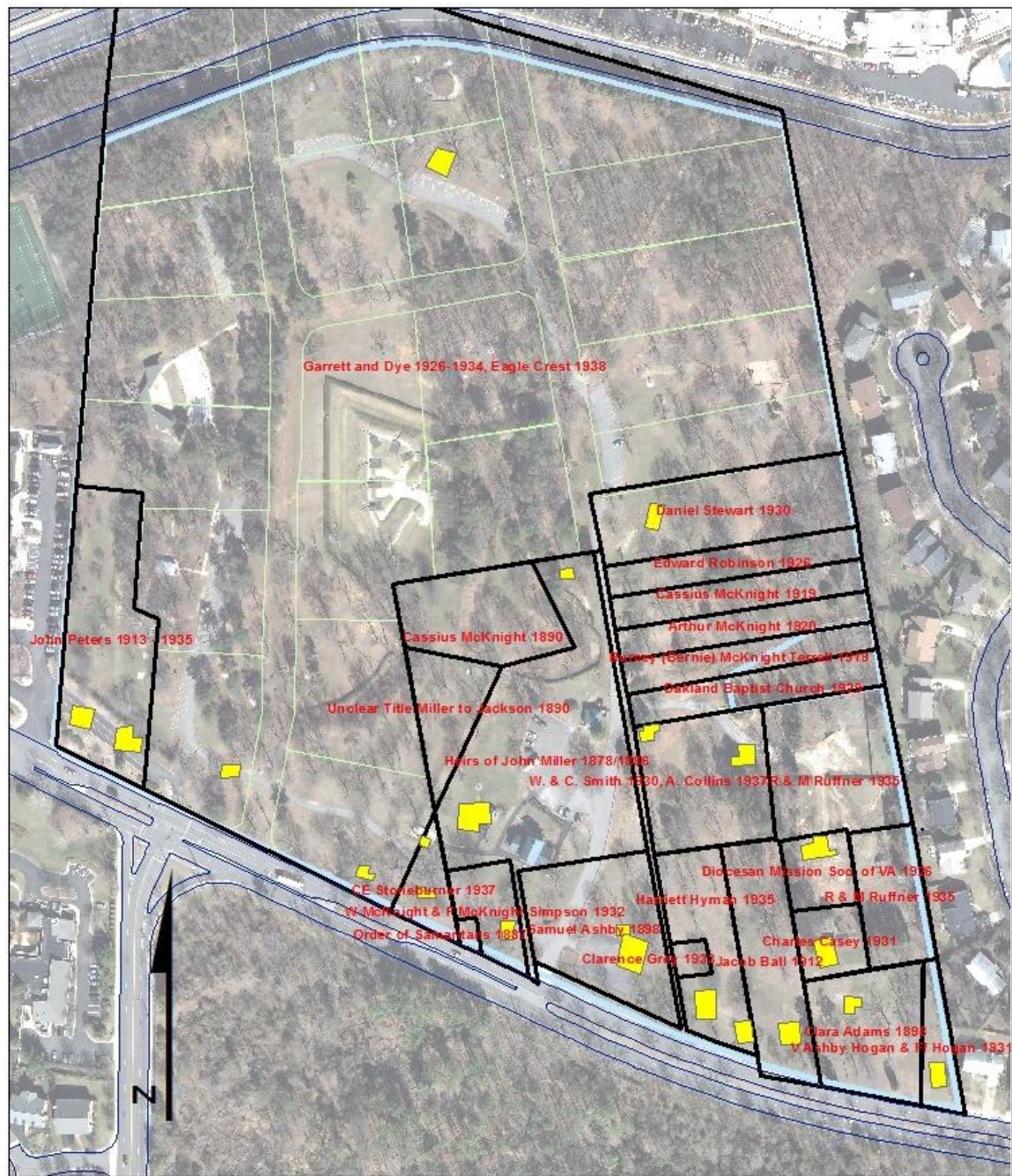
²⁰¹ Fairfax Deed Book R 12-343; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

²⁰² Fairfax Deed Book 421-16, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; *Hill's Alexandria Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Company, 1936), 112; *Hill's Alexandria Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Company, 1942), 91; *Hill's Alexandria Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Company, 1947), 109; Charles McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

²⁰³ Fairfax Deed Book O-8-416; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; Alexandria Deed Book 572-102, Alexandria Circuit Court's Historical Records, Alexandria, VA; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Brooklyn, NY, Kings County, New York, 15B; and 1940 U.S. Federal Census, Brooklyn, NY, Kings County, New York, 8; www.ancestry.com (accessed April 17, 2013).



Figure 27. The Fort community, ca. 1938. 1937 aerial photograph. Courtesy of Alexandria Archaeology.



The Fort Community in 1938

- Structures on 1937 Aerial
- Parcels/Landowners 1938
- Eagle Crest Development Lots
- Fort Ward Boundaries

0 50 100 200 300 400 Feet

Surnames of Families at the Fort
 1930 Census: Javins, G. Craven, Adams, Clark, Anderson,
 Fring, Thomas, Casey
 1940 Census: Deobor, Zimmerman, Czapp, Emory, Norris,
 Randall, Ashby, Weiner, London, C. Craven, Bethea, Peters



Office of Historic Alexandria
 Alexandria Archaeology

Figure 28. The Fort community, ca. 1938. 2014 aerial photograph. Courtesy of Alexandria Archaeology.

1940s, possibly until it burnt down.²⁰⁴ The Stewarts owned this parcel until the early 1950s when it was sold to Shirley Bizel.²⁰⁵ In 1931, Clara Adams, another daughter of Burr Shorts and Harriet McKnight, deeded a small portion of her land to her nephew, Charles E. Casey and his wife, Lucy. Charles, who grew up in Macedonia/Seminary, was the son of John Wesley Casey, a prominent member of Oakland Baptist Church, and Ada (Adams) Casey. In 1951, Henry P. Thomas, a partner in the Alexandria firm Thomas, Strauss, and Waller, an Alexandria law firm, foreclosed on the property as compensation for \$400 that Casey owed from loans that he had taken out against his home to help another Fort family in need. This family had not repaid Charles, who was now facing the loss of his home. To complicate matters, Charles believed that he had paid the loan though he did not have the receipts. As recalled by Joyce (Casey) Sanchez, her mother, Ada Casey, tried to convince Thomas to allow her to pay off Charles's debts and purchase the property. Unfortunately, through a series of missed phone calls, Thomas had already sold the property at auction to Elbert E. and Grace A. Fordham, a white couple from Alexandria. With a loan from the Alexandria National Bank, Sanchez's mother repurchased the property from the Fordhams and paid off Charles's debts.²⁰⁶ In 1935, Harriet Hyman purchased a parcel at auction

²⁰⁴ 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Washington, D.C., 10A; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Washington, D.C., 20A; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 12, 2012); Fort Ward Personal Property Tax Lists, 1942, 1946, 1950, & 1951, transcription by Catherine Marie Cartwright and Krystyn R. Moon, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; Sgt. Lee Thomas Young, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, November 16, 1996; Sgt. Lee Thomas Young, interview by Pamela Cressey, transcription, March 7, 2009; Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, May 25, 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA; Garrett Fesler, Alexandria Archaeology, Email Communication, June 13, 2013.

²⁰⁵ Fairfax Deed Book X-10-543 & 469-417; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; Alexandria Deed Book 375-455; Alexandria Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Alexandria, VA.

²⁰⁶ Email correspondence between Joyce (Casey) Sanchez and the author, April 11-12, 2014; Fairfax Deed Book Y-10-558 and 748-310; Alexandria Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Alexandria, VA.

²⁰⁶ Fairfax Deed Book X-10-543, 402-223, 469-417, 748-310, 863-422; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; Alexandria Deed Book 332-173, 332-175, 1257-519; Alexandria Circuit

originally owned by her mother, Amanda (McKnight) Clarke, at the Fort. Her children, Ethel C. Shepherd and Leonard G. Hyman, then inherited this land, which they owned for almost thirty years.²⁰⁷ Around 1945, Jacob Ball's daughter, Louise Ellen Ball, began paying his Fairfax County property taxes. By 1950, she had left the area and was attending Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical and Normal College, (AM&N College) in Pine Bluff, Arkansas now known as the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.²⁰⁸ In 1946, Clara Adams sold about one-fifth (0.3559 of an acre) of her land to her grandnephews, Willis R. and Charles H. McKnight, the sons of Robert and Susie McKnight. They owned land at the Fort into the 1950s.²⁰⁹ Although she had sold all of her land, Clara Adams continued living at the Fort until her death in 1952. Members of the McKnight family resided at the Fort according to city directories after the City of Alexandria annexed this part of Fairfax County in 1952 until 1965.²¹⁰

The Ashbys and Peters also continued to own land at the Fort through the 1950s. John H. Peters Sr. and his wife, Ella (Ashby Butler) had originally been deeded land in 1913 and 1922 from James and Kittie (Catherine) Jackson. In 1935, the Peters bought an additional parcel from Magdalene (Lewis) Whiting and Joseph Lewis and their spouses. Magdalene and Joseph were the children of Frank Lewis, who had also purchased land from

Court's Historical Records Room, Alexandria, VA; *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill's City Directory Co., Inc. 1952, 150); 1940 U.S. Federal Census, Alexandria, Virginia, 9B; www.ancestry.com (accessed April 17, 2013).

²⁰⁷ Fairfax Deed Book B-11-504, U-11-352, 457-294, and 572-97; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

²⁰⁸ Fort Ward Personal Property Tax Lists, 1942, 1946, 1950, & 1951, transcription by Catherine Marie Cartwright and Krystyn R. Moon, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

²⁰⁹ Fairfax Deed Book 489-459; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

²¹⁰ *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill's City Directory Co., 1965).



Figure 29. John Linton Ashby, II. Date unknown. Courtesy of Stephanie A. Gordon.

the Jacksons in 1922.²¹¹ With the death of Louise Ashby in 1941, her descendants agreed to sell her land to her son and daughter, John Linton Ashby and Julia Virginia Ashby (also known as Virginia Ashby) (Figure 29). The Ashbys, many of whom lived in Washington, D.C., continued to summer at this

home through the 1950s (Figure 30).²¹²

Starting in the 1940s, many new families moved to the Fort and the surrounding area. Unlike previous generations, these families were quite mobile and came from other states as well as rural Virginia.²¹³ After spending four years refurbishing the chapel into a bungalow, the Claibornes moved back to Alexandria and sold the house to Sergeant



Figure 30. Photo of Ashby home after renovation. Date unknown. Courtesy of Barbara Ashby Gordon.

²¹¹ Fairfax Deed Book R-11-558 and Z-11-315; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

²¹² Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, May 25, 1994, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA; Fairfax Deed Book X-14-25; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

²¹³ 1940 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 9A-9B, 10A; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 27, 2012).

Lee Thomas Young, who was from rural North Carolina, and his family. He had moved to northern Virginia to work at Fort Belvoir.²¹⁴ James and Malinda Bethea, who rented several homes at the Fort since 1935 if not earlier, were from North Carolina and Washington, D.C. respectively. They lived at the Fort until 1962. The Randalls, another family of renters who appeared at the Fort by 1935, were originally from Prince William County, Virginia (Figure 31). They had also lived in Jersey City, New Jersey for a few years. Later, they would marry into the Terrell family.²¹⁵ Charles Pearson and his family were renters who were listed in the 1940 U.S. Census as living between Clara Adams and the Brookings family (owners of Cassius Lee's Menokin) since at least 1935. Although born in Virginia, Pearson lived in Maryland for an unknown period of time. He was a butler, possibly at Episcopal High School.²¹⁶ The Amackers, who rented a home to the west of the Peters family since as early as 1935, were from Louisiana.²¹⁷ The Belks—Lonnie and Maydell (Casey) Belk—rented a home from her mother. Lonnie was born in North Carolina; the

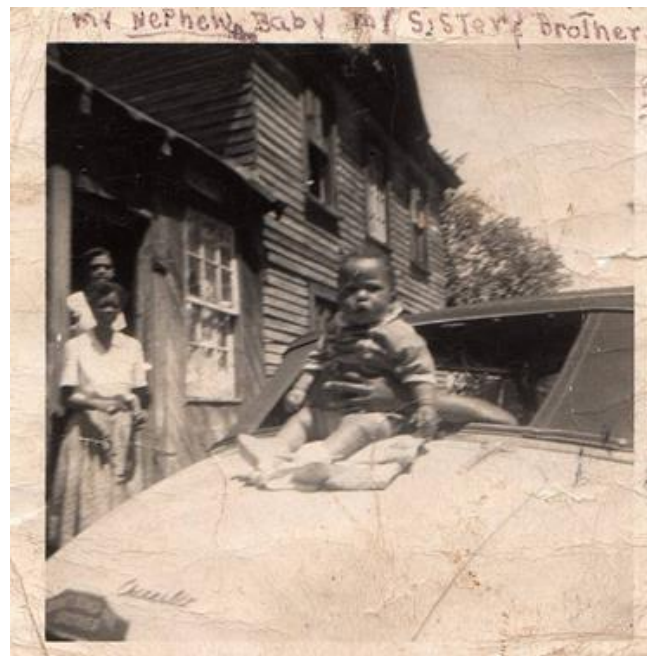


Figure 31. Earl Anthony Randall and Barbara Randall in doorway of Randall house; Lanier Randall on car. Date unknown. Courtesy of Adrienne T. Washington.

²¹⁴ Sgt. Lee Thomas Young, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, November 16, 1996, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

²¹⁵ 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Jersey City, Hudson County, N.J., 5A; www.ancestry.com (accessed April 17, 2013).

²¹⁶ 1940 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 9B; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 27, 2012).

²¹⁷ 1940 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 10A; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 27, 2012).

rest of his family was from South Carolina.²¹⁸ Even Clara Adam's extended kin were born elsewhere. Willis McKnight's wife, Addie, was from North Carolina; their children (Willis Jr., Charles, and Marion) were born in Washington, D.C., Virginia, and North Carolina respectively.²¹⁹



Figure 32. Unidentified Fort neighborhood home. Date unknown. Courtesy of Barbara A. Gordon.

Based on the 1940 U.S. Census, several white residents lived at and around the Fort too. These families also were mobile, and a few were even immigrants. George Weiner, who was listed in the census after Louise Ashby, was from Russia, and his wife, Mollie, was born in New York. Another New Yorker, Ben

London, the brother of Max London, was listed as living between the Weiners and the Charles Craven family. His wife, Lizzie, was from Poland. The Watts, Laugherty, Deobor, Zimmerman, Czapp, Emery, and Norris families, who were listed on the census between the Caseys and Randalls, were mostly born in Virginia; however, a few household members

²¹⁸ 1940 U.S. Federal Census, East Spencer District, Rowan County, NC, 1A; www.ancestry.com (accessed April 24, 2013); *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., Inc., 1959), 51.

²¹⁹ 1940 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 9B; www.ancestry.com (accessed September 20, 2013).

were born or lived in other states, namely Michigan, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Florida. Finally, Walter DuBois Brookings, who had bought Cassius Lee's home in the early twentieth century, worked for the Department of Commerce. He was born in Iowa, his wife (Martha N.) in Massachusetts, his son (Walter DuBois Jr.) in California, and their cook, Hendrex Pearl, in Oklahoma.²²⁰

In its hundred years of occupation, the land at the Fort had seen both consistency and transformation. Many men and women were invested in "family land" and maintained connections to the first generation of free people through the land. A handful also stayed and lived in the homes their parents or grandparents had built, or lived about a mile away in Macedonia/Seminary. Some families and individuals moved to cities such as Washington, D.C. or Alexandria where there were more job opportunities and a significantly larger African American community. A few were members of the Great Migration during the early twentieth century, which propelled African Americans northward to places such as Pennsylvania and New York. Yet, even among these migrants, some continued to own land at the Fort. At the same time, African Americans and whites were coming into the area to settle, often driven by family connections or job opportunities. These people traveled from other parts of Virginia and by World War II, from throughout the Eastern Seaboard.²²¹

Work

The Fort's early residents turned to local whites for employment following the Civil War. With the continuation of white paternalism and the rise of Jim Crow segregation,

²²⁰ 1940 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 9A, 9B, and 10A; www.ancestry.com (accessed September 20, 2013).

²²¹ Penningroth, 160.

many of the jobs these men and women found were similar to those they would have done as slaves, such as farming, laundry, construction, and cooking except now they were paid wages. They also had some choice regarding their employer and they could quit if they so chose. The wages earned from these positions proved significant, giving them enough money to purchase land and build homes, schools, and churches. Job opportunities, however, began to change by the beginning of the twentieth century. With improvements in transportation, the expansion of the federal government, and increasing access to education, some residents found new employment opportunities, breaking from the limitations their parents and grandparents had faced. These men and women often moved to Washington, D.C. to work or, by World War II, commuted into the District of Columbia or to nearby military installations.

Newly freed African Americans in late 1860s Virginia, as elsewhere, saw work as central to their economic security. Like white men and women, they wanted to control their own labor and be their own “boss.” Unfortunately, poverty, a lack of education, and racism greatly limited their opportunities and propelled many into a cycle of debt. Without some kind of capital, former slaves initially did not have the money to invest in businesses, land, homes, or farms, and without an education, white-collar positions were unattainable. To compound matters, whites quickly tried to reinstate the racial status quo of the antebellum period, which included limiting job choice. Although afraid to admit it, whites were dependent on blacks for their day-to-day existence and in order to maintain the racial hierarchy, they tried to keep blacks in a subservient position.²²²

²²² Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 116-117; Jeffrey R. Kerr-Ritchie, *Freedpeople in the Tobacco South Virginia, 1860-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 31-69.

The majority of freed people in Virginia worked in agriculture at this time; however, African Americans were able to turn to other types of employment in towns and cities like Alexandria and Washington, D.C.²²³ Service industries, manufacturing jobs, and retail businesses became central to the livelihoods of late nineteenth-century African Americans. Some individuals who were skilled laborers also met with success. For example, an Alexandrian butcher named William Gray increased the value of his property from \$1,700 in 1860 to \$5,000 in 1870. It was, however, his status as a free black businessman before the Civil War that initially helped him accumulate capital.²²⁴

Unlike Gray, those African Americans who had been artisans in the country or cities were often ill prepared to compete with whites who used unionism and white supremacy to control their position at the top of the market. There were two exceptions to this phenomenon: shipbuilding and brickmaking. Throughout the state, African Americans dominated certain jobs in these fields and were paid on a similar scale to whites. Attempts were also made to establish African American trade schools, such as the Alexandria Normal and Industrial School (later named John Hay Industrial School in 1897 and then renamed William McKinley Normal and Industrial School in 1902), which was founded in 1894. This school had a classical curriculum along with an industrial department that taught broom

²²³ Although beyond the scope of this work, there are several articles and books on African American workers and businesses during this period that influenced this analysis. Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Macmillan, 1994); Bettye C. Thomas, "A Nineteenth Century Black Operated Shipyard, 1866-1884: Reflections Upon its Inception and Ownership," *Journal of Negro History* 59.1 (1994): 1-12; William C. Hine, "Black Organized Labor in Reconstruction Charleston," *Labor History* 25.4 (Fall 1984): 504-517; Eric Arnesen, *Brotherhoods of Color: Black Railroad Workers and the Struggle for Equality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Herbert G. Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers of America: The Career and Letters of Richard L. Davis and Something of Their Meaning, 1890-1900," *Negro and the American Labor Movement* (New York: Anchor Books, 1968), 49-127.

²²⁴ Loren Schweninger, "Black-Owned Businesses in the South, 1790-1880," *Business History Review* 63 (Spring 1989): 52.

making and printing for men, and the domestic arts for women.²²⁵ Despite these steps forward, most African Americans were forced into low paying positions.²²⁶

The founding families at the Fort primarily turned to positions in construction, agriculture, and domestic work—occupations African Americans had held under slavery. Nearby the Fort were large and small-sized farms on which freedmen and women worked. Just to the east, Cassius Lee owned 125 acres of farmland worth \$30,000 that would have required several farm hands. In 1870, his farm produced 170 bushels of winter wheat, nine of rye, 500 of Indian corn, 290 of oats, 200 of Irish potatoes, twenty-five tons of hay, 400 pounds of butter, and sundry garden and orchard products worth \$200. John Gillen's farm was comparable in size to Lee's, containing 150 acres, although worth far less: only \$12,000. In 1870, he produced sixty bushels of winter wheat, forty of rye, 150 of Indian corn, sixty of Irish potatoes, 90 pounds of butter, 600 gallons of milk, 13 tons of hay, and sundry orchard products worth \$10. Five additional white-owned farms were nearby: John Cleveland, Caleb Cleveland, William Beale Howard, and Louis (also spelled Lewis) Smith. These farms were much smaller than Lee's and Gillen's. These men focused on growing corn, potatoes, and hay on their ten to-twenty-five acre farms.

Based on information from the U.S. Census, Benjamin Wade was the only African American farmer near Fairfax Seminary with twenty-five improved acres worth \$3,750 along with fifty acres of woodland. In 1870, he was recorded as growing seventy-five bushels of Indian corn, ten of oats, sixteen of Irish potatoes, two of sweet potatoes, and four

²²⁵ John Hay Industrial School," *Washington Post* 30 January 1897, 8; "Alexandria News in Brief," *Washington Post* 13 May 1902, 8; Engine for Alexandria," *Washington Post* 11 April 1906, 11.

²²⁶ Raymond B. Pinchbeck, *The Virginia Negro Artisan and Tradesman*, no. 7, *Publications of the University of Virginia Phelps-Stokes Fellowship Papers* (Richmond, VA: William Byrd Press, Inc., 1926), 68-105.

of clover.²²⁷ By 1880, Benjamin Wade had died; his wife, Eliza, and son, William, moved elsewhere in Fairfax County.²²⁸ Sometime in the next ten years, Frederick Foote, a well-to-do African American farmer in Falls Church, bought the property.²²⁹

By the 1880s, there were other changes among the farmers in the area. Cassius Lee, William Beale Howard, Caleb and John Cleveland were still there, and Caleb's son, also named Caleb, had joined the family business. John Gillen had left the area to places unknown, possibly selling his property to Lewis B. Hunt.²³⁰ Louis Smith had moved with his wife to the Village of Bailey's Crossroads where they continued farming.²³¹

Two African American men living at or near the Fort were artisans. In 1870, James Page was working as a brick mason; however, within the decade, he had become a farm laborer along with his fifteen-year-old son.²³² The Page family left Fairfax County by the beginning of the twentieth century. James Moore was listed in the 1880 Federal Census as a blacksmith. His youngest son, James Jr., was unable to follow his family trade and worked for a local grocery store, perhaps Victor Donaldson's, by 1910. Later, his son helped haul

²²⁷ Non-population Census of Virginia in 1870, Agriculture: Charles City-Henrico Cos., 3; Microfilm 00109, RG 029, T1132, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²²⁸ 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 4; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 2, 2012).

It is possible that Benjamin Wade was a private in the 45th Regiment of the U.S. Colored Troops. If so, then he was born in Rockbridge, Virginia where he worked on a farm. He mustered into the Union army in July 1864 in Grafton, West Virginia. On October 13, 1864, Wade was wounded at Johnson's Farm/Darbytown Road in Virginia with a compound fracture to his upper arm and was sent to the hospital at Fortress Monroe. The injury must have been severe; he was discharged for disability in January 1865. U.S. Colored Troops Military Service Records, 1861-1865, www.ancestry.com (accessed July 2, 2012).

²²⁹ Non-population Census of Virginia in 1880, Production of Agriculture in Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 5 and 31; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 2, 2012); Bradley E. Gernand, *A Virginia Village Goes to War: Falls Church During the Civil War* (Virginia Beach, VA: Donning Co. Publishers, 2002), 234.

²³⁰ Non-population Census of Virginia in 1880, Production of Agriculture in Falls Church District, Fairfax County VA, 5 and 31; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 2, 2012).

²³¹ 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 3; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 2, 2012).

²³² 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 20; 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 14; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 2, 2012).

goods and became a cook at Fairfax Seminary.²³³ Considering their proximity to Fairfax Seminary, both Page and Moore were probably involved in the rebuilding and expansion of the school in the 1870s and 1880s. Once these jobs were completed, Page and Moore needed either to move or find other occupations, which led to deskilling. Deskilling, combined with competition with white artisans and craftsmen, was a common problem for African American artisans in the late nineteenth century.

While the majority of African American men worked in agriculture, women worked as cooks, laundresses, and servants. A handful of these women appeared to have been able to live in their own homes with their families—at least the census taker documented them as such—while working for white families and Fairfax Seminary. In 1870, Lavinia (McKnight) Perkins, a washerwoman, and her young daughter, Mary, lived with Burr Shorts and Lavinia's mother, Harriet Shorts. Harriet's daughters, Kate (Kittie) and Maria McKnight, and Lucy Shorts (who was possibly a niece to Burr Shorts) were domestic servants somewhere in the area, but lived at or very near the Fort.²³⁴ The ability to live with one's family was quite a feat considering that most white households preferred to have their servants living with them so they had more control over their servants' day-to-

²³³ The Moores, like many of the Fort families, moved frequently. In 1910, they lived at the Fort. Ten years later, they were on campus. In another decade, he owned his own home on Quaker Lane. 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 14; 1870 Selected U.S. Federal Census Non-Population Schedule, 1850-1880: Industry, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 2; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 15A; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 12; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 18B; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 2, 2012); Launcelot Blackford Diaries, February 9, 1895; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

James Moore's sister, Maggie, married Lewis Shorts, Burr Shorts' brother. She had also lived at the Fort. Fairfax County, Virginia Marriage Licenses Index, as cited in Maddie McCoy, "Descendants of George Shorts."

²³⁴ 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 21; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 2, 2012).

day lives. This battle for autonomy continued well into the mid-twentieth century for many African American women.²³⁵

Of course, not all African Americans living in eastern Fairfax County had such flexibility. Many men and women were forced to live with their employers. Two other McKnight children, Burney (also spelled Birney) and Samuel McKnight, were servants living in Cassius Lee's house in 1870.²³⁶ James Jackson and Warren Garner Sr. were living at Episcopal High School in 1870 among the students and a young, white clergyman named William Gardner and his family. Garner Sr., a son-in-law of George and Annie (Ann or Ann M.) Adams, was a waiter, and Jackson was a coachman at the school.²³⁷ Other white families had domestic servants or farm hands living in their homes during the 1870s and 1880s.

The ability for women, especially wives and mothers, to have control over their work was a basic right few had enjoyed under slavery. Masters had dictated the type of work and schedule for women, leaving them little time for their own domestic duties and childcare. With the end of slavery, women began doing "women's work" for their own households. "Keeping house," as it was described in the census during the nineteenth century, included cooking, washing, caring for the sick, making clothes, and childcare. Few families, however, could afford having women stay out of the workforce for long periods of time. Because of the nature of gender roles and racial attitudes in the late nineteenth

²³⁵ Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Rebecca Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens: Domestic Workers in the South, 1865-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

²³⁶ 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 21; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 2, 2012).

²³⁷ 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 31-32; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 2, 2012).

century, African American women often did the same kinds of domestic work outside the home that they were doing for their own families.²³⁸

Since women were often moving in and out of the workforce, census takers did not necessarily capture the variability of their employment. Throughout the census, mothers and wives were listed as

“keeping house,” or the employment column was

left blank. For example,

Nancy Shepherd was a domestic servant in

Amelia Richard’s home

just down the street from

the Fort in 1870. A

decade later, she was

living at the Fort and



Figure 33a. Episcopal High School ca. 1900. Courtesy of Episcopal High School Archives.

described as “keeping house” with her children.²³⁹ Shepherd, however, was the primary breadwinner, and it is more than likely she was working. Harriet (McKnight) Shorts, who was also listed as “keeping house,” worked periodically for Launcelot M. Blackford, the principal of Episcopal High School, as a nurse for his children (Figure 33a). On at least one occasion, she worked in the dining room when two of his waiters had quit.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Penningroth, 177-181; Sharpless, 113-117.

²³⁹ 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 29; 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 14; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 2, 2012).

²⁴⁰ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, June 7, 1887, July 27, 1887, April 20, 1889, July 25, 1890; July 28, 1890; Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA.

Blackford's diary entries, which recorded personal activities as well as the official business of the high school, are full of references to African American workers, many of whom lived at the Fort.²⁴¹ This source, however, needs to be read with an understanding that Blackford had fully embraced the white paternalism so prevalent among southern, white men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Reverend Arthur B. Kinsolving, a friend and faculty member at Episcopal High School recalled Blackford quoting Thomas Jefferson: "I cannot let a negro be more of a gentleman than I."²⁴² He saw and treated African Americans as subservient and often complained bitterly when they questioned his authority. A supporter of the Confederacy and from a slave-holding family, he was active in the Democratic Party and also criticized African American men for voting

²⁴¹ Besides those discussed in the text, here are the names of other residents of the Fort whom Blackford mentioned in his diary. William Henry Terrell was one of Blackford's many cooks; he reportedly lived at the Seminary and the Fort and died on campus (February 5, 1886; April 17, 1890). He also discussed his wife going to visit the poor and sick before Christmas, especially an "Amanda Terrow," who probably was Amanda Terrell (December 23, 1886). In 1892 and 1896, he mentions another "Terrell" filling the icehouse at least four times (January 12 and 27, 1892; December 28, 1892; February 20, 1896). He noted going to the funeral of Caroline Smith, a former servant. She had lived with her husband, William, who was listed as a gardener in the 1880 census. He worked for the Mason family (September 11, 1887; May 28, 1888). William McKnight, the son of Searles, reportedly stole a watch from "Rielly," which William and Albert Somers returned. In the early 1880s, Searles took care of the Seminary's horses and cows in the stable (November 4, 1881; May 29, 1891). There are several Bells mentioned in Blackford's diary. There were two John Bells, one of whom died on October 30, 1881. There was also a Willis and William, all of whom did construction work or hauling. Frank Bell was dismissed in 1876 (September 22 and 25, 1876; April 28 and 30, 1882; October 29-31, 1881; March 23, 1881; December 9, 1880; July 13, 1880; July 24, 1879; July 10, 1879). Isaac Shepherd is described as dying in 1878. While I have not found Isaac, there is a Nancy Shepherd who is the head of household at the Fort in 1880 with a 1-year old grandson named Isaac, possibly named after his grandfather. In 1898, Blackford and his wife go to "see our old nurse, Nancy, who has been long ill." Presumably, these are the same women (October 18, 1878; June 26, 1898). Samuel Ashby, who is another early resident of the Fort, was possibly living in two places—with Nathan Dixon and his wife, Matilda, at the Seminary and with his family nearby. In 1894, Blackford mentions a "Sam Ashley," probably Ashby, helping to prepare the schools for incoming students (August 31, 1894; 1880 U.S. Federal Census Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 10 and 40; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 2, 2012)). He also recorded the death of Annie (Ann or Ann M.) Adams, the wife of George Adams, in his diary on Monday, October 15, 1894. He wrote: "Dinner at 1.30 to allow servants to attend to the funeral of Annie Adams who died Friday night. This good woman had been our cook for years, giving up only at the end of last session, though already doubtless in consumption. I have known few more faithful or efficient. I sent a wreath and Mrs. B., Miss Mackall and Miss Elell attended the funeral" (October 15, 1894). At one time, both Joseph Terrell and John Miller were employees of Blackford too, whom he visited in 1904 because of their failing health (January 10, 1904).

²⁴² Arthur Barksdale Kinsolving, D.D., *The Story of a Southern School: The Episcopal High School of Virginia* (Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Co., 1922), 185.

“for the enemy” [Republicans].²⁴³ At the same time, he saw it as part of his superior position to take care of them—they were like children and were unable to meet their own needs without his help. When his workers were sick, he called a doctor and paid for medicine. When they were married, he attended their weddings. And when they died, he sent flowers to their loved ones and attended their funerals. Like many southern white men, his relationship with the African American community was filled with contradictions.

The workers mentioned in Blackford’s diaries can be divided between those who worked for him as the principal of Episcopal High School and those who worked in his personal home. Waiters, lavatory servants, cooks, farm laborers, domestics, artisans, gardeners, and mechanics all came under his purview as principal. With the expansion of the High School’s campus in the 1870s and 1880s, he hired additional workers. The Seminary also increased its campus at this time, most notably completing Immanuel Chapel in 1881. James Jackson, one of the original landowners at the Fort, first appeared in Blackford’s diary in 1874, the year he started writing about his day-to-day activities. Jackson was responsible for hauling all sorts of things at the school, from students and faculty to coal to heat the buildings and hay to feed animals.²⁴⁴ Students were supposed to pay Jackson to drive them to the train station or into Alexandria to go shopping or to church. This practice was abused, and Blackford noted in his diary that he had to speak to the students about the immorality of not paying Jackson for his services. To resolve this problem, Blackford attempted to institute a ticket system, in which students were no longer

²⁴³ In this entry, Blackford is specifically critical of John Butler and Warren Garner. Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, November 8, 1881, Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA.

²⁴⁴ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, August 12, 1874, July 7, 1877, June 2, 1879, January 27, 1894; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

given money to pay Jackson, but paid for things with tickets, which Jackson would then exchange for money from Blackford.²⁴⁵ Blackford expected Jackson to be available at all hours of the day, seven days a week. Since Jackson lived on the Seminary grounds in the 1870s and early 1880s, Blackford could have some control over his personal activities. No doubt, Jackson, like many African Americans living with their employers, hoped to have a home of his own where he had more autonomy. He built a home at the Fort some time before August 1891, when a fire destroyed the structure.²⁴⁶ Based on Dick Daniel's personal history, Jackson worked at Episcopal High School until he was quite old, "ma[king] himself useful by going around the grounds picking up loose paper with a walking stick with a spike at one end."²⁴⁷

Periodically, Blackford complained about Jackson, who sometimes drank and did not work fast enough. For example, one day in July 1879, Blackford criticized that Jackson hauled coal "too very slowly." On Christmas day of the same year, he wrote that Jackson had been drinking and was unable to get the students to Christmas services at Alexandria's Christ Church.²⁴⁸ These incidents allowed Blackford to justify his position of power and superiority over Jackson. However, Jackson's actions were very much in line with the individual acts of resistance that historians have documented among slaves. Not as

²⁴⁵ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, March 1, 1885, December 2, 1886; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

²⁴⁶ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, October 12, 1891; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA; "Local News," *Fairfax Herald* October 16, 1891, 3.

²⁴⁷ White, 135.

²⁴⁸ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, July 24, 1879, December 25, 1879; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

powerful or threatening as a revolt or strike, these small acts undermined the authority of white patriarchs and gave African Americans a means to partially reclaim their work.²⁴⁹

Conflict between Blackford and other African American workers appeared elsewhere in his diary and speaks to the contestation of what he saw as his superiority. Warren Garner Sr. lived on the grounds of Episcopal High School with Jackson in 1870 and was the headwaiter in the high school's dining hall. By 1880, he was living at the Fort with his family, including his wife, Ellen, and several sons. One of his sons, James, worked for a short period at the Seminary until Blackford's wife, who was supposed to reprimand him, fired him for "insolence" and "negligence" towards "Miss Mary" (probably Mary Leeper the high school's matron) in 1887. The nature of the conflict was unexplained, but Blackford reported that Warren Garner Sr. quit as well. Three days later, Garner Sr. asked Blackford to rehire him. The struggle between Garner Sr. and Blackford, however, continued. Four years later, Garner Sr. demanded higher wages, which Blackford refused, stating that not only was Garner Sr. a thief but also that he was "not worth the old rate." Garner left his service, and went to work for Mary Rhett, a white widow who lived in the neighborhood with her young son, Goodwin. Their relationship did not end when Garner Sr. left his service. When Garner's wife, Ellen, was sick in 1893, Blackford and his wife visited her on two occasions. Blackford also visited Garner Sr. when he was dying and attended his funeral.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1976), 285-324, 585-660; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 315-319.

²⁵⁰ By the 1900 Census, the Garners had sold their land along Quaker Lane and moved out of the area. Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, June 6, 1887, June 10, 1887, September 12, 1891, January 24, 1893, May 8, 1893, December 15, 1897, February 1, 1898, February 7, 1898; Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA; 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 40; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 2, 2012).

The entries on John Butler, another early resident of the Fort, demonstrate the variety of jobs that African Americans accomplished at Fairfax Seminary. In the 1880 U.S. Census, Butler was listed as working as a waiter, but Blackford's diary described a variety of jobs that Butler did on campus—cleaning lavatories and other rooms, staining floors, wallpapering, whitewashing, and building the chapel, gymnasium, and Blackford's porch.²⁵¹ When Butler worked on the construction of Liggett Hall, a commencement hall that was destroyed by fire in 1914, Blackford noted "[e]verything was in capital order, owing to John Butler's skill...."²⁵² By the late 1880s, Butler had many health problems affecting his ability to work, first rheumatism and then paralysis. Blackford visited him at home; after one such visit, he called him an "old faithful servant," a phrase that spoke simultaneously to Blackford's paternalistic view and sense of loyalty to Butler.²⁵³

Blackford also documented the numerous nurses for his children and other domestics in his home. Unlike male workers whom he mentioned completing daily tasks, women usually appeared under extraordinary circumstances. An Ella Jackson, possibly related to James Jackson, was a nurse for Blackford's son, John, from June 1888 through March 1889; however, she left that post upon her own pregnancy. Although he saw her as a "faithful nurse," he noted that she had "not escaped the fate of the majority of the young of her sex & colour."²⁵⁴ In February and March 1888, a nurse named "Clara" (possibly Clara

²⁵¹ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, July 19, 1877, July 10, 1879, July 15, 1879, May 4, 1887, July 14, 1887, February 10, 1887, May 4, 1887, June 6, 1887, July 14, 1887, August 31, 1894, October 20, 1896; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

²⁵² Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, March 22, 1894, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

²⁵³ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, December 1, 1886, December 6, 1891, December 6, 1891, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

²⁵⁴ Launcelot M. Crawford Diaries, March 13 and 24, 1889; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA; 1880 Federal U.S. Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 18; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 8, 2012).

Adams) was recorded in Blackford's diary as out sick for a few days and being confirmed at St. Cyprian's.²⁵⁵ Another nurse named "Ellen" (possibly Ellen (Ashby) Butler, wife of John Butler and sister of Samuel and Isaac Ashby) caused "[s]ome flurry over a breach... who later apologized and was restored."²⁵⁶

One particular incident Blackford described at length. Cornelia Spence, a servant originally from Texas, collapsed doing laundry in Blackford's kitchen.

At 8.30 P.M. had a painful shock. Ur good, faithful nurse of a year past, Cornelia Spence, fell at a wash tub in the kitchen dead. The truth was of course at first obscure, but we had taken it in before the doctor arrived, and within an hour her lifeless body had left the house.

At the end of the entry, he expressed his feelings towards Spence: "Her loss is a real personal grief to me." He sent a wreath of flowers to her home, and her funeral was held at St. Cyprian's.²⁵⁷ Her headstone still stands in Fort Ward Historic Park in the area called the "Old Grave Yard."

On two occasions, Blackford named African American women in his diary who were caring for the dying. Fanny Strange, another Fort resident, cared for a dying student. On May 28, 1874, Blackford wrote: "Fanny Strange, our faithful servant, had been in the sick room all night, and assisted in the last sad offices."²⁵⁸ Annie Strange (Fanny's Strange's daughter-in-law) along with Keziah Adams, the daughter of George and Annie (Ann or Ann

²⁵⁵ Launcelot M. Crawford Diaries, February 3, 1888; February 4, 1888; March 30, 1888; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

²⁵⁶ Launcelot M. Crawford Diaries, October 31, 1893; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

²⁵⁷ Launcelot M. Crawford Diaries, October 13, 14, 15, and 17, 1897; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

²⁵⁸ Launcelot M. Crawford Diaries, May 28, 1874; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

M.) Adams, cared for Blackford's mother during her last few days along with Blackford's wife, Eliza Chew Minor Blackford.

Last night I took charge of Randolph and the baby (who stirred not till morning) and my dear wife remained in the room with mother, where the faithful nurse, Annie Strange, had remained up several nights. Mother was very quiet until about three, when the choking trouble began again and continued for two hours, when at 5.10 AM rest came and she entered into the Paradise of God. The last offices, as mother always said she preferred they should be by negroes—were performed by Annie Strange and Kizzy Adams (children's nurse) under Eliza's general supervision.²⁵⁹

Keziah had no occupation listed in the 1900 census, but had two young children to care for.

Annie Strange, who lived no more than half a mile away in Alexandria County (now Arlington County), was significantly older than Keziah and also had no occupation listed in the census. Annie did have a grandson in the house, for whom she might have cared.²⁶⁰

With the coming of World War I, the rhythms of work at the Fort changed dramatically. For some, the change was temporary. All men between the ages twenty-one and thirty-one had to register for the initial draft in June 1917. By September 1918, the draft was expanded to include men from eighteen to forty-five years old. Around twenty men at the Fort filled out draft cards. A handful of those listed in the 1910 census had already left the area and were either part of the wartime mobilization elsewhere or had found new jobs. Eventually, some families returned. Garnett Ashby (whose uncle was Samuel Ashby and whose grandfather was James Jackson) was working in Washington, D.C.

²⁵⁹ Launcelot M. Crawford Diaries, September 15, 1896; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

²⁶⁰ Annie was a servant in Angus Crawford's household in the 1890s. Blackford reportedly tried to hire her when Crawford and his family left for Washington, D.C. Archie was a waiter at the Seminary. He was fired in 1874 for "insolence," but was working at the school again in 1920 at the age of seventy-six. Launcelot M. Crawford Diaries, May 8, 1874; October 14, 1897; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA; 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Jefferson District, Alexandria, VA, 18; 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 9; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Jefferson District, Alexandria, VA, 22B; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 8, 2012).

as a butler when the war started. During the war, he joined the army as a private, serving a few months after the war ended in 1919.²⁶¹ A few years later, he and his wife were living in Philadelphia, where he worked as a mixer in a candy factory.²⁶² With the purchase of his grandfather's land, Garnett Ashby returned to the Fort. His cousin, John Linton Ashby, had also left the Fort to work as a janitor in Washington, D.C. He later served in the army and possibly returned to his previous position after the war ended (Figure 33b).²⁶³ He continued to use his family home at the Fort as a summer retreat. Willis McKnight Jr., grandson of Willis and Harriet McKnight, worked as a chauffeur in Washington, D.C. when the war started. By the early 1920s, he and his wife were servants in a white family's home in the Del Ray neighborhood. They returned to the Fort by the 1930s, first living in his parents' home and then with his aunt, Clara Adams.²⁶⁴ By 1920, Alice Ashby, daughter of Samuel Ashby, was working as an examiner for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington, D.C. She lived with the Henderson family, who had a daughter about the same age and who also worked at the Bureau. Between 1930 and 1933, she moved to Alexandria and was a lay reader at St. Cyprian's at the Fort, although she still commuted to Washington, D.C. to work at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.²⁶⁵ Jacob Ball, adopted son of Harriet (McKnight) Shorts, was living in Washington, D.C. and working in the

²⁶¹ Garnett Ashby is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. U.S. National Cemetery Interment Control Forms, 1928-1962;

²⁶² World War I Registration Draft Cards, 1917-1918; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Philadelphia, PA, 14B; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 8, 2012).

²⁶³ U.S. World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918; U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Washington, D.C., 3B; www.ancestry.com (accessed April 4, 2014).

²⁶⁴ World War II Draft Registration Cards; World War I Draft Registration Cards; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Jefferson District, Alexandria, VA, 12A; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012).

²⁶⁵ 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Washington City, D.C., 4-5; www.ancestry.com (accessed May 16, 2012); "Parochial Reports of the Colored Missionary Jurisdiction of the Diocese of Virginia," *The Journal of the 138th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (1933): 197; *Boyd's District of Columbia Directory* ((Washington, D.C.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1930), 178; *Boyd's District of Columbia Directory* (Washington, D.C.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1933), 144.



Figure 33b. John Linton Ashby in uniform, date unknown. Courtesy of Stephanie Gordon.

Ordnance Bureau of the War Department, but was sick or injured and was convalescing at Howard University's Medical School.²⁶⁶ By the mid-1920s, he was possibly still in D.C. although he continued to own land at the Fort through the 1940s.²⁶⁷

Other men were recruited for the war effort while living at or near the Fort. Richard Ashby, a son of Samuel and Louise (Jackson) Ashby, was living at the Fort when he joined the 810th Pioneer Infantry as a private.²⁶⁸ It is unknown where Richard Ashby went after being discharged from the army in North Carolina; his name does not appear in the 1920 and 1930 censuses.²⁶⁹ Edward Ashby, the son of Isaac and Maria (Jackson) Ashby and Richard Ashby's

cousin, was also living in the neighborhood at the time he was drafted. He served in the U.S. Army as a private in the Second Billeting and Supply Detachment.²⁷⁰ He also does not appear in later censuses. Samuel Arthur Javins was working as a laborer at Episcopal High

²⁶⁶ World War I Registration Draft Cards, 1917-1918; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 8, 2012).

²⁶⁷ *Boyd's District of Columbia Directory* (Washington, D.C.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1923), 287.

²⁶⁸ Richard Ashby is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. U.S. National Cemetery Interment Control Forms, 1928-1962; World War I Registration Draft Cards; www.ancestry.com (accessed April 4, 2014).

²⁶⁹ William H. Ashby also possibly served. He filled out a draft card; however, I have been unable to document his military service. See the appendix for a list of men who possibly also served and were residents of the Fort.

²⁷⁰ U.S. National Cemetery Interment Control Forms, 1928-1962; U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006;

School when he was drafted and served in the 511th Engineer Service Battalion, a segregated troop based out of Petersburg, Virginia. As noted earlier, his parents, Samuel and Florence (McKnight) Javins, were working at a steel mill in Pennsylvania before returning home and buying land from Dr. Thomas Dodd. His brother, Robert, was already in Steelton, Pennsylvania at the outbreak of the war working for Bethlehem Steel. Robert came home to the Fort with his father and mother sometime in the late 1920s.²⁷¹ John H. Peters Sr. was working as a chauffeur for Angus Crawford at Fairfax Seminary when the war began.²⁷²

Some who left before World War I for employment opportunities never returned to the area. Two other sons of Samuel Javins stayed in Pennsylvania. Adolphus had left the Fort to work for Bethlehem Steel in Steelton, Pennsylvania with Robert, and stayed in Pennsylvania through the early 1940s.²⁷³ Another brother, Frank Louis Javins, was working as a porter for Underwood Typewriters in Buffalo, New York in June 1917. He then joined his family at the steel mill where he stayed with Adolphus.²⁷⁴ Odell Javins, another of the Javins brothers, did not go to Pennsylvania, but to Washington, D.C. where he worked at the Navy Yard. It is unclear what happened, but by 1932, his wife, Dorothy,

²⁷¹ World War I Registration Draft Cards; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 8, 2012).

²⁷² World War I Draft Registration Cards; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 9A; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012).

²⁷³ By 1930, he was working as a janitor in an office building in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Twelve years later, Adolphus was working at Harrisburg's *The Patriot* newspaper. World War I Registration Draft Cards, 1917-1918; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Steelton District, Dauphin County, PA, 16A; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Harrisburg City, Dauphin County, PA, 12B; U.S. World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 8, 2012).

²⁷⁴ Frank Louis Javins was living in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania by 1930 and was still working in a steel mill. By 1942, he was working in a local store when he registered for the draft again. World War I Registration Draft Cards, 1917-1918; U.S. World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Steelton District, Dauphin County, PA, 16A; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Harrisburg City, Dauphin County, PA, 12B; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 8, 2012).

was listed as a widow in the city directory.²⁷⁵ By the late 1910s, James Walter Craven and his family were living at the Fort while he commuted into Washington, D.C. to work at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. By 1920, he was a farm laborer at one of the many farms nearby.²⁷⁶ These Cravens soon left to places unknown.²⁷⁷

With the Great Depression beginning in 1929, the Fort residents supported their families during this period of economic hardship by turning to positions similar to what they had held since the late nineteenth century. Farm labor, construction, and service/domestic work were common positions (Table 2). By the early 1930s, John H. Peters Sr. was a janitor and his son, John Peters Jr., was a laborer. Both worked at Fairfax Seminary.²⁷⁸ Luther Hall, who lived across the street from Peters, did odd jobs—“clean floors, do patch work, painting walls in the kitchen, working walls down, plowing yards, fixing flower gardens, and things like that” for families who lived in “Rose Crest, Mount Ida, Jefferson Park, and places like that.”²⁷⁹

Other types of jobs also emerged during the Great Depression, many of which were related to the suburbanization of northern Virginia or the expansion of the federal government. Based on the 1930 U.S. Census, Robert Javins, who had returned to the Fort after living with his father and brothers in Pennsylvania, was working on the construction

²⁷⁵ 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Washington, D.C., 12A; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 8, 2012); *Boyd's District of Columbia Directory 1932* (Washington, D.C.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1932), 860.

²⁷⁶ Russell-Porte, 174; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church Township, Fairfax County, VA, 9; World War I Draft Registration Cards; www.ancestry.com (accessed May 16, 2012).

²⁷⁷ World War I Draft Registration Cards; World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942; 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Broad Run District; Loudoun County, VA, 37; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 15A; 1940 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 10A; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 12, 2012).

²⁷⁸ *Garrett-v-Creed* (1934), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Record Room, Fairfax, VA; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 14B; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012).

²⁷⁹ *Garrett-v-Creed* (1934), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Record Room, Fairfax, VA.

Table 2: Jobs of the Fort Residents based on the U.S. Census

Occupation	1870	1880	1900*	1910*	1920*	1930*	1940*
Blacksmith		1					
Brick Mason	1						
Butler							1
Carpenter					2		
Cemetery Caretaker						1	
Coachman/Chauffer				2	1	1	
Clerk							1
Cook		1	1	2	2		
Domestic/Maid/Servant	5	9	2	1	1	4	4
Engine Watchman						1	
Farmer/Truck Farmer	1	2	1		1		
Farm Laborer	4	21		3	5	2	
Fence-Builder		1					
Foreman					1		
Gardener		1		2			1
Janitor						1	1
Keeping House	3	19	9	2	9	13	8
Laborer			12	8	3	3	9
Laundress	2		3	7	6		
Messenger							1
Nurse						1	
Operator							1
Plasterer					1		
Railroad Worker		2				2	
School Teacher		1	1				
Seamstress				1			
Truck Driver							1
Waiter		4	3			1	2

*Twentieth-century censuses do not list “keeping house” as a form of employment; however, in keeping with previous censuses, I have placed wives and/or eldest daughters in this category unless they were otherwise listed as employed.

of the Memorial Bridge.²⁸⁰ Ben Scarborough, who was originally from South Carolina, was working as an engine watchman on the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac

²⁸⁰ 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 15B; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012).

Railroad.²⁸¹ Fred Hogan and Seymour Slaughter were employed at Potomac Yards.²⁸²

Sometime in 1930, however, Hogan left that job and became a driver for Marietta Minnigerode Andrews, a writer and artist. She was the widow of Eliphalet Andrews, the director of the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C.²⁸³ Slaughter, along with his wife, Jane, was originally from Culpeper County and had lived in many locations in Culpeper and Fairfax Counties as well as Alexandria. He held a variety of jobs from the 1910s through the 1940s.²⁸⁴ Charles Craven, who had previously worked at Fort Myer and Victor Donaldson's farm, was part of the Civil Works Administration by 1933.²⁸⁵

By 1940, many of these family members were no longer living at the Fort, and other families and individuals had moved in. This new group continued to work for Fairfax Seminary, local white families, and the federal government. Leaneur Randall and his son, Leaneur Jr., were waiters at Episcopal High School. The Randalls moved several times before settling at the Fort sometime around 1935. In 1930, the Randalls were living on Old Lincolnia Road in Fairfax County. Before that, he lived in New Jersey and worked as a

²⁸¹ 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 15A; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012).

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ *Garrett-v-Creed* (1934), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Record Room, Fairfax, VA.

²⁸⁴ World War I Draft Registration Cards; 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Cedar Mountain District, Culpeper County, VA, 12; 1910 Federal Census, Cedar Mountain District, Culpeper County, VA, 8A; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Mount Vernon District, Fairfax County, VA, 17B; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 14B; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012); *Hill's Alexandria Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory Co., 1938), 374.

²⁸⁵ *Garrett-v-Creed* (1934), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Record Room, Fairfax, VA.

Arthur Thomas, who lived on Howards Lane, had worked for a "Mrs. Andrews" for twenty years. It is possible that Thomas and Hogan worked for the same Marietta Andrews. By 1934, Arthur Thomas was working in a garage in Washington, D.C. *Garrett-v-Creed* (1934), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Record Room, Fairfax, VA.

In Lucian Johnson's oral history (2009), he also recalled African Americans working on various public works projects for Arlington County, including the installation of water and sewer lines during the Great Depression. He lived in the Seminary/Macedonia neighborhood. Lucian Johnson, interview by David Cavanaugh, transcription, 5 June 2009; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.



Figure 34. John Linton Ashby and Barbara A. Gordon (possibly ca. 1950's). Courtesy of Barbara A. Gordon.

laborer in a dye works and as a plumber's helper.²⁸⁶ John Linton Ashby II lived primarily in Washington, D.C., but moved to the Fort by the 1940 U.S. Census to live with his grandmother, Louise (Samuel Ashby's widow), while working as a messenger (Figure 34).²⁸⁷ Edgar Amacker, who—along with his wife, Eudora—was from Louisiana, was working for the War Department.

During World War I and the early 1920s,

he was employed as a laborer in the Ordnance Bureau of the War Department and then as a messenger. At first, they lived in D.C. and then moved to the Fort some time before 1935, living just to the west of the Peters family.²⁸⁸

The beginning of World War II again changed the work habits of the Fort residents. Maydell Casey Belk, who rented a home from her mother at the Fort from 1952 until 1965, recalled stories of African Americans building Fairlington in southern Arlington County, an all-white neighborhood created during World War II to offset the housing crisis caused by

²⁸⁶ World War I Draft Registration Card; World War II Draft Registration Card, 1942; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 16B; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Jersey City, Hudson County, N.J., 5A; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 15A-15B; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012).

²⁸⁷ 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 15B; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012); Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, May 25, 1994, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

²⁸⁸ World War II Draft Registration Card, 1942; 1940 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 10A; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Washington, D.C., 2B; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012).

the massive influx of defense workers. Others, she noted, were commuting into Alexandria to work at the U.S. Naval Torpedo Center along the city's waterfront.²⁸⁹

To mobilize the country for "total war," there were seven drafts starting in October 1940 through December 1943, which affected past and present Fort families as well as many other African American men and women living around Fairfax Seminary. Residents recognized the importance of military service and joined all branches of the armed services.²⁹⁰ Leaneur Randall Jr. had enlisted in the U.S. Army as a Warrant Officer on July 24, 1941, a position that few African American men held prior to the outbreak of World War II. In 1941, there were only thirteen African American warrant officers in the entire country; that number rapidly expanded during World War II.²⁹¹ Leaneur's brothers, Warren, George, and David, also became Warrant Officers on November 27, 1942, January 18, 1943, and February 11, 1943 respectively.²⁹² Herman Randall Sr. enlisted in the U.S. Army as a private on October 20, 1943; he rejoined the army during the Korean War along with his brothers, Clayton, Earl, and Joseph (Figure 35).²⁹³ Aaron Randall joined the U.S. Army a few months after the war was over as a corporal in December 1945.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁹ Maydell Casey Belk, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 6 June 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

²⁹⁰ For a complete list of African American World War II veterans, see the appendices.

²⁹¹ U.S. World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1936-1946; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012); Farrell J. Chiles, "African American Warrant Officers in Service to their Country: Their History, Achievements, and Contributions to the Military and the United States," Black History Month Presentation, Fort Leonard Wood, MO, 2005; Warrant Officers Heritage Foundation; <http://www.usawoa.org/woheritage/> (accessed July 9, 2012).

²⁹² David M. Randall is buried at Quantico National Cemetery. U.S. World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1936-1946; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012).

²⁹³ Herman Randall is also buried at Quantico National Cemetery. U.S. World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1936-1946; U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012).

²⁹⁴ Aaron O. Randall is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. U.S. World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1936-1946; U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012).



Figure 35. David Randall (in cockpit) and Joseph Randall (standing on wing) with WWII airplane, ca. 1940s. Courtesy of Gloria Jean Randall and Adrienne T. Washington.

A majority of the Cravens also joined the U.S. Army. Edward H. Craven, the son of James Walter and Susie (Garnett) Craven, enlisted in Company C of the 372 Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Army in 1942.²⁹⁵ A year later, his brother, Richard H. Craven, enlisted in the U.S. Army as a private.²⁹⁶ George W. Craven, the son of Charles and Verline Virginia (Garnett) Craven, joined the U.S. Navy in 1943.²⁹⁷ Interestingly, the Navy around this time had begun to permit African Americans to hold a wider range of positions in its fleet, thus

beginning the process to integrate crews and expanding opportunities for African American sailors.²⁹⁸ Charles H. Craven Jr., his brother, also enlisted in 1943; he was a private first class in the U.S. Army.²⁹⁹ Their brother, Thomas F. Craven Sr. was eighteen when he enlisted as a private in the U.S. Army the day after the bombing of Hiroshima on

²⁹⁵ Edward H. Craven is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. U.S. National Cemetery Interment Control Forms, 1928-1962;

²⁹⁶ U.S. World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 24, 2014).

²⁹⁷ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Death File, 1850-2010; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 24, 2014).

²⁹⁸ "Freedom to Serve: Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services: A Report by the President's Committee," (Washington, D.C.: General Printing Office, 1950), 19-20.

²⁹⁹ Charles H. Craven Jr. is buried at Lake Park Cemetery in Laurel, Mississippi. U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Death File, 1850-2010; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 24, 2014)

August 6, 1945. He remained in the service for another year and a half after World War II had ended.³⁰⁰

The McKnights enlisted in three different branches of the military. Marion McKnight joined the U.S. Navy sometime during the war.³⁰¹ Willis McKnight Jr. became a private in the U.S. Army on March 23, 1943 in Richmond, Virginia.³⁰² Charles H. McKnight was one of the few African Americans to join the U.S. Air Force during World War II and later fought in Korea and Vietnam.³⁰³ Both Willis and Charles H. McKnight were the great-grandchildren of Harriet (McKnight) Shorts.

The Halls also enlisted. Cornelius Hall, son of David and Mary (Wanzer) Hall was a Steward's Mate Petty Officer Second Class in the U.S. Coast Guard.³⁰⁴ His brother, Oscar Hall petty officer third class in the U.S. Navy during World War II and later Korea.³⁰⁵ Their uncle, Dolphus Hall, joined the U.S. Army as a private in 1942, serving until the end of the War.³⁰⁶

The army and navy were popular with other former and present residents. John Linton Ashby II joined the U.S. Navy in 1943, serving until the end of World War II. He then

³⁰⁰ Thomas F. Craven Sr. is buried at Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery in Prince George's County, Maryland. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Death File, 1850-2010; www.ancestry.com (accessed April 18, 2013); "Find-A-Grave," <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=CR&GSpartial=1&GSbyrel=all&GSst=22&GSctry=4&GSsr=2001&GRid=64343954> & (accessed April 18, 2013).

³⁰¹ Marion McKnight is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 24, 2014)

³⁰² Willis McKnight Jr. is buried at Quantico National Cemetery. U.S. World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1936-1946; U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012).

³⁰³ Charles H. McKnight is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 9, 2012).

³⁰⁴ Cornelius Hall is buried at Quantico National Cemetery. U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 24, 2014).

³⁰⁵ Oscar Hall is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 24, 2014).

³⁰⁶ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Death File, 1850-2010; U.S. World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 24, 2014).

rejoined for the Korean War in 1950.³⁰⁷ George Henry Casey Sr. briefly served in the U.S. Navy in 1944 as a seaman apprentice (also known as a seaman second class) before his honorable discharge from the U.S. Naval Training Station on the Great Lakes in Illinois (Figure 36).³⁰⁸ While living in Washington, D.C., brothers George and Frederick Peters, sons of John and Ella (Ashby) Peters, joined the U.S. Army in 1942 and 1944 respectively.³⁰⁹ Leon Strange, son of Charles Wanzer and Mary Strange, also joined the U.S. Army in 1944 in New Jersey, serving for a few months.³¹⁰



Figure 36. George H. Casey and Addie Casey “showing some moves.” Date unknown. Courtesy of Dr. Michael Casey.

By the post-World War II era, many of the Fort’s residents were commuting to work for the government. Sergeant Lee Thomas Young recalled that he was one of the few people in the military (he was stationed at Fort Belvoir), but—based on city directories—many of friends and neighbors were civil servants or worked in the military too.³¹¹ John Linton Ashby II, for instance, was an elevator operator at one of the memorials. His granddaughter recalled that he had two homes, the family one at the Fort and another

³⁰⁷ John Linton Ashby II is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Death File, 1850-2010; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 24, 2014).

³⁰⁸ George Henry Casey Sr. is buried at Quantico National Cemetery along with his spouse, Addie. George Henry Casey, “Certificate of Discharge,” 12 February 1944, Dr. Michael D. Casey Personal Papers, Alexandria, VA; U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 24, 2014).

³⁰⁹ U.S. World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 24, 2014).

³¹⁰ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Death File, 1850-2010; U.S. World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946; www.ancestry.com (accessed March 24, 2014).

³¹¹ Sergeant Lee Thomas Young, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, November 19, 1996; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

place in Washington, D.C. where he cared for needy relatives.³¹² Weldon Allen was a driver for the Virginia Department of Transportation.³¹³ John H. Peters Sr.'s daughter, Juanita, was a clerk at the Department of Commerce.³¹⁴ By 1960, there were a few who were employed by the military. Charles H. McKnight was still in the U.S. Air Force while another newcomer, Cliff Brown, was in the U.S. Army. Lonnie Belk was working as a driver at Ft. Belvoir along with Young.³¹⁵

Chapter 1 Conclusion

Throughout its one hundred year history, a combination of forces brought African Americans to live and work at the Fort in eastern Fairfax County, Virginia. The Civil War not only caused much upheaval throughout the region, but also gave former slaves the opportunity to leave their masters and flee to Union lines. Alexandria and eastern Fairfax County were places where many former slaves found sanctuary and restarted their lives as freed people. Although it is possible some of these men and women had lived around or on Fairfax Seminary before the Civil War, the only concrete documentation that currently exists points to Fauquier County and other rural areas to the south and west of the Seminary neighborhood as their former homes.

While the war propelled former slaves to the area, the possibility of owning land and finding jobs made them stay. Like elsewhere in the American South, the jobs these men and women took were not unlike those found under slavery; however, the limited economic security that they provided allowed a handful to invest in land, homes, and institutions. Later, the disruptions caused by World War I and World War II gave residents the opportunity to leave the

³¹² Maydell Casey Belk, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 6 June 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA; *Hill's Alexandria City Directory*, (Washington, D.C.: Hill Directory Co., 1952), n.p.

³¹³ *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Washington, D.C., Hill Directory Co., 1960), n. p.

³¹⁴ *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Washington, D.C., Hill Directory Co., 1960), n. p.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

Fort and work elsewhere. Some never returned. By the early 1950s, residents were employed in the federal government in Washington, D.C. or were in the military, although others still continued to work as domestics, farm laborers, and construction workers.

Besides employment, land ownership inspired former slaves and their descendants to remain at the Fort. Starting in the late 1870s, African Americans were able to buy land on the remains of Fort Ward from white landholders. Having once been seen as property themselves, former slaves saw these small lots as significant to their freedom. Of course, not all of the Fort's residents were able to purchase land, and many migrated to other places in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast to find work and economic security. Starting in the mid-1920s, much of the Fort was slated for suburban development; however, the eastern portion was still home to several African American families, some of whose ancestors were the original purchasers. For those who stayed at the Fort, this land was "family land," fusing family and extended kin with the soil that freedom helped purchase.

Chapter 2: Everyday Life at the Fort, 1870s-1950s

For historian Robert C. Kenzer, the rural neighborhood was the “basic unit of southern culture” during the mid-nineteenth century.³¹⁶ These neighborhoods, as noted in the previous chapter, were a source of extensive support for residents through kinship and friendship networks. By the end of the Civil War, three additional institutions—country stores, schools, and churches—emerged to dominate local life, giving residents opportunities to congregate and share information, ideas, and goods.³¹⁷

Several problems arise when studying rural, southern neighborhoods and their institutions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. First, local residents often used different names for the same location, especially over time, and disagreed over boundaries. Complicating matters further, local and state governments sometimes gave a different name to an area that was not used or recognized by local residents. Finally, white residents used their positions of privilege to define the landscape and ignored African American naming practices.

Few African Americans, including those residing at the Fort, left written documentation that aid us in understanding their definition of neighborhoods. Through the use of deeds, city directories, death certificates, tax records, and oral histories, it is clear there were several names used in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to describe this area of Eastern Fairfax County.³¹⁸ “Seminary,” “Theological Seminary,” “Seminary Heights,”

³¹⁶ Robert C. Kenzer, *Kinship and Neighborhood in a Southern Community: Orange County, North Carolina, 1849-1881* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 1.

³¹⁷ Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 212.

³¹⁸ Roads were also given different names depending on the periodization. For example, a deed describing the sale of land from the Watkins to the Herrids in 1884 notes that the property was along Munson

and “Seminary Hill(s)” were employed most frequently to describe the large area occupied by both blacks and whites around Fairfax Seminary, including the Fort.³¹⁹ These terms

Hill Road, which by that time was also called Braddock Road. Fairfax Deed Book F-5-145 and Deed Book 2-4; Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

³¹⁹ The racial politics of neighborhood naming practices is especially important to the history of the area known as “Macedonia/Seminary,” a neighborhood between Braddock Road, King Street, and Quaker Lane. As noted in the text above, deeds and tax records most frequently used the term, “Seminary,” to describe the residential area, both black and white, around Fairfax Seminary since the nineteenth century. White developers, with the suburbanization of eastern Fairfax County by the 1920s and 1930s, established new names for neighborhoods that distinguished their communities from the general “Seminary” one. This act, in part, appears to be racially driven, so that their neighborhoods would not be seen as racially heterogeneous. Simultaneously, twentieth-century texts written by whites use the pejorative term, “Mudtown,” to describe where African Americans lived in this area.

There also appears to be at least two names circulating within the community to delineate this particular African American neighborhood. Two oral histories use “Macedonia” to describe this neighborhood prior to urban renewal and condemn the term, “Mudtown.” Elizabeth Douglas, in an interview with Patricia Knock, explained that Macedonia was Woods Lane along Quaker Lane. She states that “Mudtown” was someplace else and that city leaders conflated Macedonia with Mudtown in the early 1960s during the construction of T.C. Williams High School: “We called Mudtown from Fort down to Donaldson’s store. We didn’t know what that was. Nobody tell nobody. Never called it Mudtown.... I never heard it until they started to build those houses. Then they called it Mudtown.” Julia Bradby also talked about “Mudtown,” which was used by whites, and the employment of Macedonia by African American residents:

PK: When did you—so do you live in what they called Mud Town?

Julia Bradby: Well they called it Mud Town.

PK: Or Macedonia?

Julia Bradby:....but I never knew it as Mud Town where we lived. We always lived in, right here in front of the Episcopal High School gate. We never was—we never lived over in that area that they called Mud Town.

PK: Did you hear the name of Macedonia?

Julia Bradby: Yes.

PK: Where is Macedonia?

Julia Bradby: Well, this is what they called over there in that area on Oak Hill. Over there was Macedonia. That’s what they called Macedonia, over there.

PK: Did you feel like Mud Town was part of Macedonia?

Julia Bradby:Well, sure

PK: It was.

Julia Bradby: It was. Because it was all in the same area. They just had different names that they, you know, they called it.

PK: That they called it. You think Macedonia was an older name—or they called them at the same time.

Julia Bradby: Yeah, I think it was something that was back when my parents were—you know living. You know when they were younger. This is what they called Macedonia....now the Mud Town—I never heard that until the renewal.

PK: Yeah.

Julia Bradby: Uh huh, I never heard Mud Town until then so they called the whole area Mud Town you know. But we never knew anything but Quaker Lane.

PK: Or, or you heard that.

Julia Bradby: Now, now we never lived in the area that they call Mud Town.

PK: Okay.

Julia Bradby: But all of this, they named it all the same so were all in the same area.

also seem to be embraced by both black and white residents and government officials in describing the broader community. Tax records from the 1870s and 1880s also divided the landscape between “Seminary,” which was to the north and west of Fairfax Seminary and “Quaker Hill,” which was south of the school.³²⁰ By the 1930s and 1940s, tax records used names given by white developers. These new suburban neighborhoods were given names such as “Fort Ward Heights” and “Eagle Crest,” often used to demarcate exclusivity.³²¹ A few death certificates collected from the 1910s through the 1950s also denote the location of burial as “Fort Ward,” “Seminary,” and “Near Seminary,” presumably meaning one of the

The name “Seminary” appears to exist simultaneously with the term, “Macedonia.” Using the term, “Seminary” as opposed to “Mudtown,” however, becomes particularly significant in 1960, as local residents fight urban renewal. A *Washington Post* article notes that the proposed site for Alexandria’s fourth public school was “known as Mudtown or Seminary.” African-American residents also established the “Seminary Civic Association,” a local Civil Rights organization that fought what would be known as the “Mudtown Urban Renewal Project” about this time. Finally, Dorothy Hall Smith also recalled “Seminary” as a name for the neighborhood. In her discussion of the Jackson family, she notes “...they had to go down to Mudtown, as we call Seminary today, to school.” “Mudtown Called Good School Site,” *Washington Post* 21 Oct. 1960, B3; “Neighbors Back Plea of Mudtown,” *Washington Post* 23 Nov. 1960, B1; Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview with Patricia Knock, transcription, May 25, 1994; Elizabeth Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992; Julia M.A. Bradby, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 28 July 1992; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

Two sources that describe “Mudtown” correlates with the location of Macedonia/Seminary. Dick Daniels, a student at Episcopal High School and the son of one of its teachers, wrote an unpublished history that explained the location of the neighborhood and the origin of its name. In John White’s *Chronicles of the Episcopal High School in Virginia 1939-1989*, Daniels is quoted: “[i]n the very early twenties there were no paved roads nearer than Stanton’s store at the foot of Quaker Lane. King Street Road was paved to Janney’s Lane, the western boundary of the City of Alexandria. Braddock Road was paved to Lloyd’s Lane. Between these points mud reigned supreme, hence the name Mudtown” (p. 142). The other story, which appears in a *Washington Post* article from 1965, ties the name to the construction of mud huts by Civil War soldiers who lived in the area: “Mudtown is in the center of one of the busiest sections of Alexandria, between King Street extended and Quaker Lane, south of the Bradlee Shopping Center. It is a century-old Negro settlement and may have acquired its name when Civil War soldiers built wooden huts in the area and plastered them with mud” (“Old-Time Residents Have Returned to Mudtown But Their Homes No Longer Present an Eyesore,” *Washington Post* 15 August 1965, B1). Both of these primary sources attempt to justify the name “Mudtown” and try to avoid any negative connotation associated with the term.

I have only used this term in the following situations: when 1) “Mudtown” is in a direct quote or 2) clearly referencing the “Mudtown Urban Renewal Project.”

³²⁰ Fairfax County Property Tax Records, 1870s-1880s; Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

³²¹ Fairfax County Property Tax Records, 1941; Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.



Figure 37. St. George's Hall on the campus of the Virginia Theological Seminary with Good Shepherd in background. Date unknown. Courtesy of Virginia Theological Seminary.

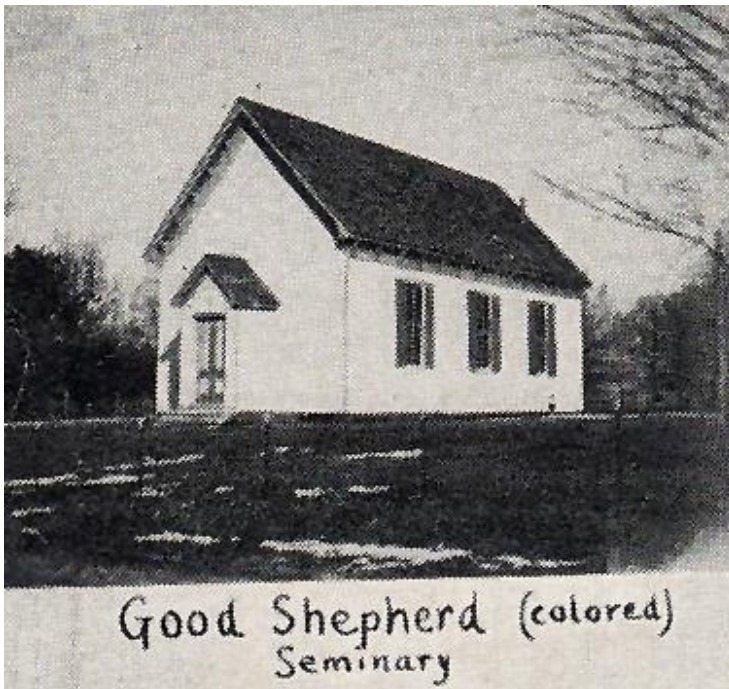


Figure 38. Good Shepherd Seminary on the campus of the Virginia Theological Seminary. Date unknown. Courtesy of Virginia Theological Seminary.

cemeteries located in the Fort neighborhood or nearby.³²² Oral histories with former African American residents speak to the existence of names used by African Americans to describe their neighborhood within the Seminary. These interviews include descriptions of the Fort.³²³

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, African Americans (as well as whites) established institutions catering to residents throughout the Fairfax Seminary area. Residents travelled to other sections of the Seminary to go to schools, churches, and stores; no one neighborhood, including the Fort, maintained all three institutions. Sometimes, they even

³²² Lucille Butler, Death Certificate, November 2, 1917; Mary Casey, Death Certificate, November 16, 1920; Burney Terrell, Death Certificate, July 4, 1930; Mamie Ellen Randall, Death Certificate, February 7, 1950; Virginia Bureau of Vital Statistics, Richmond, VA.

³²³ Elizabeth Henry Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 28 March 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

traveled to Alexandria, Bailey's Crossroads, Manassas, or Washington, D.C. By the 1920s, the intersection of King Street, Quaker Lane, and Braddock Road had become the center of the Seminary community, especially for its African American residents. Besides being the crossroads of two major thoroughfares (Braddock Road and King Street), it was also the location of two main African American institutions—Oakland Baptist Church and the Seminary School—as well as a country store, which served both black and white residents. After World War II, several businesses and a shopping center were located at this intersection in order to serve the growing number of white suburban developments in the area.

This chapter explores the emergence of the country store, public schooling, and churches in the years following the Civil War through the mid-twentieth century around Fairfax Seminary. As demonstrated by historians, including Kenzer, these institutions were central to creating a sense of community in rural areas of the American South. They were also important to the African American residents of the Fort who travelled throughout Fairfax Seminary to visit these institutions. Ultimately, these travels only intensified the cohesiveness and connectedness of the larger Seminary community among African American residents (Figure 39).

Religion

Religion, in both its personal and organizational forms, was an important part of African American life in Virginia before the Civil War. Late eighteenth century evangelical revivalism—which complimented new concepts of freedom within the young republic—reinforced the growing antislavery movement and its new conception of grace (attainable regardless of social status, gender, or race). For the first time, free blacks and enslaved

have a different message for slaves. Slave owners were only willing to promote religious instruction if it reinforced servitude and obedience towards the master class. In Virginia, the majority of these slaveholders was part of the Episcopal Church and feared that certain aspects of Christianity, such as its emphasis on literacy, could foment rebellion. In 1831, their fears were realized with the Nat Turner Rebellion. Turner believed his religious visions had told him to lead his fellow slaves in open revolt. He also admitted that his parents had taught him to read and write.³²⁵ In response, white Virginians, and slaveholders throughout the American South, cracked down on preaching, literacy, and any form of congregation among African Americans, both free and enslaved.

In cities such as Alexandria, free blacks and, to a lesser extent, slaves practiced religion in an open manner even after the Nat Turner Rebellion. Alexandria, which was part of the District of Columbia through 1847, had one of the largest free black populations in the Mid-Atlantic region, second only to Baltimore.³²⁶ As in other cities within the Mid-Atlantic, the lack of doctrinal autonomy and a hierarchical church organization allowed Methodism and Baptism to thrive in Alexandria's African American communities. The First Colored Baptist Church (later known as the Alfred Street Baptist Church) was established in 1803 in a neighborhood known as "The Bottoms." Residents of "Hayti," another African American neighborhood to the south of King Street and east of Washington Street, often attended Trinity Methodist Church with local whites before establishing their own church

³²⁵ *The Confessions of Nat Turner, the Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, VA. as Fully and Voluntarily Made to Thomas R. Gray* (Richmond, VA: Thomas R. Gray, 1832); <http://books.google.com/> (accessed May 30, 2012).

³²⁶ Dylan Pritchett, *A Look at the African-American Community through Alexandria's Eyes: 1780-1810* (Alexandria, VA: Preserving Alexandria's Cultural Traditions (PACT) Project, 1993), 56.

in 1834, known as the Davis Chapel (today called Roberts Memorial United Church). Both churches had white ministers and were connected to white churches.³²⁷

With the Civil War, open religious expression among former slaves was no longer banned, allowing some to voice that the war was God's way of ending slavery. Peter Randolph, a former slave from Prince George County, Virginia, who in the 1850s became a Baptist minister in Massachusetts, returned to Virginia during the Civil War as a USCT chaplain. In his autobiography, he recalled how former slaves in Richmond's refugee camps were "running, leaping, and praising God that freedom had come at last" near the war's end. These men and women extemporized spirituals in the streets: "[s]lavery chain done broke at last; slavery chain done broke at last—I's goin' to praise God till I die."³²⁸

It is unclear if or where the first African American residents at the Fort and around Fairfax Seminary attended church on a regular basis when they first settled in the area. By the end of the Civil War, there were four additional African American Baptist churches—Shiloh, Beulah, Third Baptist, and Zion—in Alexandria.³²⁹ Two churches in Nauck/Green Valley, another African American neighborhood established after the Civil War in present-day Arlington County, were close by. The Little Zion Church (later known as the Lomax A.M.E. Zion Church) moved from the Freedman's Village on Robert E. Lee's former estate to

³²⁷ Belinda Blomberg, *The Formation of Free Black Communities in Nineteenth Century Alexandria, Virginia*, no. 2 (Alexandria, VA: Alexandria Archaeology Publications, 1989), 1-6; Alton S. Wallace, Katherine E. Cain, and Carolyn C. Rowe, *I Once Was Young: History of the Alfred Street Baptist Church, 1803-2003* (Littleton, MA: Tapestry Press, 2003); Fern C. Stukenbroeker, *A Watermelon for God: A History of Trinity United Methodist Church, Alexandria, Virginia, 1774-1974* (Alexandria, VA: Stukenbroeker, 1974).

³²⁸ Peter Randolph, *From Slave Cabin to the Pulpit: The Autobiography of Rev. Peter Randolph: The Southern Question Illustrated and Sketches of Slave Life* (Boston: James H. Early, 1893), 59-60; <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/randolph/randolph.html> (accessed May 30, 2012). See also Levine, 137-138.

³²⁹ "Beulah Baptist Church," http://www.aaheritageva.org/search/sites.php?site_id=464 (accessed May 30, 2012).

the neighborhood in 1874.³³⁰ Mount Zion Baptist Church was originally established at another Freedmen's Village in Washington, D.C. After being at Arlington Ridge Road from 1866 through 1885, it also moved to Nauck/Green Valley.³³¹

Like much of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, Fairfax Seminary did not pursue aggressive evangelizing among former slaves. Its previous position was to cater to the planter elite and affirm their class and racial standing. Many white Episcopalians in northern Virginia were also part of the American Colonization Society (ACS), which believed that racism was so entrenched in the United States that African Americans should be sent to West Africa to create their own country. ACS included several founding members of Fairfax Seminary and its graduates, some of whom did missionary work in Liberia. Although the Episcopal Church barred itself from owning slaves, the Seminary had rented them from its neighbors to do much of the menial labor on campus. Faculty was also allowed to own slaves.³³²

Immediately following the Civil War, northern Episcopalian parishes created the Protestant Episcopal Freedmen's Commission to establish schools near black Episcopal congregations and to support local white priests who had begun proselytizing among former slaves. Day schools, Sunday schools, and churches were central to the Commission's missionary work in Virginia. By the mid-1870s, the Commission noted

³³⁰ "Lomax African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church," http://www.aaheritageva.org/search/sites.php?site_id=607# (accessed May 30, 2012).

³³¹ "Mount Zion Baptist Church-Nauck Community," http://www.aaheritageva.org/search/sites.php?site_id=609 (accessed May 30, 2012).

³³² Joseph M. Constant, *No Turning Back: The Black Presence at Virginia Theological Seminary* (Brainerd, MN: Evergreen Press, 2009), 17-20; Marie Tyler-McGraw, *An African Republic: Black and White Virginians in the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 30-32.

apathy among white Episcopalians, both Northern and Southern, toward its missionary work despite some early successes.³³³

Since the late 1860s, many white Virginians, including Episcopal clergymen, had refused to embrace racial equality and supported segregation. Many church leaders were also calling for the segregation of blacks and whites into separate churches. By 1889, Virginia's Diocesan Council approved a change to its constitution reducing all African American parishes to the status of missions. African American clergy, who were to be trained at segregated seminaries (most notably the Bishop Payne Divinity and Industrial School in Petersburg, Virginia), were to provide for African American congregants. Along with the secondary status of their congregations, African American priests were no longer members of the Diocesan Council and had very limited voting privileges within the Church except as part of the state's missionary committee.³³⁴ African Americans protested these changes, warning that the church hurt its position among Virginia's African American communities.³³⁵

In the midst of debates on the position of African Americans in the Episcopal Church, a mission was established for African American residents living near Fairfax Seminary sometime in 1878. William Herbert Assheten, who was training at the Seminary to become a minister and taught at the high school, appears to have begun the mission.

³³³ John Carleton Hayden, *Reading, Religion, and Racism: The Mission of the Episcopal Church to Blacks in Virginia, 1865-1877* (Ph.D. Thesis, Howard University, 1972), 42-47, 195, 263-269.

³³⁴ "Report of the Committee on Diocesan Colored Work," *Journal of the Eighty-Eighth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Wm. Ellis Jones, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1883), 78-80.

³³⁵ "Protest of the Colored Clergy," *Journal of the Ninety-Fourth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Wm. Ellis Jones, Steam Book and Job Printers, 1889), 75; G. Maclaren Brydon, D.D., *The Episcopal Church among the Negroes of Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Virginia Diocesan Library, 1937), 8-20; Constant, 22-25, 28-30.

Based on its description, the mission first was a Sunday school that “promises well” with fifty “scholars,” probably both adults and children.³³⁶ By 1890, Fairfax Seminary reported the establishment of a night school too.³³⁷

There is no information as to whom among the Fort’s early residents initially joined the Seminary’s Sunday school or attended services. Based on annual reports, the number of pupils at the school fluctuated greatly, ranging from ninety-one to twenty-five during the early history of the mission (Table 3). One of the lows occurred in May 1888-April 1889 when the Diocesan Council chose to limit the role of African American clergy and congregations in the Diocese. In the mid-1910s, its number of Sunday school students dropped significantly again, possibly caused by some families migrating away from the neighborhood. The mission temporarily closed during World War I and reopened after the war to small numbers.

Table 3: The Number of Teachers/Officers and Students at Fairfax Seminary’s African American Mission, 1877-1943¹

Years	Sunday School Teachers/Officers	Sunday School Students
1877-1878 ²	----	50
1878-1879 ²	----	----
1879-1880	6	81
1880-1881	8	66
1881-1882	8	80
1882-1883	7	83
1883-1884	10	90
1884-1885	10	60

³³⁶ Kinloch Nelson, “Mission Work at Theological Seminary,” *Journal of the Eighty-Third Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Clemmitt & Jones, Steam Book and Job Printers, 1878), 239; L. M. Blackford, “Report of Principal of the High School,” *Journal of the Eighty-Fifth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Wm. Ellis Jones, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1880), 50-51.

³³⁷ “Report of the Mission Stations Around the Theological Seminary for the Year Ending April 30, 1890,” *Journal of the Ninety-Fifth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Wm. Ellis Jones, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1890), 269.

Years	Sunday School Teachers/Officers	Sunday School Students
1885-1886	7	65
1886-1887	7	40
1887- 1888	9	80
1888- 1889	8	25
1889- 1890	8	56
1890-1891	10	52
1891-1892	10	64
1892-1863	8	91
1893-1894	9	66
1894- 1895	7	75
1895-1896	6	48
1896-1897	4	25
1897-1898 ²	----	----
1898-1899	7	50
1899-1900	6	63
1900-1901	5	60
1901-1902	7	54
1902-1903	5	49
1903-1904	3	36
1904-1905	3	46
1905-1906	5	34
1906-1907	4	55
1907-1908	6	50
1908-1909	6	75
1909-1910	5	72
1910-1911 ²	----	----
1911-1912	5	55
1912-1913	5	60
1913-1914	4	38
1914-1915	4	36
1915-1916 ²	----	----
1916-1917 ²	----	----
1917-1918 ²	----	----
1918-1919 ³	----	----
1919-1920	2	10
1920-1921	2	15
1921-1922	4	35
1922-1923	2 ⁴	12
1923-1924 ⁵	----	----
1924-1925 ⁵	----	----
1925-1926 ⁵	----	----
1926-1927 ⁵	----	----

Years	Sunday School Teachers/Officers	Sunday School Students
1927-1928 ⁵	----	----
1928-1929 ⁵	----	----
1929-1930 ⁵	----	----
1930-1931 ⁵	----	----
1931-1932	3	30
1932-1933	7	41
1933-1934 ²	----	----
1934-1935 ²	----	----
1935-1936 ²	----	----
1936-1937	5	32
1927-1938	6	32
1938-1939	5	31
1939-1940	5	31
1940-1941	3	14
1941-1942 ²	----	----
1942-1943	2	21

¹ This table is based upon data from the annual reports of the Diocese of Virginia. The data reported by Fairfax Seminary's mission administration comprised of activities recorded from May to April.

² It is unclear why there is no information for these years.

³ The annual diocesan report noted that the Chapel was closed because of World War I. It is possible—although the U.S. did not declare war until 1917—that Good Shepherd was negatively affected by war in Europe from 1915 through 1916 as well.

⁴ For this year, the annual report notes that the teachers were white. Other years did not state the race of the teachers.

⁵ About this time, the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia chose to buy the former African American schoolhouse at the Fort. It appears that the Chapels, both on the Seminary grounds and at the Fort, were closed for several years.

Sometime before April 1882, students at the Seminary were holding “a regular weekly service for the servants employed about the Seminary.”³³⁸ Around the same time, Launcelot Minor Blackford, the headmaster at Episcopal High School, recorded in his diary that Sunday's offertory and school contributions were being put aside for the construction of an African American chapel; the local Missionary Society donated \$26.17.³³⁹ By June 1882, the Board of Trustees for Fairfax Seminary gave permission to Reverend Benjamin

³³⁸ Kinloch Nelson, “Report of the Mission Stations around the Theological Seminary for the Year Ending April 30, 1882,” *Journal of the Eighty-Seventh Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Richmond, VA: Wm. Ellis Jones, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1882), 237.

³³⁹ “Report of the Executive Committee,” Feb. 22, 1882, Episcopal High School, Alexandria, VA; Launcelot Minor Blackford Diaries, 9 April 1882, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

Dennis to build “‘a chapel for colored people’ at which Seminary students could preside.”³⁴⁰ It was named the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, but Blackford and other locals called it St. Cyprian’s.³⁴¹ By November 1883, Blackford attended “a magic lantern and musical entertainment at St. Cyprian’s Chapel.”³⁴² A few months later, the Seminary reported at the Episcopal Church’s annual council meeting that “a commodious and neat chapel” was built under the impetus of Reverend Dennis who collected donations for the project. The building was also to serve as classroom space for Seminary faculty or for other religious purposes.³⁴³

In the late nineteenth century, white students from the Seminary, overseen by a faculty member, performed services and ran the Sunday school.³⁴⁴ Charles McKnight, great-grandson to Willis and Harriet McKnight, recalled a student named Dr. Warner who performed services at St. Cyprian’s. On Christmas Eve one year, Warner climbed on the roof of the church dressed as Santa Claus. After making some noises, he then jumped down

³⁴⁰ Robert W. Prichard with Julia E. Randle, *Hail! Holy Hill! A Pictorial History of the Virginia Theological Seminary* (Brainerd, MN: RiverPlace Communication Arts, 2012), 78; Rev. William A. R. Goodwin, D.D. *History of the Theological Seminary in Virginia*, vol. 1 (Rochester, NY: Du Bois Press, 1923), 258.

³⁴¹ The Episcopal Church’s annual reports called the mission “Chapel Good Shepherd” in 1895. “St. Cyprian’s” does not appear in the annual reports until 1932 when the new mission in the old schoolhouse at the Fort is opened. Samuel A. Wallis, “Report of Seminary Missions for Year Ending April 30, 1895,” *Journal of the one Hundredth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Wm. Ellis Jones Steam Book and Job Printer, 1895), 219; “Parochial Reports of the Colored Missionary Jurisdiction of the Diocese of Virginia,” *The Journal of the 137th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (1932): 309.

³⁴² Launcelot Minor Blackford Diaries, 24 November 1883, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

³⁴³ Kinloch Nelson, “Report of the Mission Stations around the Theological Seminary for the Year Ending April 30, 1884,” *Journal of the Eighty-Ninth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, (Richmond, VA: Wm. Ellis Jones, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1884), 220.

³⁴⁴ “Report of the Executive Committee,” Feb. 22, 1882, Missionary Society Minutes; Episcopal High School Archives, Alexandria, VA. The Missionary Society also paid a “special subscription in the school” for St. Cyprian’s in 1889 and 1890. See “Report of the Treasurer,” Dec. 12, 1889 and “Report of the Executive Committee,” Dec. 18, 1890; Missionary Society Minutes, Episcopal School Archives, Alexandria, VA.

and handed out candy.³⁴⁵ Prayer meetings were held on a weekly basis, with communion being first reported in 1889. In 1900, the number of services began being recorded. The numbers fluctuated from twenty-seven in 1900 to forty-eight in 1914.³⁴⁶ The mission also periodically held special events. In November 1887, Blackford recorded a charity concert at St. Cyprian's Chapel to purchase "an organ for the mission at Sharen which was well attended and a great success." In June 1888, two ministers spoke at the chapel. One of them was a Reverend Dr. Nelson, who Blackford noted was African American. A year later, Reverend Francis McNeece Whittle, the Bishop of Virginia, visited and made an address.³⁴⁷ In 1895, parishioners wanted a vestry room as part of St. Cyprian's and held another concert as a fundraiser.³⁴⁸ Six years later, there was another concert, which Blackford described at length:

At night there was an amateur contest in Liggett Hall for the benefit of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, which was successful. One of the singers, Miss Whittlesey of Alexandria, Va., was our guest. The general quality of the performance was uncommonly good, and the audience uncommonly appreciative and responsive.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁵ Charles H. McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

³⁴⁶ Kinloch Nelson, "Report of the Mission Stations around the Theological Seminary for the Year Ending April 30, 1884," *Journal of the Eighty-Ninth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, (Richmond, VA: Wm. Ellis Jones, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1884), 220; Kinloch Nelson, "Report of the Mission Stations around the Theological Seminary for the Year Ending April 30, 1889," *Journal of the Ninety-Fourth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Wm. Ellis Jones, Steam Book and Job Printers, 1889), 243; Samuel A. Wallis, "Report of Seminary Missions for Year Ending April 30, 1900," *Journal of the 105th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond, VA: William Ellis Jones, 1900), 180; "Fairfax County—Parochial Reports," *Journal of the 119th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (1914): 210.

³⁴⁷ Launcelot Minor Blackford Diaries, 25 November 1887, 3 June 1888, 23 June 1889; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

³⁴⁸ Launcelot Minor Blackford Diaries, April 25, 1895; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

³⁴⁹ Launcelot Minor Blackford Diaries, May 13, 1901; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

The purpose of this fundraiser is unknown; however, it is possible the monies were to go toward structural improvements to the building.

Baptisms, weddings, confirmations, and funerals were all held at St. Cyprian's (see Table 4).³⁵⁰ For the most part, the numbers for these events were quite low except for three time periods during the existence of the mission. The first spike was in baptisms and confirmations from 1887 to 1890. These numbers correlate with the segregation of Virginia's Episcopal Church, which occurred in 1889. Perhaps African American congregants hoped that, by increasing their commitment to the church, the Diocese would not segregate black and white members. The next increase in baptisms and confirmations came between 1906 and 1909. It is at this time that Fairfax Seminary, under the guidance of Angus L. Crawford, Dean of the Seminary, renovated St. Cyprian's. The annual journal for the diocese described the improvements as follows:

[r]ich stained glass windows, the work of a lady in the neighborhood, and tasteful chancel furniture and pews [which] contribute to make it a place of beauty and comfort. Most of these improvements represent the deep interest of Rev. Dr. Crawford, Dean of the Seminary, through whom generous friends have furnished the means for their accomplishment.³⁵¹

Crawford's unpublished memoir states that a Mr. and Mrs. S. F. Houston gave \$700 to restore the building. A Mrs. Andrews, probably Marietta Minnigerode Andrews, "took a deep interest in it [the chapel] and kindly used her artistic talent in decorating the windows and walls."³⁵² Both Marietta and her husband, Eliphalet Andrews, were artists

³⁵⁰ See also Launcelot Minor Blackford Diaries, 2 May 1889 and 26 December 1889; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

³⁵¹ "Report of the Rev. John Moncure, D. D., Archdeacon of the Colored Work, for the Year Ending April 30, 1907," *Journal of the 112th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond, VA: William Ellis Jones, 1907), 30.

³⁵² Angus Crawford, "Life of Dr. Angus Crawford for his Children," (n.d.), 69; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

from Washington, D.C. As noted earlier, her husband was the director of the Corcoran School of Art and had built a home called Vauxcluse (also spelled Vauxcleuse) to the southwest of the Seminary in the early 1900s.³⁵³ Finally, there is one more jump in activity from 1931-1932 when St. Cyprian's moved to the Fort neighborhood (Table 4). The five baptisms after a long period of not administering the sacraments were possibly tied to the burning of Oakland Baptist Church and the re-opening of the chapel in a new location.

Table 4: The Number of Episcopal Mission Activities among at Fairfax Seminary's African American Mission, 1879-1943¹

Years	Baptisms	Confirmations	Marriages	Funerals
1879- 1880	0	0	0	0
1880- 1881	0	0	0	0
1881-1882	0	1	0	0
1882- 1883	0	0	0	0
1883- 1884	0	0	1	0
1884- 1885	0	0	1	0
1885- 1886	0	0	2	3
1886- 1887	0	0	0	1
1887- 1888	7	3	0	2
1888- 1889	2	7	0	2
1889- 1890	7	0	2	3
1890- 1891	3	0	0	5
1891- 1892	0	0	1	2
1892- 1893	0	0	1	5
1893-1894	1	5	0	1
1894- 1895	8	4	0	0
1895- 1896	0	0	0	0
1896- 1897	0	0	0	0
1897-1898 ²	----	----	----	----
1898-1899	0	0	0	0
1899-1900	1	0	0	0
1900-1901	2	4	1	0
1901- 1902	1	1	0	1
1902- 1903	0	0	0	1
1903- 1904	0	0	2	5
1904- 1905	2	0	2	2

³⁵³ 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Washington, DC, 18; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Washington, D.C., 8B; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Washington, D.C., 3B; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church, Fairfax County, VA, 15B; www.ancestry.com (accessed January 22, 2013); *Garrett-v-Creed* (1934), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Research Room, Fairfax, VA.

Years	Baptisms	Confirmations	Marriages	Funerals
1905-1906	0	0	1	1
1906-1907	13	7	1	3
1907-1908	2	0	0	1
1908-1909	3	13	0	1
1909-1910	2	3	0	0
1910-1911 ²	----	----	----	----
1911-1912	2	0	0	4
1912-1913	1	0	0	0
1913-1914	2	0	0	0
1914-1915	1	0	0	0
1915-1916 ²	----	----	----	----
1916-1917 ²	----	----	----	----
1917-1918 ²	----	----	----	----
1918-1919 ³	----	----	----	----
1919-1920	0	0	2	0
1920-1921	0	0	0	0
1921-1922	0	0	0	0
1922-1923	0	0	0	0
1923-1924 ⁴	----	----	----	----
1924-1925 ⁴	----	----	----	----
1925-1926 ⁴	----	----	----	----
1926-1927 ⁴	----	----	----	----
1927-1928 ⁴	----	----	----	----
1928-1929 ⁴	----	----	----	----
1929-1930 ⁴	----	----	----	----
1930-1931 ⁴	----	----	----	----
1931-1932	5	0	0	0
1932-1933	0	0	1	0
1933-1934 ²	----	----	----	----
1934-1935 ²	----	----	----	----
1935-1936 ²	----	----	----	----
1936-1937	3	9	0	0
1937-1938	0	0	0	0
1938-1939	0	0	0	0
1939-1940	0	5	0	0
1940-1941	2	0	0	0
1941-1942 ⁵	----	----	----	----
1942-1943 ⁵	2	0	0	0
Total	72	62	18	43

¹ This table is based upon data from the annual reports of the Diocese of Virginia. The data reported by Fairfax Seminary's mission administration comprises of activities recorded from May to April. Unfortunately, there is no information that connects specific names to these events.

² It is unclear why there is no information for these years.

³ The annual diocesan reports noted that the Chapel was closed because of World War I. It is possible, although the U.S. did not declare war until 1917, that Good Shepherd was negatively affected by war in Europe from 1915 through 1916.

⁴ About this time, the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia chose to buy the former African American schoolhouse at the Fort. It appears that the Chapels, both on the Seminary grounds and at the Fort, were closed for several years.

⁵ World War II also impacted the day-to-day functioning of St. Cyprians.

At the same time the Episcopal Church was struggling with the role of African Americans within its church, another religion was growing in popularity around Fairfax Seminary. The Baptist Church, already one of the most popular churches among African Americans living in antebellum Virginia, saw an increase in participation with the end of slavery. As Lois E. Myers and Rebecca Sharpless note in their essay on rural African American churches, by the beginning of the twentieth century “ninety percent of rural African Americans were either Methodists or Baptists, with Baptists outnumbering Methodists two to one.”³⁵⁴ Paul Harvey in *Redeeming the South* states that 60 percent of African Americans living in the South were Baptists by 1910. The National Baptist Convention, which was the umbrella organization for almost all African American Baptist Churches, was reportedly the “largest black religious organization in the world” at the turn of the twentieth century.³⁵⁵

Although they were also segregated, Baptist churches were seen as more democratic in both organizational structure and spiritual expression, making them incredibly popular among potential African American congregants. Church members hired and fired ministers, controlled finances and property, and dictated whether a congregation participated in statewide, regional, or national Baptist organizations. Church members also censured each other for offenses, such as dancing, swearing, and adultery. Finally, they

³⁵⁴ Lois E. Myers and Rebecca Sharpless, “‘Of the Least and the Most’: The African American Rural Church,” in *African American Life in the Rural South, 1900-1950*, ed. R. Douglas Hurt (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 56.

³⁵⁵ Harvey, 3.

expelled fellow members for repeated transgressions against the moral expectations of the congregation.³⁵⁶ For some churches, services turned to improvisational musical traditions and oratory styles that pre-dated the Civil War. Others became more formalized with standardized sermons, set times and dates for services, published hymnals, and full-time, divinity-school trained ministers.³⁵⁷

The role of African American women within Baptist churches is also noteworthy, especially considering their exclusion from so many other aspects of public life during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Despite interpretations of the Bible that rendered women subordinate to men within the church, African American women found ways to be leaders within their congregation and participated indirectly in ministerial duties.³⁵⁸ Church mothers, for example, had special roles caring for the sick and dying and helping the young through rites of passage. Female auxiliary organizations on the congregational, state, and national levels debated and organized around political and social causes, including temperance and child welfare.³⁵⁹

The origin of Oakland Baptist Church is difficult to reconstruct as a fire destroyed the church's early records. Nevertheless, through oral histories and other archival resources, it is possible to shed some light on the church's early years. On September 15, 1888, African Americans reportedly established the Oak Hill Baptist Mission, probably

³⁵⁶ Ed Ayers notes that the practice of disciplining church members declined by the beginning of the twentieth century because of increasing access to secular entertainment. Ayers, 169.

³⁵⁷ Harvey, 107-110.

³⁵⁸ For a thorough discussion of women in the Baptist Church, see Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994). See also Harvey, 118-119; 238-243.

³⁵⁹ Concerns tied to temperance often brought black and white women together, even in public spaces. State laws otherwise banned inter-racial gatherings during the Jim Crow era. Ayers, 178-181.

using a building on John W. Green's "Oak Hill" property to the southeast of the Seminary.³⁶⁰ By 1889, Margaret Walker, who lived at Fairfax Seminary with her children and husband, Reverend Cornelius Walker, wrote to her niece that her cook named Josephine was "a most devoted Baptist & doesn't believe Episcopalians can be Christians."³⁶¹ Conflict between Episcopalians and Baptists was common in the late nineteenth century, with both religions questioning the validity of the other. Edward Ayers in *The Promise of the New South* gives several examples from North and South Carolina of disdain between these two groups.³⁶²

A church for the Oak Hill mission was constructed in the early 1890s with help from ministers in Alexandria and present-day Arlington County. On September 15, 1891, Oakland became recognized as a congregation of its own with Reverend E. R. Jackson as its first pastor.³⁶³ Ordained at Metropolitan Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., Jackson preached at both Zion Baptist Church in Green Valley/Nauck and Oakland at the end of the nineteenth century.³⁶⁴ Later in 1891, Brook Johnson sold 0.2 acres of land at the

³⁶⁰ On June 1, 1850, Robert P. Violett and Christopher Neale, commissioners for the court, sold this plat to James and Jane Green to pay John Peyton's debts (NOTE: the land was surveyed at this time). On July 15, 1860, James and Jane Green of Alexandria then sold this land, "formerly known as Oak Hill," to Aquilla Lockwood. Eight years later, Lockwood sold the land to John W. Green, James and Jane Green's son, also noting that it was "formerly known as Oak Hill." On July 9, 1908, John and his wife, Fanny, then sold the land to Winslow H. Randolph. Fairfax Deed Books I-4, C-4, Q-3, 2-6, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

Julia Bradby in her oral history also mentioned that Oak Hill Baptist Mission was named after its location at Oak Hill. Julia M. A. Bradby, interview by Patricia Knock and Dr. Henry Mitchell, transcription, July 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

³⁶¹ Unfortunately, I have been unable to identify whether "Josephine" was living at the Fort. It is without question that she would be living on or near the Seminary. Margaret Jane Fisher Walker, to Eliza Warren Brown, April 19, 1889; Mary Eliza Brown Papers, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.

³⁶² Ayers 167.

³⁶³ *Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Oakland Baptist Church and the Twenty-fifth of Its Minister Rev. Luther Mills: September 18, 1966—October 4, 1966* (Alexandria, VA: Oakland Baptist Church Anniversary Committee, 1966).

³⁶⁴ John W. Cromwell, "The First Negro Churches of Washington, D.C.," *Journal of Negro History* 7.1 (January 1922): 93-94; <http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/cromwell/cromwell.html> (accessed June 1, 2012); "Church History," *120th Anniversary Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Arlington, Virginia* (1986), Virginia Room Archives, Arlington Central Library, Arlington, VA; *Minutes of the 12th Annual Session of the Northern Virginia Union Baptist Sunday School Convention* (Philadelphia: The Christian Banner Print, 1903); *Minutes of the 19th*

intersection of King Street, Quaker Lane, and Braddock Road to the trustees of Oakland Baptist Church for “the present and future members of the said Oakland Baptist Church.”³⁶⁵ Based on the present-day foundation stone, a church building was completed in 1893.

Based on oral histories and a 1966 history written for Oakland’s seventh-fifth anniversary, both men and women were founders of Oakland: Clara (Shorts) Adams, William Carpenter, Brook Johnson (who had previously owned the land on which the church was built), John William Terrell, John Wesley Casey, Maggie Hall, Smith Wanzer, Daniel Simms Sr., Nancy Shepherd, and Harriet (McKnight) Shorts. Six of these men and women—Carpenter, Adams, Terrell, Casey, Hall, and Shepherd—were living at the Fort either when the 1880 or 1900 U.S. Census was taken.³⁶⁶ Daniel Simms and Brook Johnson were living in Macedonia/Seminary.³⁶⁷ In 1900, Smith Wanzer lived in Alexandria.³⁶⁸

Along with these founding members, three local residents who were members of other local Baptist churches, helped to establish Oakland. Matilda Wood along with her son William were members of the Third Baptist Church, and Mollie Nelson was a member of Shiloh Baptist Church. Both churches were located in Alexandria (Figures 40 and 41).³⁶⁹ All of them lived near Oakland but were reportedly not members. Nelson, although listed

Annual Session of the Northern Virginia Baptist Association (Washington, D.C.: Baptist Magazine Print, 1896), African American Annual Reports, 1865-1990, Virginia, Microfilm Reel 99, American Baptist Historical Society, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.

³⁶⁵ Fairfax Deed Book X-5, 210-211; Fairfax County Court Records, Fairfax, VA.

³⁶⁶ 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, VA, 9; 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, VA, 13-15; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 1, 2012).

³⁶⁷ 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, VA, 8 and 10; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 1, 2012).

³⁶⁸ It is also unclear what Smith Wanzer’s relationship was to the other Wanzers from the Macedonia/Seminary and Fort neighborhoods. His wife’s family, the Tolers, was from Fauquier County like many of the early residents of the Fort. *Richmond’s Directory of Alexandria, Virginia 1899-1900* (Washington, D.C.: Richmond & Co., 1899), 215; 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Alexandria City, VA, 22; 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Cedar Run District, Fauquier County, VA, 49; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 1, 2012).

³⁶⁹ *Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Oakland Baptist Church* n.p.; Mary Crozet Wood Johnson, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, 18 December 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

Table 5: Names and Dates of Oakland Baptist Church's Ministers Based on Annual Reports and the 1966 Church History, 1891-1966³⁷⁰

Name	Years at Oakland Baptist Church
E. R. Jackson	ca. 1891-1900
A. B. Catlett	ca. 1900-1904
No Minister ¹	1900
No Minister ²	1903
Lawson	1904-1905
Oliver H. Wood	ca. 1905-1912
J. H. Ford	ca. 1912-1918
Howard Barnes	ca. 1918-1940
S. T. Moore	ca. 1940-1941
Luther Hunter Mills	1941-1966

¹ Based on information from *Minutes of the 23rd Annual Session of the Northern Virginia Baptist Association* (n.p. 1900); African American Annual Reports, 1865-1990, VA, Microfilm Reel 99, American Baptist Historical Society, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.

² Based on information from *Minutes of the 26th Annual Session: Northern Virginia Baptists Association* (n.p., 1903); African American Annual Reports, 1865-1990, Virginia, Microfilm Reel 99, American Baptist Historical Society, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.

³⁷⁰ Catlett left Oakland to go to Mt. Bethel Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. where he stayed until his death. Wood left Oakland for Ebenezer Baptist Church in Alexandria. Even while at Oakland and Ebenezer, he was living in Washington, D. C. with his wife, Pearl. Ford went to Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church, also in Washington, D.C., and then to Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Rectortown, Virginia where he remained until his death. Moore, who was the Assistant Pastor to Barnes, filled the pastorate position at Oakland temporarily until Mills was chosen. *Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Oakland Baptist Church and the Twenty-Fifth of Its Minister Rev. Luther Mills: September 18, 1966—October 4, 1966* (Alexandria, VA: Oakland Baptist Church Anniversary Committee, 1966); *Alexandria, Virginia Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory Company, Inc., 1912), 323; *Alexandria Virginia Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory Company, Inc., 1923), 737; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Washington, D.C., 7B; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 1, 2012).

Julia Bradby, in her oral history, stated that her father, James Adams, was licensed as a minister from Oakland Baptist Church, but I have been unable to verify this information. Her grandparents were members of Oakland for a period of time, and then went to Ebenezer's in Alexandria. Julia M. A. Bradby, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 28 July 1992; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

as a house servant in the 1900 U.S. Census, was a noted midwife and was perhaps seen as a healer in the community.³⁷¹ Wood was the first superintendent of Oakland's Sunday school; along with her husband, Douglas, the Woods were noted for trying to ensure educational access for children within the Fairfax Seminary neighborhood.³⁷²

Table 6: Church Leaders and Positions at Oakland Based on the 1966 Church History

Chronicle of Chairmen of Deacons	Chairmen of Trustees	Superintendents of Sunday School	Church Mothers/Chair of Deaconess Board	Senior Deaconess	Church Clerks
John William Terrell ¹ (1891-)	Rev. S. T. Moore (1891-?)	Matilda Wood (1891-?)	Clara Adams (1891-?)	Daisy Fry (1891-?)	Daniel Simms (1891-?)
John Wesley Casey (dates unknown)	Richard Nelson (dates unknown)	Jacob Ball (dates unknown)	Mary E. Lewis (current in 1966)	Mary Nelson (dates unknown)	Jacob Ball (dates unknown)
William Wanzer (dates unknown)	Clarence Wanzer (dates unknown)	John Wesley Casey (dates unknown)	----	----	Douglas Johnson (dates unknown)
Charles Pearson (dates unknown)	James Craven (current in 1966)	Emmit Browne (dates unknown)	----	----	Mrs. B. M. Terrell (current in 1966)
James Lewis, Jr. (current in 1966)	----	Charles Pearson (dates unknown)	----	----	----
----	----	Amos Turner (current in 1966)	----	----	----

¹ In his deposition in the divorce case *Bailey-v.-Bailey* (1909), Terrell noted that he was a deacon at Oakland. Simon Reed and John Wesley Casey, two other witnesses in the case, stated that

³⁷¹ Julia M.A. Bradby, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 28 July 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

³⁷² 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, VA, 8 and 10; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 1, 2012); *Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Oakland Baptist Church* n.p.

they were deacons too. *Bailey-v.-Bailey* (1909); Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Record Room, Fairfax, VA.



Figure 40. Mollie Nelson in formal “dress,” ca. 1900?. Courtesy of Dorothy Hall Smith.



Figure 41. Mollie Nelson in “work clothes,” date unknown. Courtesy of Dorothy Hall Smith.

As with other Baptist Churches, women were central to the founding and continuation of Oakland. Charles McKnight, in his oral history, relayed the conversion of his great-aunt, Clara (Shorts) Adams, which led to her decision to establish Oakland. In it, he stated that she had “straddled a horse with a bottle of whiskey in her mouth.” Then, one morning she awoke with what

felt like the world...on her chest and she said that she couldn’t breathe. She just took and pushed it, and the weight came off, and she put on her bedroom slippers, and you can imagine from where we were on Braddock Road there, and she put on her bathrobe, and ran from the house to the Seminary.

On the Seminary grounds, she ran into a person who said, “I knew you were coming. I knew you were coming.” She embraced this person and “got down on her knees, she said, and accepted Jesus Christ at that time.”³⁷³ Adams’ experience is similar to others among African American Baptists with some kind of otherworldly dream or vision bringing them to the Church.³⁷⁴

According to all of the oral histories describing Oakland Baptist Church, Adams was central to the Church’s founding and history. By 1903, she was recorded in the annual report of the Northern Virginia Baptist Association as Oakland’s clerk, and not Daniel Simms or Jacob Ball who were mentioned in the 1966 history.³⁷⁵ In the same 1966 history, Adams was listed as a “Church Mother,” a position that she possibly held until her death in 1952.³⁷⁶ Even for non-Baptists, such as Episcopalian Charles McKnight, she was a powerful force in their lives; McKnight even recalled going to hear her testify at Oakland.³⁷⁷

While few records exist from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there is one court case that speaks to the standards of conduct maintained by Oakland Baptist Church members that also reinforces the important role that women played in the Church. In this case, Belle Bailey, a cook who worked for Reverend R. K. Massie at the

³⁷³ Later in his interview, McKnight asserted that Clara Adams had possibly run into Dr. Warner, one of the Episcopal ministers at St. Cyprian’s, in her conversion. Charles H. McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA. For discussion of religious conversion narratives, see Harvey, 114-120.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 114-118.

³⁷⁵ *Minutes of the 26th Annual Session: Northern Virginia Baptists Association* (n.p., 1903); African American Annual Reports, 1865-1990, VA, Microfilm Reel 99, American Baptist Historical Society, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.

John Wesley Casey was listed as the clerk in 1900, which also does not match the 1966 history. *Minutes of the 23rd Annual Session of the Northern Virginia Baptist Association* (n.p. 1900); African American Annual Reports, 1865-1990, VA, Microfilm Reel 99, American Baptist Historical Society, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.

³⁷⁶ *Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Oakland Baptist Church* n.p.

³⁷⁷ Charles H. McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

Seminary, sued for divorce in 1909. She had been married to Robert Bailey since 1897, living in the Macedonia/Seminary neighborhood near the Simms and Wood families. They never had children.³⁷⁸ Aside from accusing Robert of domestic violence, Bailey's lawyers explained that her husband had committed adultery with Susie Young and other women in the neighborhood at the home of Fanny Dixon from May through July 1908.³⁷⁹ The deposition from Bailey's lawyers then explained the response from the members of Oakland:

Complainant avers that the said defendant and Susie Young were, on Friday, July 17th, 1908, brought up before the congregation of the Oakland Baptist Church, of which they were members, and were warned that they must cease their improper intercourse upon penalty of expulsion from said church, but both defendant and the said Susie Young obstinately refused to cease their licentious conduct, and thereupon they were expelled from the church by a vote of the congregation thereof.³⁸⁰

It is presumable, based on her description of the state of her marriage and comments from members of Oakland Baptist Church, that she was granted a divorce.

The Northern Virginia Baptist Association and the Northern Virginia Union Baptist Sunday School Association's annual reports provide additional insight into Oakland. While these associations did not dictate local church activities, they did organize annual conventions at which African American Baptists came together to talk about their faith,

³⁷⁸ 1900 U.S. Census, Fairfax County, Falls Church District, Virginia, 8; www.ancestry.com (accessed May 8, 2013).

³⁷⁹ In the 1900 U.S. Census, the Young family lived just outside the Fort. In the 1910 U.S. Census, Susie Young was living with her family at the Fort. She was 26 years old and was working as a cook for a private family. Fannie Dixon, who was married to James Dixon, lived in Macedonia/Seminary near the Terrells and Wanzers. In the 1900 Census, there is no occupation listed for Fannie; however, she did have seven of her eight children (ranging in ages from one to sixteen years old) living with her. Her husband worked as a cook. 1900 U.S. Census, Fairfax County, Falls Church District, Virginia, 4 and 10; 1910 U.S. Census, Fairfax County, Falls Church District, Virginia, 15B; www.ancestry.com (accessed May 8, 2013).

³⁸⁰ *Bailey-v.-Bailey* (1909); Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Record Room, Fairfax, VA.

current social issues, missionary and evangelical work, and religious education.³⁸¹ In 1900, Oakland sent John Wesley Casey as its delegate to the Northern Virginia Baptist Association for its annual convention (Figure 42). According to the statistical report for the association, Oakland had thirty church members (after one was removed from the church) and had collected \$2.00 to give to the association's various charitable funds. Three years later, John Wesley Casey and John William Terrell attended as delegates. The number of church members had increased slightly to thirty-five, and collected \$2.50 for the association.

Additionally, Oakland was reported to have a Sunday school with fifty-two attendees.³⁸²



Figure 42. John Wesley Casey "Poppa." Date unknown. Courtesy of Iovce C. Sanchez.

After joining in 1909, Oakland was very active in the Northern Virginia Union Baptist Sunday School Convention. Founded in 1890 by Reverends M. D. Williams, L. H. Bailey, and R. H. Gofney, the organization promoted all aspects of religious education, from the creation of Sunday schools to the distribution of Bibles to seminary training. The promotion of religious education at the turn of the twentieth century spoke to the professionalization and

³⁸¹ "Constitution," *Minutes of the 26th Annual Session: Northern Virginia Baptists Association* (n.p., 1903); "Constitution," *Synopsis of the Nineteenth Annual Session of the Northern Virginia Union Baptist Sunday School Convention* (Washington, D.C.: The Murray Brothers Press, 1910), 5-6; African American Annual Reports, 1865-1990, VA, Microfilm Reel 99, American Baptist Historical Society, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.

³⁸² *Minutes of the 23rd Annual Session of the Northern Virginia Baptist Association* (n.p. 1900); *Minutes of the 26th Annual Session: Northern Virginia Baptists Association* (n.p., 1903); African American Annual Reports, 1865-1990, VA, Microfilm Reel 99, American Baptist Historical Society, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.

regimentation of certain African American Baptist churches in northern Virginia and Washington, D.C., including Oakland. Other Baptists, most notably Primitive Baptists, did not espouse these forms of education because they believed the Bible did not mandate it. In August 1910, Oakland hosted the nineteenth annual convention with Jacob Ball as its representative. Reverend Oliver H. Wood gave several speeches, and a choir, presumably consisting of church members, sang.³⁸³ Oakland hosted the annual convention again in 1916 and 1925.³⁸⁴

Even with competition from Oakland Baptist Church, St. Cyprian's on the grounds of Fairfax Seminary continued to be popular with some African American families in the early twentieth century. Members of the McKnight, Miller, Peters, Craven, Smith, Thomas, Randall, and Ashby families were recorded as members through oral histories or church documents.³⁸⁵ Oral histories also contain many anecdotes of early childhood memories of the Episcopal mission. Charles McKnight believed his father, Willis, had attended Saint Paul Normal and Industrial School (now known as St. Paul's College) in southern Virginia, a high school created by the Episcopal Church for African Americans in the 1880s.³⁸⁶ Willis McKnight was a nephew of Clara (Shorts) Adams and a grandson of Willis and Harriet McKnight. Edmonia (Smith) McKnight (wife of the aforementioned Charles McKnight)

³⁸³ *Synopsis of the Nineteenth Annual Session of the Northern Virginia Union Baptist Sunday School Convention* (Washington, D.C.: The Murray Brothers Press, 1910), 5-6; African American Annual Reports, 1865-1990, VA, Microfilm Reel 99, American Baptist Historical Society, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.

³⁸⁴ *Minutes of the Forty-First Annual Session: Northern Virginia Union Baptist Sunday School Convention* (Washington, D.C.: James A. Brown, 1933); African American Annual Reports, 1865-1990, VA, Microfilm Reel 100, American Baptist Historical Society, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.

³⁸⁵ Charles McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA; "Parochial Reports of the Colored Missionary Jurisdiction of the Diocese of Virginia," *The Journal of the 137th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (1932), 309.

³⁸⁶ Charles H. McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

**Table 7: Data on Oakland's Sunday School from Northern Virginia Union Baptist
Sunday School Convention Reports, 1910-1941³⁸⁷**

	Number of Teachers	Number of Students	Number of Parents Attending	Number of Conversions	Number of Books in Library	Sunday School Months in Year	Contributions for Various Funds
1911	4	57	6	3	50	12	\$7.50
1913	6	60	10	0	40	12	\$1.00
1930	---	65	---	---	---	---	\$9.00
1932	---	72	---	---	---	---	\$4.75
1933	---	76	---	---	---	---	\$8.00

recalled going with her mother and sister to St. Cyprian's during Christmastime and "pickin' at the Christmas doll and the ornaments on the Christmas tree."³⁸⁸ Even those who attended Oakland recalled visiting St. Cyprian's. Julia Bradby noted that her older brothers and sisters attended Sunday school at St. Cyprian's.

But you know we almost were Episcopalians my brother and my oldest brother tells me that the only Sunday school that they had to go to was the...was the Seminary. My brother said that they didn't go to Sunday school here [Oakland] they went to Sunday school up at the Seminary. They attended the Sunday school there. They didn't have a Sunday school here and they went to Sunday school at the Theological Seminary.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁷ *Synopsis of the Twentieth Annual Session of the Northern Virginia Union Baptist Sunday School Convention* (Washington, D.C.: Murray Brothers, 1911); *Synopsis of the Twenty-Second Annual Session of the Northern Virginia Union Baptist Sunday School Convention* (Manassas, VA: Manassas Journal Print, 1913); *Minutes of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Session: Northern Virginia Union Baptist Sunday School Convention* (n.p., 1930); *Minutes of the Forty-First Annual Session: Northern Virginia Baptist Sunday School Convention* (Washington, D.C.: James A. Brown, 1932); *Minutes of the Forty-Second Annual Session: Northern Virginia Baptist Sunday School Convention* (n.p. 1933); *Minutes of the Forty-Ninth Annual Session: Northern Virginia Baptist Sunday School Convention* (Washington, D.C.: James A. Brown, 1941); African American Annual Reports, 1865-1990, VA, Microfilm Reels 99-100, American Baptist Historical Society, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.

³⁸⁸ Edmonia Smith McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, June 2, 1994, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

³⁸⁹ Julia M.A. Bradby, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, July 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

It is possible that they attended St. Cyprian's when Oakland did not have one after fire destroyed their building.

In 1926, the Diocesan Missionary Society of Virginia purchased land at the Fort, presumably to better connect with local members by moving the mission off Seminary property and closer to their homes. The Society, which was charged with purchasing and managing property for the Diocese, bought the "old Seminary school" for \$300. Fairfax County had been using it as a public school for African American children beginning around 1899. This building reopened as the new home of St. Cyprian's in 1931 with Rev. J. A. Mitchell from the Seminary leading services.³⁹⁰ Another strip of land was purchased a year later from Amanda (McKnight) Clarke.³⁹¹ Directly to the northeast of St. Cyprian's new home, this land was possibly a right of way for the mission or an attempt to connect the chapel with a pre-existing cemetery that had been established at the Fort in the late nineteenth century. Archaeologists have identified locations of graves in this earlier cemetery, but only three headstones remain, two in place and one propped against a tree. According to the inscriptions, the oldest stone is for Cornelia Spence, who (as noted in the previous chapter) was a servant in Launcelot Blackford's home and had died suddenly while doing the wash in 1897 (Figure 43).³⁹² Another headstone marks the grave of William E. Javins (1878-1907), the son of Samuel and Florence (McKnight) Javins. He was

³⁹⁰ "Meeting of the County School Board," January 5, 1926, School Board Minutes, 1922-1929, <http://commweb.fcps.edu/schoolboardapps/searchmenu.cfm> (June 1, 2012); "Parochial Reports of the Colored Missionary Jurisdiction of the Diocese of Virginia," *The Journal of the 137th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (1932): 309; File 741-A, Davis-Ruffner Papers, transcription by Elizabeth B. Drembus, Fort Ward History Working Group.

³⁹¹ File 741-29, Davis-Ruffner Papers, transcription by Elizabeth B. Drembus, Fort Ward History Working Group.

³⁹² Launcelot M. Crawford Diaries, October 13, 14, 15, and 17, 1897; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

working in Wheeling, West Virginia as a janitor when he died.³⁹³ In 1917, Virginia Fitzhugh was buried in this cemetery. She was a nurse in the home of Willoughby A. Reade, an English immigrant who taught at Episcopal High School.³⁹⁴



Figure 43. Cornelia Spence Gravestone, 2014. Courtesy of Krystyn Moon.

With World War II, the maintenance of St. Cyprian's Mission at the Fort became untenable. The Episcopal Diocese of Virginia was no longer able to staff all of its African American missions. Its ministers were joining the armed services or seeking opportunities elsewhere. By early 1942, St. Cyprian's no longer had an affiliated-minister, although Emmett E. Miller Jr., the rector at Meade Memorial Church in Alexandria, attempted to hold services at St. Cyprian's periodically. Meade Memorial Episcopal Church, another African American Episcopal Church, was established in 1869 as a mission affiliated with Christ Church in Alexandria.³⁹⁵ Miller had a special connection to the area, as his father, also named Emmett E. Miller, had grown up at the Fort. The younger Miller was also the grandson of Willis and Harriet McKnight's daughter, Lavinia. Within a few months, Miller

³⁹³ West Virginia Deaths Index, 1853-1973, www.ancestry.com (accessed April 24, 2013).

³⁹⁴ Willoughby A. Reade was also a writer. Interestingly, in a collection of short stories set in Virginia entitled, *When Hearts Were True* (1907), one of the characters in "For the Child's Sake," which is set during the Civil War, has a beloved doll named "Jinny Fitzhugh." In another story, "Forgive Us Our Trespasses," the protagonist, a former slave named Uncle Jack, tells his life story to the unnamed author. In it, he talks several times about his wife, a nurse in the slave master's home, named Jinny. Willoughby A. Reade, *When Hearts Were True* (New York Neale Publishing Co., 1907).

There is a Virginia Fitzhugh listed in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census in Capeville, Virginia. This might be the same person. 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Capeville District, Northampton County, VA, 58; 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 16; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 14B; www.ancestry.com (accessed April 24, 2013).

³⁹⁵ Julia E. Randle, "Meade Chapel: Creation and Perseverance," *Souvenir Journal: 140th Anniversary; Meade Memorial Episcopal Church* (2009): 1-8.

Jr. left Alexandria to become a military chaplain. Neither Meade Memorial nor St. Cyprian's had a minister for almost a year. Local residents of the Fort still tried to keep the mission going. Charles H. McKnight and Rosetta Craven continued to run the Sunday school. John H. Peters (it is unclear whether this was the father or son), as the mission's warden, maintained the property. Finally, increased pressure on the Episcopal Church to address the needs of its congregants throughout Virginia, led to the Diocese's decision to consolidate St. Cyprian's and Meade Memorial, selling the property at Fort Ward in 1944 to John Lorenzo and Clara Claiborne. The \$800 from the sale was to pay for a "new church, rectory or parish house" at Meade Memorial, which the Diocese hoped to build after the war.³⁹⁶ The Canonical Parish Register from the 1950s and 1960s for Meade Memorial contained many Fort family surnames—Craven, Randall, McKnight, Terrell, and Butler.³⁹⁷

By the late 1920s and early 1930s, Oakland Baptist Church was also experiencing major changes that could have led to the end of the church. Sometime before September 1931, a fire destroyed the building. Church members, however, decided to rebuild and received a building permit from the City of Alexandria on September 12, 1931 (Figure 44).³⁹⁸ Reverend Howard Barnes then led the charge to expand Oakland Baptist Church by 1939.³⁹⁹ In 1929, Samuel and Florence (McKnight) Javins conveyed land (which Florence

³⁹⁶ Thomas D. Brown, "The Board of Colored Work," *Journal of the 147th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (1942): 117-118; "Parochial Reports of the Colored Missionary Jurisdiction," *Journal of the 147th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (1942): 219-220; "Parochial Reports of the Colored Missionary Jurisdiction," *Journal of the 148th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (1943): 232-235; Thomas D. Brown, "Report of the Secretary," *Journal of the 149th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (1944): 97-98.

³⁹⁷ Canonical Parish Register, 1950s-1970s, Meade Memorial Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA.

³⁹⁸ New Construction Permit Listing, #19 Oakland Baptist Church, September 12, 1931; Archives and Records Center, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

³⁹⁹ *Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Oakland Baptist Church* n.p.; "In Alexandria: Permits Issued for Construction to Coast a Total of \$53,603," *Washington Post* 27 August 1939, 8.

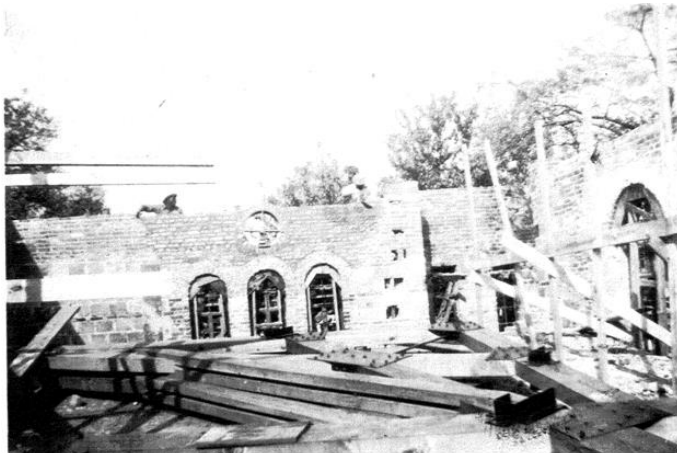


Figure 44. Rebuilding of Oakland Baptist Church, ca. 1931. Courtesy of Oakland Baptist Church.

had inherited from her mother) at the Fort to Oakland for a cemetery.

Perhaps because the church paid Javins in installments or because of the church fire, it took a decade for the deed to be recorded in Fairfax County.⁴⁰⁰

Although not next to the church, the land had already been used as a

cemetery for several years (NOTE: Oakland Baptist Cemetery is located immediately north of the “Old Grave Yard”). Four people—Maria (McKnight) Blackburn (1925), John William Terrell (1925), Russell Lewis (1929), and Burney McKnight Terrell (1930)—and others were already buried there when Oakland purchased it.⁴⁰¹ Although none of these people lived at the Fort based on 1920 and 1930 U.S. Censuses, they were connected to the community through Oakland Baptist Church membership, extended kin, or previous residency.

The arrival of Reverend Luther Hunter Mills during World War II gave Oakland further stability. Mills, who was a member of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, commuted to the church from Washington, D.C. for over twenty-five years. He was originally from Danville, Virginia and had attended St. Paul Industrial Institute in Lawrenceville—the same school

⁴⁰⁰ As noted in chapter 1, each deed listed the names of Oakland Baptist Church’s trustees at the time. In 1929, the deed recorded Wilmer Henry, Sr., John Crone, James Lewis, Douglas Johnson, Richard Nelson, and Joseph Lewis as trustees. The 1939 deed also lists the Church’s trustees, four of whom are the same as those listed on the 1929 one: William Henry, Richard Nelson, Frank Nelson, Douglas Johnson, and James Lewis. Fairfax County Deed Book, I-13-515; Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; Davis-Ruffner File 741-8100-8, City of Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁰¹ Dave Cavanaugh, “Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery,” February 8, 2012, 5-6.

attended by Willis McKnight, the father of Charles H. McKnight and the grandson of Willis and Harriet McKnight. Because of his attendance at St. Paul's, it is unclear whether he was raised in the Baptist church or converted later in life. Regardless, he was "[c]alled to preach" in 1936, eventually attending Washington Baptist Seminary and taking classes at several other institutions. He later received a Doctorate in Divinity from Natchez College in Mississippi in 1948.⁴⁰²

Under Mills' guidance, Oakland acquired additional land at the Fort. In 1943, Mills bought 0.36 acres from Clara Adams, one of Oakland's most dedicated church members. It is unclear what purpose he had for the land.⁴⁰³ Oakland also began to participate in the Baptist Allied Bodies of Virginia, a statewide convention, by 1948. As a member of the organization, Oakland contributed to the statewide Baptist General Association's Sunday School Convention fund and its general fund.⁴⁰⁴ By the 1960s, congregants were raising monies for the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, which funded the construction of schools in Haiti and Liberia. Donations were also given to the Washington Baptist Seminary and the Stoddard Baptist Home.⁴⁰⁵

Since the late nineteenth century, Oakland Baptist Church and the Chapel of the Good Shepherd/St. Cyprian's greatly impacted the lives of African Americans around

⁴⁰² *Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Oakland Baptist Church* n.p.

⁴⁰³ Fairfax Deed Book 413-P169 and 413 P172; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

⁴⁰⁴ "Schedule of Contributions," *Report on Examination*, (September 30, 1948), 33; "Contributions for the Year Ended September 30, 1956," *Official Journal of the Baptist Allied Bodies of Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Virginia Union University, 1956; African-American Baptist Annual Reports, VA, 1865-1990, microfilm reel 90; American Baptist Historical Society, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.

⁴⁰⁵ *Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Oakland Baptist Church* n.p.; "Contributions for the year Ended September 30, 1961," *Baptist Allied Bodies of Virginia: Report on Examination* (Richmond, VA: no publisher, 1961); African-American Baptist Annual Reports, VA, 1865-1990, microfilm reel 90; American Baptist Historical Society, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.



Figure 45. Modern-day Oakland Baptist Church, ca. 2000s. Courtesy of the Oakland Baptist Church, Frances C. Terrell and Bill Reeves Photography.

Fairfax Seminary. Despite the prevalence of racism among both white Episcopalians and Baptists, African Americans were able to create their own religious spaces to celebrate their faith and create a sense of community. Education through their Sunday schools was also prominent within each institution. By the 1930s and 1940s,

the two churches met different fates. Oakland burned to the ground, only to be rebuilt and expanded. It still exists today (Figure 45). Because of a lack of ministers during World War II, St. Cyprian's merged with another African American Episcopal mission, Meade Memorial, located in Alexandria. Thus, African American Episcopalians at the Fort had to commute into Alexandria to attend services and other events. Many of the Fort's descendants still attend this church today.

Education

The generations of African Americans living at the Fort, like many living in Jim Crow Virginia, recognized the importance of education. Not only was education central to notions of citizenship and freedom, but also it allowed for expanded economic opportunities—despite the structural limits of segregation—and socio-cultural capital. During and immediately following the Civil War, schools appeared throughout the region. With the establishment of Virginia public schools in 1870, African American children were

guaranteed access to education, although they could not sit side-by-side with white children. Where Fort children went to school in the 1870s is unknown, but by 1880, a schoolhouse for African American children was established in the neighborhood. These children, like those throughout Virginia, continued to attend segregated schools until Alexandria began the slow process of integration in the mid-1960s.

The accessibility of education in Virginia for African Americans—both enslaved and free—in antebellum Virginia was greatly limited in practice and law. Fears driven by the failed rebellion of Nat Turner in 1831 led slave owners and other whites to pass legislation heightening the policing of African American education as it was seen as central to the spread of rebellious ideas. When Alexandria was retroceded to the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1847, its schools for African American children were closed because of pre-existing laws in Virginia. By 1860, it was reported in the U.S. Census that 90 percent of all African Americans in Virginia were illiterate.⁴⁰⁶

Limited access to education, however, did not crush the spirit to learn among slaves and free blacks. A benevolent planter or white acquaintance might teach a slave to read and write. Others might learn on their own or through a family member.⁴⁰⁷ The most extraordinary opportunities for education in the slave-holding South appeared across the

⁴⁰⁶ Ronald E. Butchart, *School the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the struggle for Black Freedom, 1861-1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 2.

Not all authors agree with that percentage. W. H. Brown writes that the illiteracy rates in Virginia were at 85% based on the 1850 and 1860 censuses, but even that number was too high. W. H. Brown, *The Education and Economic Development of the Negro in Virginia*, no. 6, in *Publications of the University Of Virginia Phelps-Stokes Fellowship Papers* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1923), 40.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

Potomac River where free blacks created private academies where African American ministers worked as teachers.⁴⁰⁸

With the American Civil War, the question of education—like so many aspects of the everyday lives of slaves and free blacks—was part of the debate on freedom and equality. For African Americans, freedom was at the center of the war and along with it access to education. Before teachers sponsored by northern missionary societies arrived, African Americans themselves led the charge in educating those who had been previously barred from learning. For future residents of the Fort, the level of educational opportunities in Alexandria and, later, Fairfax County could have been a potential draw to the area. Beginning in 1861, three African American women in Alexandria began to openly teach African Americans: Anna Bell Davis, Mary Chase, and Jane Crouch. In 1862, a former slave named Clement Robinson who had attended the Ashmun Institute in Pennsylvania (later named Lincoln University in 1866), opened Beulah Normal and Theological School, the first African American normal school, in Alexandria.⁴⁰⁹ As the war progressed, northern organizations gave money so African American women in Alexandria could continue their teaching efforts. Most notably, Marianna Lawton, Harriet Jacobs, and her daughter, Louisa Jacobs, ran the largest black school in Alexandria sponsored by New York Quakers. White teachers, supported by northern missionary organizations, also appeared in Alexandria, two of whom worked at the “Jacobs School.”⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁸ Kate Masur, *An Example for All the Land: Emancipation and the Struggle over Equality in Washington, D.C.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 20-21.

⁴⁰⁹ Butchart, 20-21, 27.

⁴¹⁰ *The Harriet Jacobs Family Papers*, ed. Jean Fagan Yellin (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Jean Fagan Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs: A Life* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2005); No author, “A House Divided Still Stands: The Contraband Hospital and Alexandria Freedmen’s Aid Workers,” 10 and 21. <http://www.freedmenscemetery.org/resources/documents/contrabandhospital.pdf> (accessed May 9, 2012).

Once Union forces secured the region, there were other educational opportunities to the west of Fairfax Seminary and Fort Ward. Ronald E. Butchart, an expert on post-Civil War African American education at the University of Georgia, has documented at least one or two women teaching from 1863 through 1870 among African American children in the Falls Church District where the future Fort community would be located. Betsey J. Read (also spelled Reed), a local white woman, taught African Americans from 1863 through the end of the Civil War. Sponsored by the Philadelphia Friends' Freedmen Association, Mary J. Besley taught in Falls Church from 1864 through 1865. Other teachers of various backgrounds worked throughout Fairfax County during the latter part of the Civil War.⁴¹¹

With the end of the Civil War, northern missionary organizations, most notably those affiliated with the Quakers, along with the newly established Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (later known as the Freedmen's Bureau) continued to operate schools in both Alexandria and the Falls Church District of Fairfax County. In Falls Church, the Philadelphia Orthodox Friends sponsored two teachers, Harriet Jenkins and Philena Heald. Jenkins, a local African American woman, taught in Falls Church from 1868 through 1871 and may have continued teaching as a public school teacher into the 1870s. After teaching in St. Helena, South Carolina, Heald, who was from Philadelphia, taught for one year (1867-1868) in Falls Church. Two sisters from the North, A. E. and H. A. Rutledge, taught together in Falls Church for one year after the war. The Rutledges were sponsored by the Philadelphia Friends' Freedmen Association, which had previously sponsored Mary J. Besley.

⁴¹¹ All of this information has been generously shared by Ronald E. Butchart. Ronald E. Butchart, The Freedmen's Teacher Project, unpublished database, 2012.

Other women were also connected to the Quakers, although the specific organizations sponsoring them are not known. The Quakers sponsored Harriet N. Jones to teach in Falls Church from 1868-1869. From East Winthrop, Maine, she had previously taught in Slabtown, Virginia and Washington, D.C. Eliza "Ellie" Way, a Quaker from Chatham, Pennsylvania, taught briefly in Falls Church from 1866-1867. Prior to and following her work in Virginia, she taught in South Carolina.⁴¹²

With its high concentration of former slaves and free blacks in comparison to rural Fairfax County, Alexandria offered many different types of educational opportunities with almost every kind of missionary organization operating in the city during the latter half of the 1860s.⁴¹³ Churches, for example, organized Sunday Schools for adults and children, many of whom felt it was important to be able to read the Bible. The Freedmen's Baptist Church reported having "three hundred and thirty scholars, of whom fifty [we]re adults" in its Sunday School.⁴¹⁴ In 1867, the Freedmen's Bureau commissioned George L. Seaton, a former free black resident of Alexandria who owned a grocery store and worked in construction, to build two schools, one for boys and another for girls. The Snowden School, which was also known as the Seaton School, and the Hallowell School were named after

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ "Baptist Items," *The Christian Recorder* 2 June 1866, <http://www.accessible.com.ezproxy.umw.edu:2048/accessible/print?AADocList=3&AADocStyle=STYLED&AStyleFile=&AABeanName=toc1&AANextPage=/printFullDocFromXML.jsp&ACheck=1.49.3.0.3> (accessed May 9, 2012).

white educators in Alexandria.⁴¹⁵ Both schools were transferred to local officials with the establishment of public education in 1870 and remained in use through the 1910s.⁴¹⁶

With the end of the Civil War, the future of public education for African Americans was uncertain in Virginia. In 1864, Francis Harrison Pierpont, governor of the “restored” sections of Virginia during the Civil War, held a constitutional convention in Alexandria that created a white-only public education system.⁴¹⁷ Four years later, Virginia held another constitutional convention, one that would allow its re-admittance to the Union. The new state constitution (also known as the Underwood Constitution) required state funded public education for both blacks and whites, but schools would not be integrated.⁴¹⁸ The newly established school system was paid for with tax monies combined with donations from the Literary Fund, a state-managed charity begun in 1796 to make schooling accessible to poor whites.⁴¹⁹ By 1870, schools run by private organizations and the Freedmen’s Bureau were transferred to Virginia’s newly appointed superintendent of schools.⁴²⁰

The establishment of a public school system in Virginia, however, did not mean the immediate construction of a school in the Fort neighborhood. Fairfax County’s first

⁴¹⁵ Snowden School—1893 Teachers’ Census, The Other Alexandria, <http://theotheralexandria.com/2011/10/30/snowden-school-1893-teachers-census/> (accessed May 9, 2012); Hallowell School –1893 Teachers’ Census, The Other Alexandria, <http://theotheralexandria.com/2011/10/31/hallowell-school-1893-teachers-census/> (accessed May 9, 2012).

⁴¹⁶ “Black Education and Park-Gray School,” Alexandria Black History Museum, <http://alexandriava.gov/historic/blackhistory/default.aspx?id=37214> (accessed May 9, 2012)

⁴¹⁷ Foner, 39.

⁴¹⁸ As noted in the previous chapter, some of the original Fort settlers were living in Fairfax County and participated in the vote for this constitutional convention in 1867.

⁴¹⁹ Evelyn Darnell Russell-Porte, *A History of Education for Black Students in Fairfax County Prior to 1954* (Ph.D. diss., Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2000), 18, scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses (accessed May 8, 2012).

⁴²⁰ Russell-Porte, 24-26.

superintendent, Daniel McCarty Chichester, did not believe African Americans were interested in education and wrote in the *State Superintendent's Report* for 1871-1872 that African Americans "did not demonstrate a great desire for education except in isolated cases."⁴²¹ Nevertheless, within the year, there were thirteen African American public schools with 640 students in Fairfax County. The locations of these schools within the county are not listed.⁴²²

In 1880, Fairfax County's new superintendent, Eugene D. Ficklin, had a much different view of African American education. His report published in the *State Superintendent's Report* describes how public education impacted African Americans in the county:

The population generally seem[s] to have appreciated very highly the advantages which have been offered them for the education of their children; so much so that it is very rare that a lad over 10 years of age is met with who is unable to read and write. There seems to be a marked improvement in the youth of both races, especially the colored; the latter being more careful than formerly, are husbanding their means, and investing in small tracts in different parts of the county; thereby obtaining for themselves a solidarity which it is impossible to obtain as tenants and day laborers.⁴²³

The Fort's African American residents also recognized the importance of landownership and education.

The same 1880 report documented the number of African American children within each magisterial district in Fairfax County. Falls Church, which included the Fort, had 412 students. That same year, Ficklin noted that there were eighteen African American public schools with eighteen teachers.⁴²⁴ One of these schools was located at Oak Hill, the same

⁴²¹ 37, 59 as quoted in Russell-Porte, 48.

⁴²² Russell-Porte, 48-60.

⁴²³ *Annual School Report* (1880), 117, as quoted in Russell-Porte, 55.

⁴²⁴ Russell-Porte, 54.

location where residents would later establish a Baptist mission in 1888. Where local children were attending school before 1880 is uncertain.⁴²⁵ In the scant records of the Falls Church Magisterial District for this period, Oak Hill, also called “Theological Seminary,” was in use from 1880 through 1890 and possibly through 1898. The account book for the district listed Oak Hill’s rent for 1880-1881 as \$12.00; rent increased to \$14.00 by the 1885-1886 academic year. The school district also paid for fuel and a broom. In September 1886, the school district recorded paying for repairs at Oak Hill. In 1887-1888, the district clerk’s account book mentioned purchasing an axe, presumably to cut wood, for “Seminary Hill.” A year later, R. J. Bailey, the clerk who kept the records of Fairfax County’s public schools, purchased another broom and a bucket.⁴²⁶

From the existing records, only one person, Samuel B. Burke, is known to have taught at Oak Hill. Burke lived in Alexandria and began his teaching career at Oak Hill in 1884. Since he was African American, he was paid less than his white counterparts during the five-month school year of 1887-1888. During that school year, he had an average of

⁴²⁵ The Little Zion Church (now known as the Lomax A.M.E. Zion Church) in the Nauck/Green Valley opened a school in 1875 that children around Fairfax Seminary could have attended. In the mid-1920s, at least one Fort resident attended this school, later known as the Kemper School, while the Seminary School was being built. Alfred O. Taylor, Jr., “Nauck: A Neighborhood History,” <http://www.hmdb.org/marker.asp?marker=2504> (accessed May 30, 2012); Elizabeth Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

The connections between the Fort and Green Valley/Nauck have not been thoroughly explored although it is likely that the families in both neighborhoods were somehow connected. In oral histories conducted by the Office of Historic Alexandria, interviewees mentioned family members working in this part of Arlington County. Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, May 25, 1994; and Maydell Casey Belk, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, June 6, 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁴²⁶ R. J. Bailey, Clerk, [School Account Book, 1871-1890]; John H. Chichester, [Notebook, 1871-1886]; Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Research Room, Fairfax, VA.

thirty-seven students per month. Two years later, the average number of children at Oak Hill dropped to twenty-nine students.⁴²⁷

With the limited nature of Fairfax County's late nineteenth century school records, analysis of census data must be used to gain a sense of educational attainment at the Fort. From 1870 through 1930, federal census takers collected data on whether Americans could read and write. What the specific parameters were used for reading and writing are not clear for each census or census taker. Nevertheless, this information still speaks to African Americans gaining some kind of an education immediately after and possibly during and even before the Civil War. Starting with the founding generation at the Fort listed in the 1870 census, it is not surprising that older residents who had been born in servitude as well as young children were much less likely to be able to read and write (NOTE: ages for residents often changed from census to census). Children under the age 10 were not asked whether they could read and write.⁴²⁸ Those who were of school age by the end of the Civil War or were in their late teens also appear to have had some kind of schooling. Based on 1870 U.S. Census, James and Chloe Page, Lavinia (McKnight) Perkins (later Lavina Miller), and Burr and Harriet (McKnight) Shorts were listed as unable to read and write. Among these six early residents, Lavinia (McKnight) Perkins was the youngest at the age of twenty-

⁴²⁷ Record of Teachers: Examined and Contracted with, 1886-1891; Memoranda 1887-1888, Book 2; John H. Chichester, [Notebook, 1871-1886]; R. J. Bailey, Clerk, [School Account Book, 1871-1890]; Records of Monthly Reports, 1886-1889; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Research Room, Fairfax, VA. See also *Chataigne's Alexandria City Directory* (Washington, D.C.: J. H. Chataigne, 1887), 67.

The 1881-1882-city directory and 1880 U.S. Census appears to have switched Samuel's occupation with his brother's, William, who was a laborer. By the late 1890s, Burke had left teaching and was working as a clerk and, later, an agent. *Chataigne's Alexandria City Directory* (Washington, D.C.: J. H. Chataigne, 1881), 54; *Richmond's Directory of Alexandria, 1897-1898* (Washington, D.C.: W. L. Richmond, 1897), 66; *Richmond's Directory of Alexandria, 1898-1899*, (Washington, D.C.: W. L. Richmond, 1897), 90; 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Alexandria, VA, 25; www.ancestry.com (accessed July 12, 2012).

⁴²⁸ Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, "1870 Census: Instructions to Assistant Marshals," <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/voliii/inst1870.shtml> (accessed January 27, 2013).

four. Lucy Shorts, and Willis and Harriet McKnight's children, Robert, Maria, Kate, and Florence McKnight, were listed as unable to write, but could read. Lucy Shorts, a niece of Burr Shorts, was the oldest among this group at the age of twenty-six. Finally, Burney (also Birney) and Samuel McKnight (also the children of Willis and Harriet McKnight), who lived in Cassius F. Lee's home, Menokin, were able to both read and write. Burney and Samuel were in their teens and twenties respectively, not unlike the other young adults who could only read. It can be speculated that they may have had additional educational opportunities in Lee's household.⁴²⁹

In 1880, a little over half of the Fort's population, excluding young children, was able to read, or read and write (see Table 8). With the exception of a dip in 1880 (in which the number of residents swelled to its highest because of local employment opportunities), that number increased until the 1930 U.S. Census, when almost 100 percent of the population was able to read and write, excluding young children.

Based on the 1880 and 1900 U.S. Censuses, there were even two African American schoolteachers living in the neighborhood. Unfortunately, the records from Fairfax County's archives are limited for the period and do not list where these men taught. Charles M. Miller, who was a boarder in John Butler's home, was a schoolteacher in the 1880 U.S. Census, and might have taught at Oak Hill from 1880 through 1884.⁴³⁰ Emmett E. Miller, the son of a John and Lavinia (McKnight Perkins) Miller and possibly a distant relative of Charles Miller, was also listed as schoolteacher in the 1900 U.S. Census. The

⁴²⁹ The literacy of children six years old and under was left blank. There were seven such children in the 1870 Census for the Fort neighborhood. 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church Township, Fairfax County, Virginia, 21, www.ancestry.com (accessed July 25, 2011).

⁴³⁰ 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church Township, Fairfax County, VA, 15, www.ancestry.com (accessed July 25, 2011).

Table 8: Literacy Breakdown for Early Residents of The Fort, 1870-1930

	Total Number of Residents	Young Children	Can Only Read	Can Only Write	Can Read and Write	Total (Read, Write, and Read and Write)	Percentage of Total Population (without Young Children)	Percentage of Total Population
1870	20	7	5	0	2	7	53%	35%
1880	124	24	5	0	41	46	41%	37%
1900	64	12 ¹	0	0	29	29	45%	56%
1910	60	7	0	0	38	38	63%	72%
1920	56	9 ¹	0	0	46 ²	46	71%	85%
1930	72	23 ¹	N/A	N/A	47	47	98%	82%

¹ The space for “Read” and “Write” in the 1900, 1920, and 1930 U.S. Censuses were left blank for both black and white children nine years old and younger (and one ten year old in the 1900 census). An “N” was given to children five and under in the “Read” and “Write” columns in the 1920 census. This information matches the guidelines given to enumerators. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, “Enumeration Forms,” <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/voliii/tEnumForm.shtml> (accessed January 27, 2013).

² Two children, ages six and eight, were listed as being able to read and write in the 1920 U.S. Census and were included in this number.

census taker also noted that Emmett E. Miller had worked for six months that year, a typical situation in Virginia’s public schools as they were only open for about half a year.

Where he taught is unknown; however, one can speculate that he taught at the newly established school at the Fort.⁴³¹ As noted in the previous chapter, he went on to become an Episcopal minister.

⁴³¹ 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church Township, Fairfax County, VA, 5, www.ancestry.com (accessed May 14, 2012).

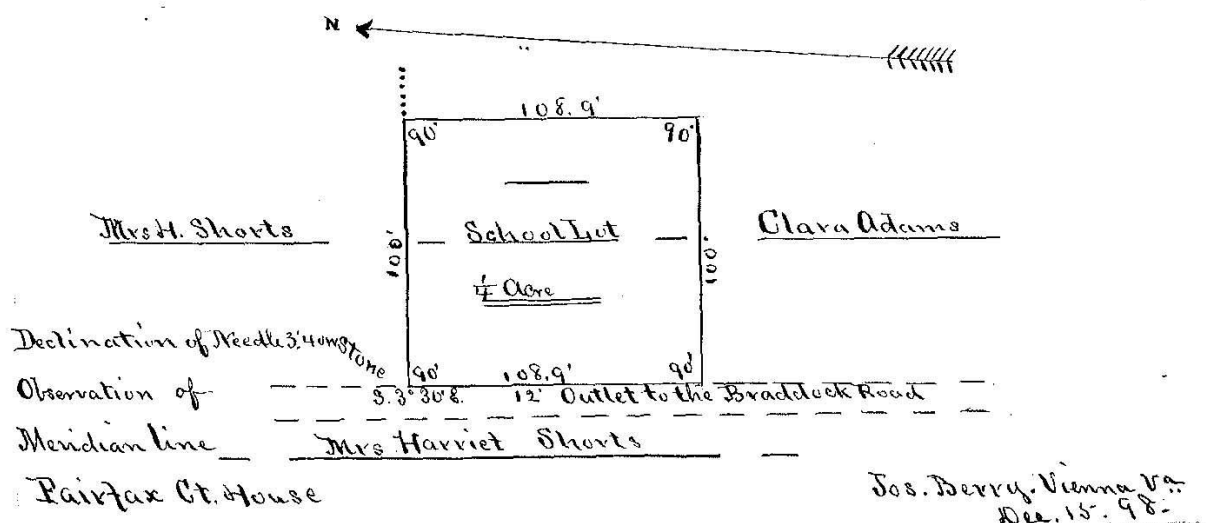


Figure 46. Clara and Robert Adams's conveyance of land for a new school at The Fort, 1898. Courtesy of Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a new school built at the Fort superseded the one at Oak Hill.⁴³² On December 31, 1898, Clara (Shorts) and Robert Adams conveyed 0.25 acre of land to the Fairfax County School Board to build a public school at the Fort (Figure 46).⁴³³ This decision was a common one made by African Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to ensure their children's access to education. African Americans also donated money, labor, and supplies to support local schools and pay teachers.⁴³⁴ School funding, which was allocated by the state to the counties with few guidelines or oversight, was spent mostly on white schools. In the 1870s, there were more schools for white children in Fairfax County in comparison to African American ones (even

⁴³² Elizabeth Henry Douglas mentions that her father talked about a school burning down around 1900 and that it was probably Oak Hill. At this date, I have not been able to confirm this information. Elizabeth Henry Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁴³³ Fairfax Deed Book, C-6-139, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

⁴³⁴ Foner, 98.

when taking the larger number of white children into account). By the mid-1880s, African American teachers were paid less than their white counterparts.⁴³⁵

Little is known about the school (which was called the “old Seminary school” in the 1925 minutes of the Fairfax County School Board) that served the Fort and other African American households around Fairfax Seminary in the early twentieth century.⁴³⁶ Oral histories conducted in the 1990s by the Office of Historic Alexandria, however, do provide some details. Crozet Wood Johnson, who was born in the fall 1915, described the school as having one room.⁴³⁷ She also recalled wearing dresses with high-top shoes and white stockings and bringing her own lunch to school. She also discussed playing games:

P.K.: Did you skip rope?

M.C.W.J.: Oh yes. I forgot all about that. Oh yes. I loved to skip rope. And we played tag after we got older, not when we were very small. And we played jacks.

P.K.: I’m pretty good at that.

M.C.W.J.: And I loved to shoot marbles. I wore a hole in my thumb shooting marbles.

Crozet (Wood) Johnson also recalled children playing in the yard around the building, self-segregated by sex.⁴³⁸

Oral histories along with Virginia’s teacher censuses, which began in 1893 (with a gap from 1895 through 1908), and the federal census provide information as to the name of at least one individual who taught at the “old Seminary school” in the early twentieth century. Alice M. Ashby, the daughter of early Fort residents, Louise (Jackson) and Samuel Ashby, was listed in the 1910 U.S. Federal Census as a public school teacher. By the next

⁴³⁵ Russell-Porte, 55 and 251.

⁴³⁶ “Meeting of the County School Board of Fairfax County,” September 8, 1925, School Board Minutes, 1922-1929, <http://commweb.fcps.edu/schoolboardapps/searchmenu.cfm> (accessed June 1, 2012).

⁴³⁷ Mary Crozet Wood Johnson, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, 18 December 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁴³⁸ Mary Crozet Wood Johnson, interview.

year, an A. M. Ashby, most likely Alice, was listed as teaching in the Falls Church School District where she taught until the beginning of World War I. At least one former student recalled Ashby as their teacher at the Fort.⁴³⁹ It is unclear who taught at the school during World War I and the early 1920s.

Perhaps driven by the physical condition of the school, local residents petitioned the Rosenwald Fund for monies to build a new school at a new location by the early 1920s. Julius Rosenwald, a Jewish American businessman who had made his fortune as the primary shareholder in Sears Roebuck and Co., decided to use his wealth to improve the educational opportunities of rural southern African Americans. He first became involved with black education by helping fund Booker T. Washington's extension program at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, which—as critics have noted—focused on industrial education as opposed to the professions or liberal arts. By the late 1910s, African Americans from throughout the South were contacting Tuskegee's extension program and later the Rosenwald Fund (which was established in 1917) to support the building of schools. The Fund had a set criteria in its allocation—that state and county authorities along with both black and white residents supported the building of a new school; that the state and county agreed to maintain the building as part of the public school system; and that whites had to donate land, funds, or other resources while blacks gave labor or monies. By the time of Rosenwald's death in 1932, 368 "Rosenwald schools" were built in Virginia.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁹ Russell-Porte 169-171; Charles H. McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 14, www.ancestry.com (accessed May 16, 2012).

⁴⁴⁰ Russell-Porte, 87; Phyllis McClure, "Rosenwald Schools in the Northern Neck," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 113.2 (2005): 114-145, <http://ezproxy.umw.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ahl&AN=>

The Seminary

School for Colored Children

was built in 1926 near the present-day site of T.C.

Williams High School with

monies from the



Figure 47. Seminary School, ca. 1926. Courtesy of Rosenwald Fund Archives, Fisk University.

Rosenwald Fund (Figure 47). Douglas (also Douglass) Wood and later his descendants conveyed two acres for \$500 to Fairfax County for a new three-room school with a privy and library (Figure 48).⁴⁴¹

Local African American residents raised \$1,000 to build the school. Whites gave \$50, the state \$4,285, and Rosenwald \$900 for a total of \$6,235.⁴⁴²

While this new school was being built, local children attended school at Liberty Hall, a fraternal building not far from Oakland Baptist Church. Frederick Rust, John Wesley Casey, and Rucker Pollard, trustees of the Sons and Daughters of Liberty, originally purchased the land in 1915.⁴⁴³ In the 1924 and 1925 minutes, it was recorded that the Fairfax County School Board was paying rent to Jacob Ball, the adopted son of Harriet (McKnight) Shorts,

[17684560&site=ehost-live">Rosenwald](#) (accessed May 7, 2012); Stephanie Deutsch, *You Need a Schoolhouse: Booker T. Washington, Julius Rosenwald, and the Building of Schools for the Segregated South* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011).

⁴⁴¹ Fairfax Deed Book F-10-481, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA. After World War II, it reportedly had moveable walls between two of the classrooms so that teachers were able to slide a wall back to make a space large enough for an all-school event. Interview with Mrs. Janie Brown, July 24, 1969, as cited in Laurel C. Dolan, *A History of Negro Education in the Alexandria City Public Schools, 1900-1964* (M.A. Thesis, American University, 1969), 51.

⁴⁴² As noted earlier, Elizabeth Henry Douglas mentioned temporarily attending the Kemper School in Arlington County before going to the Seminary School. Russell-Porte 95; Mary Crozet Wood Johnson, transcription; Elizabeth Henry Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA; "Regular Meeting of Fairfax County School Board," February 5, 1926, School Board Minutes, 1922-1929, <http://commweb.fcps.edu/schoolboardapps/searchmenu.cfm> (June 1, 2012); "Seminary School," Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card File Database, http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/?module=search.details&set_v=aWQ9NDgxNg==&school_historic_name=seminary&button=Search&o=0 (May 10, 2012).

⁴⁴³ Arlington County Deed Book 137-555, Land Records Division, Arlington County Court House, Arlington, VA.

to use the building.⁴⁴⁴ Elizabeth Henry Douglas described the interior of Liberty Hall as “a great big room, and those children, about 40 or 50 children, was in that one room” when it functioned as a school.⁴⁴⁵ Others might have attended the nearby Kemper School in Arlington County.

Local parents and educational advocates joined together to ensure that all local children could attend the Seminary School. Among them was a group named the Seminary Colored School League, with William D. Wood (the son of Douglass



Figure 48. Douglas Wood. Date unknown. Courtesy of Crozet Wood Johnson.

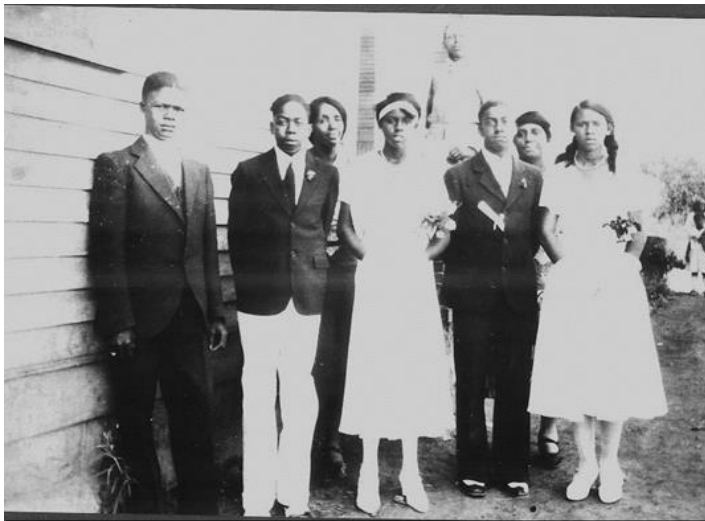


Figure 49. Seminary School Students (from left to right) Lewis Douglas, Archie Casey, Beatrice N. Terrell, Elizabeth V. (Henry) Douglas, Allen Wanzer, Mrs. Geraldine Stevenson, and Rebecca Rust, 1932. Courtesy of Elizabeth Douglas.

and Matilda Wood) as its spokesperson.

In 1927, the League argued before the Fairfax County School Board that children from Arlington County who had previously attended school with children from around Fairfax Seminary, be allowed to attend. The school board, after some debate, agreed to create a

⁴⁴⁴ “Regular Meeting of the County School Board of Fairfax County,” June 5, 1925, May 5, 1925, November 4, 1924; School Board Minutes, 1922-1929, <http://commweb.fcps.edu/schoolboardapps/searchmenu.cfm> (June 1, 2012).

⁴⁴⁵ Elizabeth Henry Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

reciprocal agreement with Arlington County so these children could remain with their peers.⁴⁴⁶

With its completion, there were at least four African American teachers at the newly constructed Seminary School while it was under Fairfax County's jurisdiction.⁴⁴⁷ Geraldine L. Stevenson, whom many former students remembered, was recorded as teaching in Fairfax County starting in 1924 and at the Seminary School in 1927.⁴⁴⁸ The May 1927 minutes of the Fairfax County School Board also listed Miss R. S. Glass as the principal with E. M. Campbell as a teacher.⁴⁴⁹ Glass and Campbell were paid \$60 and \$50 a month respectively, which was a similar salary to other African American teachers in Fairfax County; however, it was still below that of white teachers.⁴⁵⁰ Beatrice Terrell taught in 1928-1929 at the Seminary School; it is also possible that she had previously taught at the Fort and/or Liberty Hall. There is a B. M. Terrell listed in the Virginia teacher censuses in Fairfax County from 1923-1925 and 1926-1928; however, it does not give the name of the school at which Terrell taught. In an oral history, Mary Crozet Wood Johnson, who began attending school around 1920, recalled Beatrice Terrell as her teacher.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁶ "Regular Meeting of Fairfax County School Board," December 5, 1927, School Board Minutes, 1922-1929, <http://commweb.fcps.edu/schoolboardapps/searchmenu.cfm> (June 1, 2012).

⁴⁴⁷ Julia M. A. Bradby in her 1992 interview noted that a Kerry Vaughn taught at one of the Seminary schools, but I have been unable to locate her in the historical records that exist. Julia M.A. Bradby, transcription.

⁴⁴⁸ Geraldine L. Stevenson, Washington, D.C., to Mrs. Marjorie Hodda, Alexandria City School Board, Alexandria, Va., May 23, 1960; Teacher Censuses, Alexandria City Public Schools, Record Center, Alexandria, VA; Charles H. McKnight, transcription; Elizabeth Douglas, transcription; Edmonia Smith McKnight, interview of Patricia Knock, transcription, June 2, 1994, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁴⁹ "Special Meeting of the Fairfax County School Board," May 26, 1927, School Board Minutes, 1922-1929, <http://commweb.fcps.edu/schoolboardapps/searchmenu.cfm> (June 1, 2012).

⁴⁵⁰ Laurel C. Dolan, *A History of Negro Education in the Alexandria City Public Schools, 1900-1964* (M.A. Thesis, American University, 1969), 51; Russell-Porte 174, 176-178, 183-242.

⁴⁵¹ Russell-Porte, 174-175. Mary Crozet Johnson, interview; [List of Teachers], Alexandria School Board Minutes, ca. 1929, Alexandria City Public Schools, Records Center, Alexandria, VA.

Oral histories provide information on the average school day at the newly constructed Seminary School. Elizabeth Henry Douglas discussed her experiences at the Seminary School at length:

P.K.: So you didn't have running water in Seminary Hills School. You had an outside toilet?

Elizabeth Douglas: Yes, ma'am, and four rooms. We had the 8th grade, the first and second. See, in those rooms, they had two or three classes. You'd have a first and second and then you'd have third and fourth and fifth and sixth or seventh and eighth. I went as far as I could go up there. That's the reason why I had to either go to Alexandria or go somewhere else to school.

P.K.: Do you remember the teachers' names?

Elizabeth Douglas: Yes, ma'am. Now, Mrs. Geraldine Stevenson was my teacher. We had Miss Campbell, Miss Glass, Miss Janie Ross, and Mrs. Kosner.

P.K.: Was there a principal?

Elizabeth Douglas: Mrs. Geraldine Stevenson was the principal. And Beatrice Terrell would substitute when one of them didn't come in. But we opened in the morning with a hymn. And a prayer. We had one half hour devotional every morning. One child would get up and lead the devotion. Then, we would salute the flag. "I pledge allegiance to the flag and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."⁴⁵²

Like Douglas, Lucian Johnson, son of Douglas and Mary Frances (Simms) Johnson and grandson of Daniel and Alice (Wanzer)

Simms of the Macedonia/Seminary neighborhood, described the school as "[a] three-room house, rectangle. First, second, and third grade in one room; then fourth and fifth in another; and six and seven—they only had seven grades, then you had to



Figure 50. Elizabeth Henry Douglas' Certificate of Attendance for Seminary School, 1932. Courtesy of Elizabeth Douglas.

⁴⁵² Elizabeth Henry Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

go downtown.”⁴⁵³ When interviewed by Evelyn Darnell Russell-Porte as part of her Ph.D. dissertation on African American education in Fairfax County, Charles H. McKnight, great-grandson of Willis and Harriet McKnight, also noted that each day began with prayer, singing, and recitation. The school day ran from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and included reading, math, geography, and history. Students could bring a lunch or go home, and books were rented for a \$1.50.⁴⁵⁴

The annexation of the easternmost portions of Fairfax County in 1928 by Alexandria, which was finalized in 1930, meant that the County no longer maintained the school. The dividing line, which ran along Quaker Lane, bisected the Seminary community. Children living in the recently annexed eastern portion of the Seminary were now residents of Alexandria and those at the Fort were still in Fairfax County. Fairfax County, however, did not have a school for children living at the Fort to attend unless they were transported by bus to a segregated school in Bailey’s Crossroads. Thus, during the 1928-1929 school-year, Fairfax County worked out an arrangement with Alexandria to pay \$35 for each student from the Fort to attend the Seminary School, with the understanding that the Fairfax County School Board would then move these children to Bailey’s Crossroads next year.⁴⁵⁵ Children at the Fort, however, continued to attend the Seminary School through the 1930s and 1940s instead of traveling to Bailey’s Crossroads. As late as 1949, two

⁴⁵³ Lucian Johnson, Lucian Johnson, interview by David Cavanaugh, transcription, 5 June 2009; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁵⁴ Russell-Porte, 95.

⁴⁵⁵ “Regular Meeting of Fairfax County School Board,” April 5, 1929, School Board Minutes, 1922-1929, <http://commweb.fcps.edu/schoolboardapps/searchmenu.cfm> (June 1, 2012).

children from Fairfax County—Willie and Gladys Johnson—were attending the Seminary School.⁴⁵⁶

Historical records combined with oral histories provide a good picture of those teaching after Alexandria began running the Seminary School.⁴⁵⁷ Interestingly, a few of the same teachers worked at the Seminary School after annexation.

Table 9: Teacher Information for Seminary School, 1929-1950¹

Name	Dates Teaching at Seminary	Grades Taught/Position	Additional Information
Geraldine L. Stevenson	1929-1944	4-7 grades/principal	Transfers to Parker-Gray and only teaches
Lethia M. Costner	1929-1934	1-2 grades	Transfers to Parker-Gray
Janie Dangerfield Ross Browne	1931-1942	2-5 grades	Transfers to Lyles-Crouch
Beatrice M. Nash Terrell	1928-1929; 1939	1-2 grades (1928-1929); 2-5 grades (1939)	6 month replacement for Browne while on leave (probably maternity) in 1939
Frances E. Ross Baton	1934-1950	1-4 grades	Transfers to Charles Houston

¹ All information in this chart comes from the Teacher Censuses and School Board Minutes maintained by the City of Alexandria Public Schools.

Based on teacher censuses maintained in Alexandria, three out of these five teachers worked for their entire lives in Alexandria's public schools. Stevenson, who had attended

⁴⁵⁶ "Fairfax County School Board," September 22, 1949, School Board Minutes, 1940-1949, <http://commweb.fcps.edu/schoolboardapps/searchmenu.cfm> (June 1, 2012).

In 1935, the School Board unsuccessfully attempted to build a new Seminary school. Residents from throughout Fairfax County also petitioned the School Board to build new schools, including the Seminary one, at this time. "Special Meeting Fairfax County School Board," September 27, 1935; "Special Meeting Fairfax County School Board," July 22, 1935; School Board Minutes, 1930-1939, <http://commweb.fcps.edu/schoolboardapps/searchmenu.cfm> (June 1, 2012).

⁴⁵⁷ R Laurel C. Dolan, *A History of Negro Education in the Alexandria City Public Schools, 1900-1964* (M.A. Thesis, American University, 1969), 51; Russell-Porte, 174, 176-178, 183-242; Charles H. McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992; Elizabeth Douglas, interview with Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992; Edmonia Smith McKnight, interview with Patricia Knock, transcription, June 2, 1994, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

Miner Normal School in Washington, D.C., had first taught in Washington, D.C. and Montgomery County, Maryland before coming to Virginia. She taught in Alexandria until the mandatory retirement age of 70, which she reached in 1960.⁴⁵⁸

The two Ross sisters, Janie and Frances, lived with their parents in Alexandria while they taught at the Seminary School. They, too, went to Miner Teacher's College, which changed its name by the time they matriculated. The sisters also took courses at the Hampton Institute in southern Virginia in the 1940s. Before receiving their appointments in Alexandria by the early 1930s, Frances taught in Albemarle County, and Janie's first position was in Orange County, Virginia. Frances was also the last teacher working at the Seminary School, which, after Stevenson left in 1944, only covered grades first through fourth. Frances transferred to Charles Houston Elementary School in 1951, where she taught until her retirement in 1967 (she was 67 years old). Janie transferred from the Seminary School to Lyles-Crouch in 1942, where she taught for two years. She then moved to Charles Houston followed by Jefferson-Houston. Five years after her sister's retirement, she did the same.⁴⁵⁹

Frances Ross' personnel file, unlike those for other teachers, contained a lengthy description of her teaching style written in 1944 by Stevenson, the Seminary School's principal at the time. Stevenson wrote:

There is evidence that the skills are being well taught and used intelligently. The majority of the first graders read well. The room is neat, clean, attractive, pupils polite and many practicing desirable health habits.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ Geraldine L. Stevenson, Teacher Censuses [microfilm], Alexandria City Public Schools, Record Center, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁵⁹ Janie Dangerfield Ross Browne and Frances E. Ross Baton, Teacher Censuses [microfilm], Alexandria City Public Schools, Record Center, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁶⁰ Frances E. Ross, Teacher Evaluation Record, April 13, 1944, Teacher Censuses [microfilm], Alexandria City Public Schools, Record Center, Alexandria, VA.

She did have one criticism of Frances—she was too serious when teaching her first and second graders and needed to incorporate “more play” into her curriculum.⁴⁶¹ As part of her annual evaluation, Stevenson highlighted that Frances was active with her students and their parents through her participation in the Tuberculosis Association, Girl Scouts, and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). She even noted what she was reading--*Reader's Digest*, *Virginia Journal*, and the *N.E.A. Journal*—in her free time.

Compared to the other women, Lethia M. Costner had a short teaching career in Alexandria. She first taught in White Oak and Virgilina, Virginia before obtaining an appointment at the Seminary School in 1929. By March 1934, Costner requested a transfer to a different school, preferably Lyles-Crouch. In a handwritten letter to the superintendent of schools, T. C. Williams, she explained that it would cost less money to travel to Lyles-Crouch from her home in Washington, D.C. Stevenson, who had reviewed Costner's teaching, stated the following:

There has been for some time a disatisfactory [sic.] feeling among patrons, which does not seem to clear up. I think a new environment would be better as the teacher is capable of doing good work.⁴⁶²

What was perhaps left unsaid was that Costner and her husband, William E. Costner, had divorced some time in 1933 and that he had remarried. This might have affected her teaching as well as her economic stability. It can be speculated that her divorce also caused

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Lethia M. Costner Teacher Information Sheet, 1933-1934, Teacher Censuses [microfilm], Alexandria City Public Schools, Record Center, Alexandria, VA.

controversy among local parents.⁴⁶³ Costner taught at Lyles-Crouch for the next ten years, after which the school system decided not to renew her contract.⁴⁶⁴

Despite Alexandria's population explosion during World War II mobilization, the number of children attending the Seminary School declined. By 1944, the Seminary School only provided first through fourth grade. Older children in grades fifth through seventh were forced to ride a bus to one of the other segregated elementary schools in Alexandria. Children living in Fairfax County, which included Fort Ward until 1952, were to be bussed to schools elsewhere in the county. The Seminary School finally closed by fall 1950.⁴⁶⁵

Because the Seminary School only covered grades first through seventh, all African American students were required to travel away from the neighborhood to attend junior high or high school. For those families who could afford to continue their children's education, they sent their children wherever educational opportunities were available. African American children walked or—if they could afford it—paid to take the trolley or bus to Alexandria or Washington, D.C. Alexandria, however, did not establish a public high school until the 1936; thus, parents often looked to Washington, D.C. for continuing their

⁴⁶³ *Boyd's District of Columbia Directory* (Washington, D.C.: R. L. Polk & Company, 1933), 414; *Boyd's District of Columbia Directory* (Washington, D.C.: R. L. Polk & Company, 1934), 424; "Vital Statistics," *The Washington Post* 30 November 1933, 27.

⁴⁶⁴ T. C. Williams, Superintendent of Schools, Alexandria, VA to Lethia M. Costner, Washington, D.C. September 9, 1944, Teacher Censuses [microfilm], Alexandria City Public Schools, Record Center, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁶⁵ "Fairfax County School Board," June 4, 1944; Fairfax County School Board," September 22, 1949, School Board Minutes, 1940-1949, <http://commweb.fcps.edu/schoolboardapps/searchmenu.cfm> (June 1, 2012); Mark Howard, *An Historical Study of the Desegregation of the Alexandria, Virginia, City Public Schools, 1954-1973* (Ph.D. Dissertation, George Washington University, 1976), 134-137.

The playground and fields around the school reportedly remained opened through the summer of 1960 so that children could play and former teachers, who usually watched over them during the summer, could remain connected. Interview with Mrs. Euna Johnson Smith, June 23, 1969, as cited in Laurel C. Dolan, *A History of Negro Education in the Alexandria City Public Schools, 1900-1964* (M.A. Thesis, American University, 1969), 56.

children's educations in the early twentieth century.⁴⁶⁶ Starting in the nineteenth century, school options for African American children were much more abundant in Washington, D.C. The Preparatory High School for Colored Youth, renamed in 1916 after Paul Laurence Dunbar and today is known as Dunbar High School, was established in 1870. Armstrong Manual Training School, in the Truxton Circle neighborhood, was built in 1902 and dedicated by Booker T. Washington. Francis Junior High School, built in 1927, catered primarily to African American children in the Foggy Bottom and Georgetown areas.⁴⁶⁷

All of these schools had students from the Fort and Macedonia/Seminary in their ranks. Archibald Casey, son of John Wesley and Ada (Adams), traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend Francis Junior High School. He graduated in 1934.⁴⁶⁸ Elizabeth Douglas, Dorothy Hall Smith, and Lucian Johnson recalled in oral histories teenagers going to Washington, D.C. to complete high school. With money from a babysitting job with the May family, Elizabeth Douglas was able to travel into the District for schooling and eventually pursued a degree in nursing:

I went into the District. The others went to Parker-Gray. Now, I went to Francis Junior High School on to Armstrong High School. I graduated from there. I went on to training school there and I took every course that I could, including nursing. And that's what I was going to major in. But then, as I went on, and my mother worked for the people that owned the AB&W bus line, the M-A-Y, May. She started working for the son. The son had two children. At the age of 11, no older than that, I started babysitting them and I got 50 cents an evening and that helped me to go to school....⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁶ Lucian Johnson, interview by David Cavanaugh, transcription, 5 June 2009; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁶⁷ Based on conversations with Carol Johnson, Adams, and Dr. Michael D. Casey. Elsie Thomas, who lived in the City of Alexandria, also recalled attending Dunbar High School in 1937. Elsie Thomas, interview by unknown, transcription 21 April 2002; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁶⁸ Archibald Casey Diploma, 20 June 1934, Francis Junior High School, Washington, D.C.; Dr. Michael D. Casey Personal Papers, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁶⁹ Elizabeth Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 28 March 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

Johnson, in an oral history, noted that “[o]riginally high schools just went up to go to ninth grade. If [you] wanted to go further up had to go into the District to complete high school. This was 1937. High schools in the south only went to the 11th grade.”⁴⁷⁰ In fact, Johnson’s sister, Mary Agnes (Johnson) Colbert attended Francis Junior High School and then Central High School (now known as Cardoza High School) in Washington, D.C.⁴⁷¹ Smith recalled going to high school in Washington, D.C. after trying to commute to the only high school for African Americans in Fairfax County—Manassas Industrial School—that was almost an hour away by bus.⁴⁷²

Because it was located in Fairfax County, a handful of Fort residents also attended Manassas Industrial School. Jennie Dean, a former slave from Virginia, had established Manassas Industrial School in 1893 as a private, Baptist-affiliated school, not unlike the Tuskegee Institute.⁴⁷³ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Manassas was the only high school—public or private—available to African Americans within the county. In 1938, the City of Manassas and Fairfax and Fauquier Counties purchased the Manassas Industrial School, which became a regional high school for all African Americans. The campus was used for African American education through the early 1950s.⁴⁷⁴

As a consequence of the cost and distance, a large number of Fort residents did not go to junior high or high school prior to annexation by Alexandria in 1952. It is also possible that parents needed their older children to work and support the family as

⁴⁷⁰ Lucian Johnson, interview by David Cavanaugh, transcription, 5 June 2009; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁷¹ Email correspondence with Frances Colbert Terrell, May 26, 2014.

⁴⁷² Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, 25 May 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁷³ Laura A. Peake, *The Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth, 1894-1916* (M.A. Thesis, College of William and Mary, 1995), 25-29.

⁴⁷⁴ Peake 93.

opposed to going to school. In the early twentieth century, there is record of only one student—Virginia Ashby (the daughter of Samuel and Louise Ashby)—attending in the 1910s.⁴⁷⁵ Charles H. McKnight, who attended in the 1930s, reported that transportation to the school was the biggest issue and often deterred children and their parents.

Thirty-five miles. All those that lived at the Fort were bussed from where we walked around to where the hospital is today.... We stood out there and it was the most, and this is what happened. The home is still there. There was a white family, who, I don't know which school, how far they'd go. But the black kids and the white kids stood and we'd talk together. You know, we'd talk and be very, very friendly. And then whoever's busses came first, we got on. "See you tomorrow!" We passed, going to Manassas, we passed, I know at least six schools, going to Manassas. Back then, you know, you never give it the first thought, because for four years straight, I rode 35 miles one way, 70 miles a day, going to Manassas. At that time it was [a] Regional Industrial Boarding School.⁴⁷⁶

Such a commute to school was hard on families. Many children, including his wife, Edmonia (Smith) McKnight, only completed seventh grade, after which they went to work.⁴⁷⁷

With Alexandria's 1952 annexation of large portions of Fairfax County (which included Fort Ward), students who had been separated with the closing of the Seminary School were now in the same school district. Elementary age children attended one of Alexandria's all-black schools, Lyles-Crouch. Alexandria also opened a new high school for African American students in 1950, which took the name Parker-Gray. The location of

⁴⁷⁵ "Manassas Industrial School Personnel (1894-1938) (Faculty, Staff, Students and Graduates – Partial Listing," <http://eservice.pwcgov.org/library/digitalLibrary/PDF/MIS%20Personnel.pdf> (accessed May 17, 2012).

The records for the Manassas Industrial School are quite limited; however, there is information on one other person from the Fairfax Seminary area in their records. "Amanda G. Woode" (Wood) was in the "Manassas Industrial School Personnel" listing as attending the school and then working as Assistant Bookkeeper from 1915-1916. Wood is the daughter of Douglass and Matilda Wood who lived on Quaker Lane. 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 2, ancestry.com (accessed May 16, 2012).

⁴⁷⁶ Charles H. McKnight, transcription.

⁴⁷⁷ Russell-Porte, 95-96.

these schools required that students take a bus past several of the city's all-white schools. Parker-Gray High School, however, was still much closer than Manassas Industrial High School.⁴⁷⁸

Because of the limited nature of educational opportunities in the region, at least two families—one at the Fort and another at Macedonia/Seminary—sent children to Catholic schools starting in the 1950s. Historian Megan Stout Sibbel argues that African American parents, although not necessarily members of the Catholic Church, believed that Catholic schools were “superior educational alternatives to area public schools” and many parents appreciated the “attention paid by many sisters to the needs of students.” The mission of nuns to educate underserved populations, which included African American children in the American South, appealed to parents as well. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church, like other religious institutions, was still a segregated one, and struggled to come to terms with its own universal goals versus the mandate of Jim Crow.⁴⁷⁹ Sergeant Lee Thomas Young in his 1996 interview with Patricia Knock noted that—although he was a Protestant—he sent his children to St. Joseph’s Catholic School in Alexandria because he knew “we had to get them an education so you did it any way you could.” St. Joseph’s, which was dedicated in 1916, catered to African American members of the Catholic Church in Alexandria. From its inception, the church also functioned as a school with the Oblate Sisters, an African

⁴⁷⁸ Charles Houston (which had changed its name from Parker-Gray in 1950) was the other all-black elementary school in Alexandria. Mable T. Lyles, *Caught between Two Systems: Desegregating Alexandria's Schools, 1954-1973* (no location: Xlibris, 2006), 17-23.

⁴⁷⁹ It should be noted that the majority of the historical literature on the Catholic Church and African Americans does not look at Virginia; however, there are many dissertations that look at race relations and the Catholic Church in the twentieth century. Megan Stout Sibbel, *Reaping the “Colored Harvest”: The Catholic Mission in the American South* (Ph.D. dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago, 2013), 150. See also Cyprian Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (St. Louis: Crossroad Publishing 1995); Shannen Dee Williams, *Black Nuns and the Struggle to Desegregate Catholic America after World War I* (Ph.D. dissertation Rutgers University, 2013).

American order of nuns, as teachers. In 1931, St. Joseph's opened a separate brick school building, which included grades first through seventh.⁴⁸⁰ The school, however, provided no transportation, making it difficult for children who lived outside of the city core to attend. Young stated: "we had to get our own transportation any way we could to get them down there—to Alexandria. Or sometimes we'd walk it—walk down. It was almost three or four miles."⁴⁸¹ Once Blessed Sacrament School integrated and added additional grades (it first covered only first through fourth), his children then attended that school, which was only a mile away from their home at the Fort at the intersection of Braddock Road and Quaker lane. Blessed Sacrament, which was established as a church in 1946 and expanded to include a school in 1949, first began to cater to white residents living in Parkfairfax and Fairlington.⁴⁸² Brenda Adams recalled that her parents sent all eight of their children to Catholic school along with the Young family. The older three children attended St. Joseph's although an older brother went to Blessed Sacrament for seventh and eighth grades; the younger children attended Blessed Sacrament so that they did not have to take the bus by themselves (Brenda Adams attended first grade at St. Joseph's and then transferred to Blessed Sacrament for second through eighth grades). Later, Brenda matriculated at St. Mary's Academy in Old Town for high school, although her older siblings (Earl Jr., Thelma, and Landon) attended Parker-Gray. Her younger siblings (Paul, Anthony, Patricia, and Denise) went to T. C. Williams for high school. Brenda's mother, Mary Thelma (LeBeau)

⁴⁸⁰ "Church is Dedicated," *Washington Post*, May 15, 1916, 9; "Alexandrians to Give Dinner for Rev. Kelly," *Washington Post*, August 11, 1936, X7.

⁴⁸¹ Sergeant Lee Thomas Young, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, November 19, 1996; Sergeant Lee Thomas Young, interview by Pamela Cressey, transcription, March 7, 2009; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁸² "New Catholic Church to Open in Alexandria," *Washington Post*, September 14, 1946, 2; "2 New Schools Dedicated in Alexandria Area," *Washington Post*, December 5, 1949, 9.

Adams (1925-2002) was Catholic and originally from Louisiana. She married Earl Adams Sr. (1917-1992), who was a Baptist and had spent time in Louisiana while serving in the U.S. Army during World War II. After the war, they returned to his family's homestead, which dated to the late nineteenth century, at Macedonia/Seminary. Thelma—along With George Henry Casey who lived briefly at the Fort and then Macedonia/Seminary, also worked for the Sisters of the Holy Cross who ran the school. Earl Adams Sr.'s great grandparents—George and Ann Adams—had been renters at the Fort in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁸³ Other community students attended both private and parochial schools. Francis and Carol Johnson attended Burgundy Farm Country Day School in Fairfax County, the first school in Virginia to desegregate in the 1950s. They later transferred to Blessed Sacrament along with the Adams and Young families. Jason Wood attended Beverley Hills Country Day School, Alexandria's first co-operative school established in 1946. It is unclear how long this school operated.⁴⁸⁴

The U.S. Supreme Court's two rulings on *Brown-v.-Board of Education* in 1954 and 1955 followed by the Virginia Supreme Court's ruling on the unconstitutionality of "Massive Resistance" in January 1959 led the way for dramatic changes in Alexandria's public school system. Within a few months, local parents joined Alexandria's chapter of the NAACP in suing the school board so African American children, including those from the

⁴⁸³ Special thanks to Brenda Adams (who is the great-great-granddaughter of George and Ann M. Adams, who were early renters at the Fort, and the great-grandniece of Robert and Clara (Shorts) Adams, who owned land at the Fort since the late nineteenth century) for pointing out that she and her siblings attended St. Joseph's and Blessed Sacrament, both the church and the school, and the importance of educational access. She has been a member of Blessed Sacrament for over fifty years. Email correspondence with author, April 21, 2014; U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006; www.ancestry.com (accessed April 16, 2014); *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., Inc. Publishers, 1950), 22.

⁴⁸⁴ "Preschool Unit at Alexandria may Expand," *Washington Post* 6 May 1945, M4; "Parents Plan Co-Op Day School for Alexandria," *Washington Post* 5 March 1946, 9; Email correspondence with Carol Johnson, 27 May 2014.

Fort and Macedonia/Seminary neighborhoods, could attend schools much closer to their homes. In December 1959, the courts forced Alexandria to place nine of the fourteen children who were part of the suit into all-white schools under the pupil placement system by spring 1960.⁴⁸⁵ Among these children were Judy and Vickie Belk (who were the great-grandchildren of John Wesley Casey and Ada Adams) and Deborah, Marie, and James Bradby (who were the great-grandchildren of James Adams—the brother of Robert Adams who was married to Clara (Shorts) Adams—and Ada Adams Casey—who later married John Wesley Casey). The Belks lived at the Fort and the Bradbys were in nearby Macedonia/Seminary.⁴⁸⁶ For these children living in the western portions of the city (now called the West End), this meant that they would no longer be bussed into Uptown (a largely African American neighborhood to the north of King Street), but could attend schools within walking distance of their homes.⁴⁸⁷

In spite of the court rulings, assignment to the closest elementary and high schools was still not automatic for African American children. Alexandria continued to use the pupil placement program into the mid-1960s. The program required that African American children take intelligence tests in order to attend all-white schools. By the fall of

⁴⁸⁵ *Otis E. Jones and Betty Jo Jones, infants, by Leora Jones, their mother and next friend, at al., Appellants, v. School Board of City of Alexandria, Virginia a body corporate, and T. C. Williams, Division Superintendent of Schools of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, Appellees*, 278 F.2s 72, April 20, 1960; *Jones v. School Board of the City of Alexandria Virginia, et al., Vickie Belk et al., Plaintiffs-Intervenors*, 179 F. Suppl. 280, December 29, 1959; Lexis-Nexis (accessed May 2, 2013); Mark Howard, *An Historical Study of the Desegregation of the Alexandria, Virginia, City Public Schools, 1954-1973* (Ph.D. Dissertation, George Washington University, 1976), 172-173.

⁴⁸⁶ Robert E. Baker and Susanna McBee, "Alexandria Segregation Ends Calmly," *Washington Post* 11 February 1959, A1; "Alexandria Disqualifies 4 Negro Pupil Transfers," *Washington Post* 19 May 1959, A14; "Segregation Ends in 4th City School," *Washington Post* 2 Feb. 1960, A11; Patricia Sullivan, "Maydell Casey Belk Dies; Fought Segregation in Alexandria Schools," *Washington Post* May 7, 2005, www.washingtonpost.com (accessed June 6, 2012).

⁴⁸⁷ Compliance—Prior to 1965, Box 27-02-32, Desegregation, Alexandria City Public Schools, Record Center, Alexandria, Va.

1960, more local children applied and passed the exam, allowing them to attend the closest school to their homes, joining the Belks and Bradbys in the slow process of desegregating Alexandria's public schools.⁴⁸⁸

The availability of education for African American children at Fort Ward and elsewhere around Fairfax Seminary changed dramatically in the hundred years following the Civil War. At first, there was no public education for any children in Virginia; however, by 1870, a segregated system started, granting limited educational opportunities in a clearly unequal system. Nevertheless, families worked hard to give their children a chance to learn by advocating for their local schools and going so far as donating land and funds to the county for schools. Some children traveled to schools as far away as Manassas and Washington, D.C. or attended local Catholic schools. Education—however—was always recognized as important, and families were willing to sacrifice to have a chance at a quality one. By the early 1960s, the slow process of unraveling the ninety-year-old segregated school system began. Families from the Fort and Macedonia/Seminary were at the forefront of the movement to desegregate Alexandria's public schools.

Consumerism and the World of Goods

The country store, a mainstay in rural southern communities, appeared near the Fort at the turn of the twentieth century and persisted until the post-World War II era. Prior to the 1890s, the Fort's residents relied on their proximity to Alexandria for access to regional, national, and international markets. The Fort community also participated in various forms of household production well into the mid-twentieth century, which could be

⁴⁸⁸ Pupil Placement Board Correspondence and Subject Files: City Transfers, Alexandria-Chesapeake, 1958-1964, Box 27; Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

shared with friends and neighbors or bartered for other necessities. Local white elites, including Launcelot Blackford, often gave gifts of food or goods to African Americans in order to further bind African Americans to their households and affirm authority. Like most rural neighborhoods, African Americans at the Fort and around Fairfax Seminary relied on a variety of forms of exchange to materially sustain their homes, families, and friends.

For residents of the Fort, it can be argued that the ability to participate in American consumerism, whether at a local store or in Alexandria, was more than simply fulfilling their needs and desires through the marketplace. The purchasing of household goods, bric-a-brac, toys, or clothing spoke to the economic and social aspirations of African Americans. Increased consumerism meant that people's things became more central not only to how one was perceived but also how one displayed himself/herself to others, both black and white. Furthermore, to be treated with respect at a white-owned business was gratifying for African Americans who struggled with the day-to-day degradation of Jim Crow.⁴⁸⁹ In his research on African American consumerism in Annapolis, Maryland, Paul Mullins found "a rich cross-section of elite, upwardly mobile, and marginalized African Americans aggressively pursued civil privileges, developed consumption tactics which minimized community racism, and subverted racist caricatures."⁴⁹⁰ Thus, as the majority of African

⁴⁸⁹ Paul R. Mullins, *Race and Affluence: An Archaeology of African America and Consumer Culture* (New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002). See also Ibid. For other discussions of consumerism, identity, and affluence, see Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (London: MacMillan, 1915); Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Culture Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3-63; Jean-Christophe Agnew, "Coming up for Air: Consumer Culture in Historical Perspective," *Consumption and the World of Goods*, eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 19-39.

⁴⁹⁰ Paul R. Mullins, *Race and the Genteel Consumer: Class and African-American Consumption, 1850-1930 Historical Archaeology* 33.1 (1999): 23.

Americans were pushed out of the political arena in the late nineteenth century, some were able to turn to the civil realm of the marketplace to have their voices heard.

Because of disenfranchisement, there is very little evidence of African American participation in electoral politics at the Fort during this period. Some of the men who became residents of the Fort voted in November 1867 for the convention leading to the passage of the Underwood Constitution, which most notably established public—although segregated—schools in Virginia. This listed included the following names of men who appeared on the 1870 and 1880 censuses in the vicinity of Fort Ward: George Adams, Frank Ashby, John Butler, Nelson Corbin, Frederick Foote, Warner Garner, Pleasant Green, James Jackson, William Massie, Alfred Moore, James Page, Burr Shorts, Joseph Terrell, and Phillip Terrell.⁴⁹¹ Just a decade later, the Virginia General Assembly passed its first legislation requiring all voters to pay a poll tax and disenfranchising all men convicted of petty larceny. For residents of the Fort, it was the poll tax that had the potential of limiting voting among African Americans as it also did for poor whites.⁴⁹² Nevertheless, a handful of African American men continued to participate in the Republican Party during the late nineteenth century. As noted in the previous chapter, Launcelot Blackford, the headmaster of Episcopal High School, was critical of Warren Garner Sr. and John Butler for voting for “the enemy” [Republicans] in 1881.⁴⁹³ In 1889, Searles McKnight, son of Willis and Harriet McKnight (Shorts), was reported in the *Fairfax Herald* as a member of the Republican precinct committee for the West End, the name given to the neighborhood around the Falls

⁴⁹¹ Maddy McCoy and Elizabeth Drembus, “A List of Colored Voters Voting in the 4th Magisterial District, 1867,” Fort Ward History Working Group, January-June 2010.

⁴⁹² Andrew Buni, *The Negro in Virginia Politics, 1920-1965* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1967), 2.

⁴⁹³ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, November 8, 1881, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, Virginia.

Church Train Station and West Street.⁴⁹⁴ That same year at a meeting of the Seminary Hill Republican Club, George W. Stewart, a Republican from the City of Alexandria and Searles' brother-in-law, stated, "he still believed the claims of the negro would be fully recognized."⁴⁹⁵ This club presumably included McKnight and other African American men around Fairfax Seminary.

The passage of legislation to further disenfranchise African Americans continued in the early twentieth century. Virginia's 1902 constitutional convention rewrote the state's voting requirements to include a grandfather clause and literacy test. The poll tax was also expanded so all Virginian voters would have to pay this tax for at least three years to vote. The impact of these laws was significant. The *Alexandria Gazette* reported that while 3,152 African American men voted in the 1900 presidential election, only forty-nine were registered to vote by the end of 1903.⁴⁹⁶ In Fairfax County's Falls Church Precinct for 1902-1903, twenty-seven African American men were registered to vote; based on the 1900 U.S. Federal Census, there were 736 African American males between the ages of 18 and 44 in Fairfax County.⁴⁹⁷ With the expansion of the vote to women in 1920, there were only thirty-seven African American men and women registered to vote in Fairfax County while the 1920 U.S. Federal Census listed 2,431 African American men and women over the age of 21.⁴⁹⁸ Alexandria's voter registration rolls from 1902 to 1954 only list four Fort residents.

⁴⁹⁴ "Falls Church," *Fairfax Herald*, May 17, 1889, 2.

⁴⁹⁵ "He has Faith in the President," *Washington Post*, April 20, 1889, 5.

⁴⁹⁶ Andrew Buni, *The Negro in Virginia Politics, 1920-1965* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1967), 28.

⁴⁹⁷ "General Register 1902-1903, Fairfax County," Fairfax County Courthouse Archives, Fairfax, VA; UVA Historical Census Browser, <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/php/county.php> (accessed January 23, 2013).

⁴⁹⁸ "List of Voters Registered in Fairfax County, Virginia 1900-1920," Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Record Room, Fairfax, VA; UVA Historical Census Browser, <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/php/county.php> (accessed January 22, 2013).

A Jacob Bell, probably Jacob Ball who was the adopted son of Harriet [McKnight] Shorts, registered to vote in 1920. Bertha F. C. [Miller] Tancil, the daughter John A. and Lavinia Miller, had moved to Alexandria with her spouse, Herbert P. Tancil, where she registered to vote in 1928. Her husband, father-in-law, and two children were also voters. David Hall, the son of Luther and Emma [Taylor] Hall who owned land across the street from the present location of Fort Ward Park, registered in 1929. Finally, Clara Adams registered to vote in August 1941.⁴⁹⁹

At the same time that African Americans were politically disenfranchised, there is ample archaeological evidence of African American participation in consumerism at the Fort. Unfortunately, without supporting textual documents, we do not know whether these items were purchased, bartered, or gifted or who the owner(s) were. At the Fort, archaeologists have found nineteenth- and twentieth-century porcelain, stoneware, and earthenware, some of which was hand decorated or transfer printed while other pieces were unadorned. In addition to ceramics, there were many pieces of glassware, the types of bric-a-brac that Paul Mullins has argued represented African Americans embracing Victorian ideals of display to demarcate identity. Other types of consumer goods tied to middle-class identity were uncovered, such as phonograph records dating from 1912 and pocket watch parts. Toys—pieces of two racecars, assorted marbles, a saucer from a tea

⁴⁹⁹ The date for Clara Adams in this website is incorrect. It should read “1941” and not “1914.” Voter Registration in Alexandria, Virginia: African Americans, 1902-1954; http://www.alexandria.lib.va.us/custom/web/lhsc/genealogyresources/aavr/a_c.html (accessed July 9, 2014).

set, a burnt fireplace for a dollhouse, and parts of a German bisque doll—were also found (Figure 51).⁵⁰⁰



Figure 51. Archaeological examples from The Fort community: Porcelain teapot (upper left); recovered artifacts (upper right); concrete foundation at the Ashby House (lower left); example of phonograph record fragment from the Shorts' House. Courtesy of Alexandria Archaeology.

Written records maintained by local whites provide additional insight into the Fort's relationship to local centers of commerce. Launcelot Blackford frequently wrote of his travels into Alexandria and Washington, D.C. where he and his family visited friends, ran errands, and shopped. Sometimes, he bought things for Episcopal High School, including a

⁵⁰⁰ Alexandria Archaeology, "Fort Ward Artifact Inventory—Ceramics," "Fort Ward Artifact Inventory—Glass," and "Fort Ward Artifact Inventory—Miscellaneous," (unpublished databases) (Alexandria, VA: Office of Historic Alexandria, 2013).

tablet for the newly built chapel.⁵⁰¹ In town, he saw new inventions, such as Thomas Edison's phonograph, which he then arranged to bring to campus. He noted in his diary that both white students and African Americans attended the phonograph concert.⁵⁰²

Carriages, sleighs, and wagons were the easiest way for white visitors, students, and faculty to travel into Alexandria in the late nineteenth century. Blackford hired James Jackson, one of the original African American settlers at the Fort, to transport members of the Fairfax Seminary community.⁵⁰³ On one occasion, Jackson took several African American residents into Alexandria for the funeral of Frances Coles, Blackford's former cook, in his carriage and wagon, which he had nicknamed the "E. H. S. express."⁵⁰⁴ Poorer residents, both black and white, could also walk the three miles into Alexandria.

The amount of money African American residents of the Fort might have put towards shopping in Alexandria is unclear. Records for local households do not exist and Fairfax Seminary's account books do not list wages for individual workers. Blackford, however, did log the decrease of specific African American employees' wages in a September 1877 diary entry. Also included in the entry is the savings that he incurred for Episcopal High School. He cut Frances Coles' (his cook) wages to \$15.50 from \$17.50 a month. John Butler, who lived at the Fort with his family and was a waiter, had his wages

⁵⁰¹ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, 9 June 1879, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁰² Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, 21 August 1879; 7 November 1879, 11 May 1891; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁰³ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, 1 January 1877, 11 January 1877, 4 November 1884; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁰⁴ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, 25-26 March 1886, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, V.

Based on the 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Frances Coles lived in Blackford's home at the Seminary along with four other servants: Peggy Deane (servant—this woman was Blackford's nanny and a former slave of his mother), Charles H. Brown (servant), Lizzie Brown (servant and married to Charles), and William H. Terrell (employee/cook). Terrell also lived with his family at the Fort. 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 14, 15, and 40; www.ancestry.com (accessed June 5, 2012).

cut from \$15.00 to \$13.00. Warren Garner Sr., who lived at the Fort with his family and later along Quaker Lane, had his wages cut from \$14.00 to \$12.00. Fanny Strange, another Fort resident, was a domestic servant; her wages were cut from \$9.00 to \$7.50. Finally, an “Ann,” who was probably George Adam’s wife, worked in the dormitories. As a new employee, her wages were less than her peers with the exception of Strange’s (\$9.00).⁵⁰⁵ Blackford provided no explanation as to why he cut everyone’s wages; however, it is possible that the financial crisis the U.S. experienced in 1877 (known as the Panic of 1877) had negatively affected the high school. Wages for servants were traditionally low and unstandardized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, varying greatly based on region, work experience, and employer whims. Because of the issues surrounding wages, most families pooled the resources of all able-bodied adults and children working to ensure economic survival.⁵⁰⁶

Based on the limited documentation from the time, African Americans working at Fairfax Seminary and at nearby farms were using their wages in the late nineteenth century to purchase various kinds of goods. Some of these items were more functional in nature and were used to produce food, to transport residents to work, or to meet other basic needs. The property tax lists for 1866, for example, mention that Burr Shorts owned two horses valued at \$130, two hogs valued at \$20, and 1 carriage valued at \$40.⁵⁰⁷ In 1895, Blackford sold his horse, Ned, to James Jackson for \$33, if he paid the first down payment

⁵⁰⁵ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, 10 September 1877, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA; U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 14, 15, and 40, www.ancestry.com (accessed June 5, 2012).

⁵⁰⁶ Sharpless, 72-73.

⁵⁰⁷ Personal Property Tax Records for 1866, Northern District of Fairfax County, Virginia; Fairfax County Court House, Fairfax, VA.

by December. If not, Blackford would charge Jackson \$35.⁵⁰⁸ The existing wills for residents of the Fort also inventory items to be sold in order to pay off debts or be given to family members. Harriet (McKnight) Shorts' will, which was probated after her death in 1917, listed that her cow, horse [which died before it could be sold], and wagon was to be sold upon her death to pay her bills.⁵⁰⁹

Textual evidence also speaks to the ownership of decorative items that were tied to notions of middle class respectability. William Henry Terrell, who lived at Blackford's and at his father's home on the Fort, died suddenly while cooking at Blackford's home on April 17, 1890.

About 11 a.m. occurred a painful and shocking incident. I was busy dictating letters when Charley Summers [Somers?], a young negro servant, came excitedly to the study and said that William Henry Terrell, the cook, was very sick and must have the doctor. I did not at first take in the seriousness of the case, but in 2 or 3 minutes went to the kitchen and found this faithful servant in a chair, supported by one or two others, - dying - if not already dead when I reached him, his mouth, nostrils and front covered with blood. He had an obstinate attack of grip for some weeks, but would not give up and I had no idea his condition was serious, though his coughing at times was terrible. He had a bad night, but was up as usual and about. The hemorrhage came on, as far as I can hear, unannounced, and with the single exclamation "Oh I'm gone" - he sank into a seat on the scene of his humble but faithful labours of 17 years, and expired.⁵¹⁰

Blackford noted money and a watch worth \$30.00 among Terrell's personal belongings.

Amanda (McKnight) Clarke, daughter of Willis and Harriet McKnight, stated in her will that

⁵⁰⁸ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, October 14, 1895; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁰⁹ Fairfax Will Book 9, page 226 and page 421; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Record Room, Fairfax, VA.

⁵¹⁰ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, 17 April 1890, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

all of her jewelry would be given to her grand-niece, Bertha (Miller) Tancil, with the exception of one ring, which would be given to her son, Clarence Gray.⁵¹¹

White paternalism also meant that families received things in lieu of money as a form of compensation or as a means of reinforcing social hierarchies; however, these gifts could also be incorporated into African American households in ways that reinforced perceptions of African American respectability and middle class identity in spite of the intention of local whites. In November 1882, Blackford hosted an oyster supper for his servants to “compensate their getting none Saturday night when the first table eat [sic] up the 12 gallons solid,” presumably leaving no leftovers for the servants.⁵¹² Charity from whites was also a form of gifting meant to bind African American servants to white faculty, neighbors, and students at Fairfax Seminary. For example, Blackford wrote in his “Oblation” notebook that he had given Fanny Strange \$2.50.⁵¹³ In 1903, Blackford sent coal to help an African American family along Quaker Lane. He wrote:

The Coldest day of the winter [underline in original], the thermometer down to zero at 8 A.M. near us...The cold goes particularly hard with our poorer neighbors on account of the high price of coal. Had to send Felicia Adams a sack full last night and am adding a larger supply.⁵¹⁴

Felicia (Williams) Adams was married to James Adams, one of the brothers of Robert Adams and a son of George and Annie. Edward L. Daingerfield, one of the wealthiest men in Alexandria, willed \$500 each to Douglass and William Wood. Both men worked at

⁵¹¹ Fairfax Will Book 14, page 458; Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Record Room, Fairfax, VA.

⁵¹² Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, 14 November 1882, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

⁵¹³ Launcelot M. Blackford, “Oblation” [Charity Account Book], Blackford Family Papers, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC.

⁵¹⁴ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, February 19, 1903, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

Daingerfield's home.⁵¹⁵ At some time in the late 1920s or 1930s, Elizabeth Henry Douglas, who is a member of Oakland Baptist Church and lived in Macedonia/Seminary, recalled going to St. Cyprian's at the Fort to obtain clothes from Seminary students for her family.⁵¹⁶ At Christmastime, she also recalled visiting St. Cyprian's and receiving a little "beaded pocketbook."⁵¹⁷ Whites traditionally gave gifts to servants' families during the holidays. In his diary, Blackford documented the Christmas presents that he gave, including those for servants. For Christmas 1876, James Jackson received a pocket book and a box of candy for his children. Two years later, he received socks and more candy. Blackford gave William Henry Terrell sleeve buttons and fifty cents in 1876, and a knife in 1878. There were other possible residents of the Fort on Blackford's Christmas gift list in 1876. His list included a "Warren," presumably waiter Warren Garner Sr., who received two matching glasses and a box of candy for his children. "John" (possibly John Butler who was also a waiter) received the same presents. The 1878 Christmas list mentions "Ben Shorts," who was either Burr and Lewis Shorts' brother or a misspelling of Burr's first name. Like Jackson, Shorts received a pair of socks.⁵¹⁸

Other diary entries record both whites and blacks helping those in need. In late August 1893, a hurricane hit the Atlantic Coast near Savannah, Georgia, killing 1,000-2,000 people. The governor of South Carolina made an appeal to the American public for aid to help the victims of the storm, especially in Beaufort and along the Sea Islands. Blackford

⁵¹⁵ Fairfax Will Book 12-401; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Record Room, Fairfax, VA.

⁵¹⁶ Elizabeth Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 28 March 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵¹⁷ Elizabeth Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 28 March 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵¹⁸ There are several other names that I have been unable to identify. Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, Christmas 1876, Christmas 1878; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

wrote in his diary: “[o]ur servants and a few others, in response to an appeal made to them yesterday by my reading the address of Gov. Fillman, of S.C., for aid, have brought me \$15 to send to the Beaufort suffers.”⁵¹⁹ When a former servant named Warner Johnson and his family lost their home to a fire in February 1895, Robert “Archie” Strange gave the family shelter, while students and faculty gave money. Blackford wrote:

Heard that Warner Johnson, formerly in my service, until last night an occupant of the house of the late Wm Smith just below the blacksmith shop, had been burned out last night with all his belongings. He, his wife and six children (one in service in town, and not at home) were sheltered and still are by Archie Strange living opposite. Appealed to the boys for help and from them and others got about \$30 subscribed, exclusive of my own.⁵²⁰

In this instance, the community rallied to help one of their own.

Reciprocity between friends and family in the local community was an even more relevant method of exchange. This practice not only ensured that everyone had at least minimum care, but also protected families from negative gossip in instances where an individual could not provide for their own family members. As Robert Kenzer writes in his analysis of nineteenth century Orange County, North Carolina, “[r]elatives assumed a high degree of responsibility for each other not only out of love but because of fear of what neighbors would think or say about intentional maltreatment or even neglect.”⁵²¹ Although we do not know the kinds of exchanges that were occurring in the late nineteenth century, residents living at the Fort and Macedonia/Seminary from the 1910s through the 1950s recalled such practices in oral histories. Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon,

⁵¹⁹ Launcelot M. Balckford Diaries, September 9, 1893; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

⁵²⁰ Launcelot M. Blackford Diaries, February 14, 1895; Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

⁵²¹ Kenzer, 20-21.

who as children visited their extended family at the Fort during the summers, remembered walking every morning to Ella (Ashby) and John H. Peters' home where they were able to obtain fresh milk and bring it home for cereal.⁵²² Elizabeth Henry Douglas also recalled the need for cooperation among neighbors:

If you wanted salt or pepper or something, sugar, and it was evening and you had nobody to go to the store. That's all you had to do is send a cup and you would get. The milk, the cows went dry, somebody had cows, after all, they shared. You'd have a quart of milk and they would have a quart of milk, too.⁵²³

Certain foodstuffs were shared so that everyone had their basic needs met.⁵²⁴

The annual slaughter of hogs and sharing of the meat was central to bringing residents together. Barbara Ashby Gordon, granddaughter of Samuel and Louise (Jackson) Ashby, recalled "a gathering" of ten to twenty people from the Fort and Macedonia/Seminary that took place in the late fall, probably around Thanksgiving time. For two-to-three days, people brought hogs to slaughter in her grandfather's (John Linton Ashby) garage. Each person killed their own hogs and hung them in the garage. Meanwhile, people played checkers and drank "a little homemade brew."⁵²⁵ Edmonia (Smith) McKnight remembered her father, Wallace Smith, slaughtering a hog around November each year at her home (although she did not recollect a gathering at the Ashbys).

⁵²² Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview with Patricia Knock, transcription, 25 May 1994; Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview with Stephanie Gordon (daughter), transcription, 15 July 1991; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵²³ Elizabeth Henry Douglas, interview with Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 28 March 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵²⁴ In her interview, Edmonia McKnight stated clearly that her family never "borrowed" anything and that whatever they needed to eat was in their pantry and icebox. One can speculate that McKnight's concern here might be that she wanted to make it clear that her family was never too poor to feed itself, a reality that African American families sometimes faced. The act of "borrowing" might also be seen as negatively too, and playing of stereotypes that African Americans could not care for themselves. Edmonia McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, June 2, 1994, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵²⁵ Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview.

Her father would smoke the pork in his smokehouse. Her mother then used the lard to make cracklin' bread.⁵²⁶ Both Gordon and McKnight noted that after the hogs were killed the families shared either food or meat.⁵²⁷

Families with the time and space grew their own food or maintained domestic animals on their property. In addition to hogs, several interviewees mentioned their families having cows and chickens. Cows were not only used for milk, but also for butter. Edmonia (Smith) McKnight joked that she "wished I had a quarter as I churned butter" for her mother.⁵²⁸ Some families kept their chickens in coops, while others let theirs roam free. Penned chickens often escaped, but never wandered too far. Chickens were cooked whole, including the feet and heads; families also relied on them for eggs.⁵²⁹

Families living at the Fort found time to maintain their own gardens as well. Barbara Ashby Gordon described an elaborate garden that her family maintained. In it, they grew string beans, corn, sweet potatoes, tomatoes and squash, all of which her grandmother then canned and stored in their "kill." Dorothy Hall Smith described the kill as "a real deep hole that goes down so far in the ground. Then it has a level, like a shelf, and they put the breakable things up on the shelf. The potatoes and other things go down in [inaudible] store."⁵³⁰ Similar to a root cellar, the kill was dug into the side of a hill.

⁵²⁶ Edmonia McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, June 2, 1994, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵²⁷ Elizabeth Henry Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 28 March 1992; Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, 25 May 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵²⁸ Edmonia McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, June 2, 1994, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵²⁹ Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, 25 May 1994; Elizabeth Henry Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 28 March 1992; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵³⁰ Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, 25 May 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

Prepared foods and baked goods, however, were often lowered into the cool depths of the family well, which was more accessible to the house. Smith explained:

Like in the well they would let the food down so far in the well, like if the food was cooked on Saturday evening for Sunday, they lowered it in the well so far down near the water where it would be real cool. Things like maybe corn puddings or very seldom potato salad, anything baked. They would lower it down and then whatever they needed, they could, you know, raise it back up. Definitely the well was used for things that was needed the next day.⁵³¹

Throughout the Fort, there were fruit trees (apples, peaches, and pears), grapes, and berries (strawberries and blackberries). All of the fruit would have been canned.

Interviewees recalled collecting tree nuts around Christmastime.⁵³² Not all residents spent such extensive amounts of time growing food. Charles H. McKnight noted that his great-aunt Clara (Shorts) Adams did not grow any vegetables, but had a pear orchard. With the importance of caring for others in the neighborhood, it is likely she traded her pears for other fruits and vegetables.⁵³³

Flour and cornmeal, both key ingredients in southern cuisine, were readily accessible through numerous mills in the vicinity. With cornmeal and wheat flour, families made bread and other staples. Dorothy Hall Smith noted that her relatives at the Fort purchased wheat flour and cornmeal at local mills. There were several nearby—Macedonia/Seminary, Green Valley/Nauck, Georgetown, and the West End.⁵³⁴ By

⁵³¹ Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, 25 May 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵³² Ibid.

Both Edmonia McKnight and Maydell Casey Belk recalled family gardens. Edmonia McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, June 2, 1994; Maydell Casey Belk, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 6 June 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵³³ Charles H. McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵³⁴ Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, 25 May 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

comparing Smith's interview with the historical record, it is possible to speculate the mills to which she was referring (although the location or the type of milling do not always match). In nearby Macedonia/Seminary, John McGinnis, an African American farmer, briefly owned a mill; however, it processed sugar, not wheat or corn. Further south, Cameron Mills, which was established in the 1840s along Holmes Run processed wheat. It closed down by the 1920s.⁵³⁵ A flourmill owned by Wilkins-Rogers Milling Company was in operation along the canal in Georgetown from the nineteenth century through the 1950s.⁵³⁶ In Green Valley/Nauck, there were several mills along Four Mile Run; however, milling in the area had begun to decline by the mid-nineteenth century. One mill, Roach's Mill, was still in operation through the early twentieth century.⁵³⁷

For both black and white consumers throughout the country, the creation of mass marketing by the turn of the century changed people's relationship with the material world. It enabled them to purchase things that they had either made at home or gone without. National brands—such as National Biscuit Company (Nabisco), H. J. Heinz, and Quaker Oats—appeared as low priced, mass-produced items that could be bought throughout the country by the 1920s. Department stores revolutionized shopping in commercial districts with their one price system (there would be no haggling over prices and everyone would pay the same), diversified offerings, no obligations to buy, and

⁵³⁵ Dennis A. Knepper and Madeline Pappas, *Cameron Mills: Preliminary Historical and Archaeological Assessment of Site 44AX112, Alexandria, Virginia* (Alexandria, VA: Hoffman Management, Inc. April 1990); R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc., *Phase I and II Archaeological Investigations at Cameron Farm (44AX182) and Cameron Mill (44AX112), Final Report* (Alexandria, VA: Hoffman Management, Inc. July 2005).

⁵³⁶ Aubrey Graves, "New Maryland and Virginia Wheat Crop Starts Rolling in at Georgetown Market," *Washington Post* 6 July 1953, 14; "Old Georgetown Flour Mill Beating Western Concerns," *The Washington Herald* 9 July 1919, 6; Elizabeth Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock, Henry Mitchell, and Bradford Henderlong, transcription, 28 March 1992; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵³⁷ C. B. Rose, Jr. *Arlington Country, Virginia: A History* (Arlington: Arlington Historical Society, 1976).

promises to refund or exchange goods. By the 1890s, the Sears catalog began offering consumers everything from undergarments to tractors, especially in rural areas.⁵³⁸ Finally, by playing on people's desires and insecurities, the emerging modern advertising industry told us what to purchase to 'keep up with the Joneses'."⁵³⁹

For African Americans, segregation in the American South made shopping a potentially tension-filled experience, especially at white-owned establishments. Maya Angelou explained that, while growing up in Arkansas, whites were always served first at her local butcher, followed by African American servants working for white families, and then African Americans.⁵⁴⁰ In *Downtown America*, Alison Isenberg states that African Americans in southern towns had "to keep low profiles as consumers, dressing simply and making themselves part of 'the background.'"⁵⁴¹ Some businesses, such as Shuman's Bakery in Alexandria, were known to refuse African Americans service.⁵⁴²

The increasing amount of money among African American consumers along with the negative experiences of shopping at white-owned businesses encouraged growing numbers of African American entrepreneurs, professionals, and business owners. Because of the racial politics of Jim Crow, they could offer services, such as bathrooms and dressing rooms, to African Americans that they would otherwise not have access in white

⁵³⁸ Elizabeth Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, 28 March 1998; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵³⁹ Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 112-122; Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 1989); Paul Mullins, et al., "Consuming Lines of Difference: The Politics of Wealth and Poverty along the Color Line," *Historical Archaeology* 43.3 (2011): 140-150.

⁵⁴⁰ Maya Angelou, *Hallelujah! The Welcome Table* (New York: Random House, 2004), 46.

⁵⁴¹ Isenberg, 113.

⁵⁴² For protests to desegregate Shuman's and other segregated businesses in Alexandria, see "5 Alexandria restaurants are Picketed," *Washington Post* 27 August 1961, A5; Helen Miller, interviewed by Mitch Weinschenk, transcription, March 25, 1999, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

commercial districts.⁵⁴³ As early as 1881, Alexandria had at least twenty-two black owned businesses. Although many came and went, the number of African American businesses and professionals continued to increase over the next forty years (see Table 10).

Table 10: Chart of African American-Owned Businesses and Professionals in Alexandria in 1881, 1907, and 1920¹

Occupations/Businesses	1881	1907	1920
Bakers	----	1	
Barbers	6	13	9
Billiard Halls	----	----	3
Blacksmiths & Wheelwrights	5	1	1
Carpenters & Builders	----	2	----
Cement Contractors	----	----	1
Cleaners & Pressers	----	----	4
Coal & Wood Dealers	1	5	1
Confectioners	----	11	----
Contractors & Builders	----	----	1
Dairies	----	----	1
Dentist	----	----	1
Draymen	----	----	6
Dressmakers	----	14	13
Dyers & Scourers	----	1	
Eating Houses, Restaurants, & Saloons	----	12	16
Express (Local & Baggage)	----	----	1
Florists	----	1	----
Hairdressers	----	----	5
Hotels	----	1	1
House Movers	----	----	1
Hucksters	1	----	----
Insurance Company--Beneficial	----	----	3
Insurance Company--Life	----	1	----
Junk Dealers	----	5	4
Land Companies	----	----	1
Livery, Boarding, & Sale Stables	----	----	1
Meat Markets	1	----	----
Midwives	----	----	1
Music Teachers	----	2	2
Newspapers	----	1	----
Nurses	----	3	----
Oyster, Fish, & Game Dealers	3	----	1

⁵⁴³ Isenberg, 119.

Occupations/Businesses	1881	1907	1920
Painters	1	1	
Photographers	----	----	1
Physicians	----	2	3
Plasterers	----	----	1
Printers	----	1	----
Produce Dealers	----	1	7
Public Notaries	----	----	1
Retail Grocers	1	4	6
Shoemakers & Repairers	3	7	5
Undertakers, Embalmers, & Funeral Directors	----	1	2
Well Diggers	----	----	1

¹ This information comes from Alexandria's city directories. *Chataigne's Alexandria City Directory* (Alexandria, VA: J. H. Chataigne, 1881-82); *Richmond's Directory of Alexandria* (Washington, D.C.: Richmond & Co., 1907); *Alexandria, Va. City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., 1920).

The oral histories of residents who grew up at the Fort and in nearby Macedonia/Seminary extensively describe where families shopped from the 1920s through the 1950s. However, whether early residents of the Fort shopped at black-owned businesses is not known with the exception of Terrell's little store in Macedonia/Seminary. Maydell Casey Belk, granddaughter of John Wesley and Ada (Adams) Casey, spoke extensively about shopping in Alexandria. By this time, families had cars to drive into Alexandria and elsewhere.⁵⁴⁴ Others caught the bus on King Street and rode it into town. The Belk family usually went into Alexandria for groceries at Safeway, which had seven locations in Alexandria by 1947; a decade later, Safeway opened at the Bradlee Shopping Center near the Fort.⁵⁴⁵ The Alexandria Furniture Store on King Street and Gaines Hardware and Auto Supply on Dangerfield Road, both of which were established in Alexandria in the 1940s, were popular with the Belks. She also recalled children's clothing

⁵⁴⁴ Maydell Casey Belk, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 6 June 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁴⁵ In 1938, there were no Safeways in Alexandria. A decade later, Safeway was located at the following addresses: 3131 (3805) Duke Street; 626, 1301, and 1747 King Street; 320 Prince Street; and 1510 and 2609 Mt. Vernon Avenue. *Hill's Alexandria City Directory, 1947-48* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory, Co., Inc., 1947), 394.

being sold at another hardware store, R. E. Knight and Sons (Figures 52 and 53). An advertisement for Knight's in the 1932 *City Directory* mentioned selling the following: books, stationery, household goods, hardware, paints, tools, oils, cutlery, athletic goods, cigars, and tobacco. Knight's had four floors and sold "something of most everything."⁵⁴⁶ Edmonia (Smith) McKnight also remembered shopping in Alexandria although her father, Wallace Smith, mostly went to Bailey's Crossroads for groceries. He enjoyed cooking for his family and periodically cooked at Fairfax Seminary.⁵⁴⁷

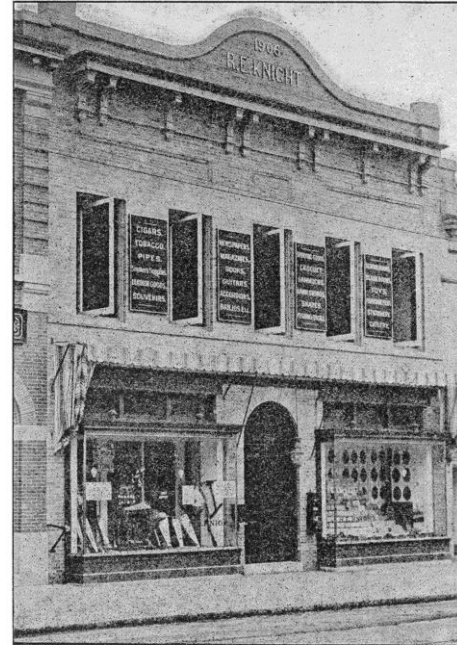


Figure 52. R. E. Knight's store on King Street. Photo ca. 1907? Courtesy of Special Collections, Alexandria Public Library.

Besides going to Bailey's Crossroads and Alexandria, residents around Fairfax Seminary shopped at their local country store, the first of which appeared some time in the 1890s. The 1895 Hopkins map of Alexandria included a "BSS Store" at the intersections of Leesburg Pike/King Street, Braddock Road, and Quaker Lane, which was owned by Thomas Terrett Sr. and, later, Thomas Terrett Jr.⁵⁴⁸ The store

⁵⁴⁶Hill's *Alexandria City Directory, 1932* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory, Co., 1932), 22 and 214.

Belk stated that Gaines was one of the oldest businesses in Alexandria; however, it was not in the City Directory prior to 1939. R.E. Knight and Sons, which was at 621-625 King Street, was listed in the 1932, 1938, and 1947 directories; I did not find it in the 1920 City Directory. In 1947, the Alexandria Furniture Company, Inc. was located at 1004-1006 King Street, and Gaines Hardware was at 107 Dangerfield Road. Hill's *Alexandria City Directory, 1947-48* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory, Co., Inc., 1947), 691 and 695; Hill's *Alexandria City Directory, 1938* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory, Co., Inc., 1938), 620.

⁵⁴⁷ Edmonia McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, June 2, 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁴⁸ In March 1895, C. G. Lee sold an acre of land to Thomas Terrett at the intersection of King Street and the Braddock Road for \$500. A few months later, Thomas Terrett Jr. reportedly sold his "lower" store on the Alexandria Turnpike, presumably the above-mentioned store, to his father and brother. Griffith Morgan Hopkins, Jr., *The Vicinity of Washington, D.C.* (Philadelphia: Griffith M. Hopkins, 1895); Geography and Map

was robbed several times, which received significant local press. In 1908, Blackford wrote about the robbery in his diary:

Last night about 10:30 perhaps earlier there was within 250 yards of my study a highway robbery, probably the first in this immediate vicinity within the century. Our neighbor, Mr. Thomas Terrett, had closed his shop at the corner of the E.H.S. grounds and was driving home in a wagon with his son and another person when, on the road through the Seminary passing Dr. Micou's lower gate, the party was held up by masked white men, and robbed. Mr. T.T. himself was on the rear seat with a roll of about \$70 which he threw under the seat and thus out of harm's way, so that the miscreants only got about \$2.00.⁵⁴⁹

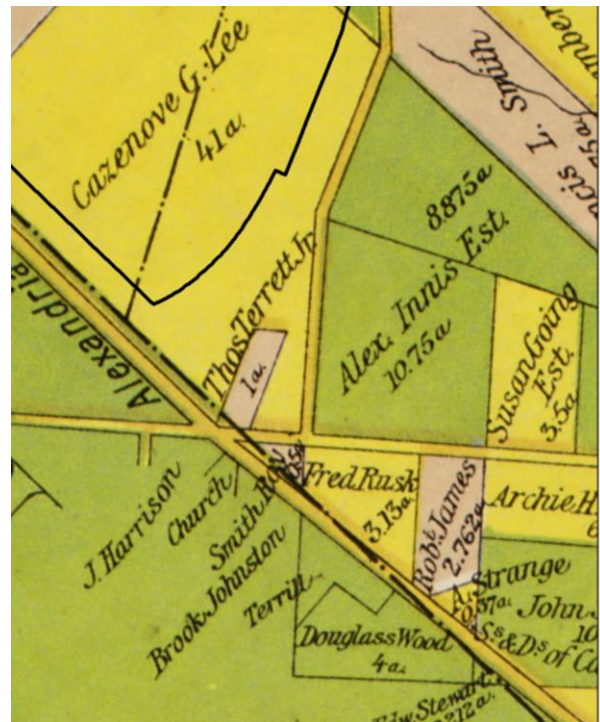


Figure 53. Terrett's Store at the intersection of Braddock Rd. and King St. Map of Alexandria County, Virginia for the Virginia Title Co., 1900. Courtesy of Alexandria Archaeology.

A week later, the *Alexandria Gazette* reported that a Constable Cleveland confronted a group of African American men in a nearby home—and not white ones as Blackford recorded—whom he believed were involved in the robbery. A fight ensued, and the men fled the scene.⁵⁵⁰ Terrett's store even appeared in Richmond's *The Times-Dispatch* at least two times because of robberies. The first instance in 1909 involved burglars using nitroglycerine to blow open the safe. The explosion was so "great that it blew a portion of

Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; "Fairfax Notes," *Alexandria Gazette* Jan. 22, 1895, 4; "Fairfax Notes," *Alexandria Gazette* March 27, 1895, 3; "Fairfax Notes," *Alexandria Gazette* May 17, 1895, 2; "Fairfax Notes," *Alexandria Gazette* Oct. 11, 1895, 2.

A Mr. Fegan owned another store located in the West End near Seminary Lane. It was also not too far from the Fort. "Fight in West End," *Alexandria Gazette* September 7, 1901.

Blackford mentions in his diary walking to a "new store," presumably Terrett's, with his sons. Launcelot Blackford Diaries, May 25, 1895, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁴⁹Launcelot Blackford Diaries, February 2, 1908, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁵⁰ "Negroes Fight Officer," *Alexandria Gazette* February 7, 1908, 3.

the roof from the building and knocked most of the goods from the shelves.”⁵⁵¹

Unfortunately for the robbers, they only found \$2 for their efforts, overlooking an additional \$100 in the safe. Four years later, the county constable called upon a local judge, students from the Seminary, and others, all of whom were “armed to the teeth,” to stop another robbery at Terrett’s store. There was a shoot-out this time. The robbers escaped, but “[t]he little store was riddled with bullets as a result of the battle, all of the windows being shot out and bullets embedded in the sides and front of it.”⁵⁵² The store appears to have closed down soon after this incident.⁵⁵³

John William Terrell, who lived in Macedonia/Seminary and was a deacon at Oakland Baptist Church, also ran a “little store” beginning sometime around 1909.⁵⁵⁴ A year later, he was listed in the 1910 U.S. Federal Census as the owner of a “grocery store” and, in 1920, was described as a “merchant.”⁵⁵⁵ Elizabeth Douglas recalled Terrell’s store, probably during the 1920s when she was a young child, along King Street. In an interview with Patricia Knock, she stated: “Uncle William Terrell had a little store and he sold candies and oil for the lamps. And he would go to town once a week in his horse and wagon. And he would come back with different things and he sold them at that little store.”⁵⁵⁶ With his death in 1925, the store appears to have disappeared. The 1928 Alexandria City directory listed

⁵⁵¹ “Blow Safe Open; Get Two Dollars,” *The Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), March 3, 1909, 3.

⁵⁵² “Citizens Fired on by Thieves,” *The Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), January 15, 1913, 5.

⁵⁵³ “The Shooting of George Cleveland,” *Alexandria Gazette* July 31, 1897; “Citizens Fired on by Thieves,” *The Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), January 15, 1913; 1900 Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, Virginia, 4; www.ancestry.com (accessed November 8, 2012).

After the death of Thomas Terrett in 1909, the store was owned by Terrett-Row and was located at “Seminary Crossing.” “Death of Thomas Terrett,” *Alexandria Gazette* January 21, 1909; “Blow Safe Open; Get Two Dollars,” *The Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), March 3, 1909, 3.

⁵⁵⁴ *Bailey-v.-Bailey* (1909); Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Research Room, Fairfax, VA.

⁵⁵⁵ 1910 U.S. Federal Census; Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 2A; 1920 U.S. Federal Census; Falls Church District, Fairfax County, VA, 2A; www.ancestry.com (accessed November 8, 2012).

⁵⁵⁶ Elizabeth Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

only one of his sons, Jacob, who was working as a cook in the area. Two years later, Beatrice and Jacob were living in the Macedonia/Seminary neighborhood.⁵⁵⁷

Almost all the Fort residents remembered shopping at one country store, Donaldson's, located directly across the street from Oakland Baptist Church (Figure 54). Sometimes called Donaldson's Grocery, it catered to both black and white residents around Fairfax Seminary. Victor C. Donaldson, a local farmer, established the store around 1910 just across the street from Terrett's store.⁵⁵⁸ Based on John White's history of Episcopal High School, Donaldson's brother, Bernard (nicknamed "Bun"), ran another store near the school's athletic fields that was popular with students on Seminary Road.⁵⁵⁹ In 1917, Victor's store was temporarily shut down after a fire destroyed the building, outbuildings, and merchandise, with a total loss of \$4,000. Insurance only covered part of his building, and it appears that he was



Figure 54. Bun Donaldson's Store. Date unknown. Courtesy of Episcopal High School Archives.

forced to sell his 104-acre farm as well as all of his farm equipment and animals in 1919 and 1920.⁵⁶⁰ By the 1920s, he was again listed as selling "general merchandise" as well as

⁵⁵⁷ *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., 1928), 405; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Alexandria, VA, 15A; www.ancestry.com (accessed November 8, 2012).

⁵⁵⁸ *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory and Co., 1947), 84 and 152; *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory and Co., 1950); 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Falls Church District, Fairfax County, Virginia, 13; and Bernard Daniel Donaldson, World War II Draft Card; www.ancestry.com (accessed May 25, 2012).

⁵⁵⁹ White mentions two other stores in the vicinity of Episcopal High School in the early twentieth century. One was owned by a "Mr. Mack" on Quaker Lane near the school's entrance. That reportedly closed some time after 1918 when Mack died. Another one was "Stanton's store," which was at the intersection of Duke Street and Quaker Lane. White, 100, 161.

⁵⁶⁰ "Store of V.C. Donaldson Burned," *Fairfax Herald* December 14, 1917, 3; "Public Sale," *Fairfax Herald* October 24, 1919, 2; "Public Sale," *Fairfax Herald* October 22, 1920, 2.

groceries. The latter probably came from Holstein-Harvey-Kirk Company, a wholesale distributor working with small stores throughout northern Virginia.⁵⁶¹ In his obituary, Donaldson and his store were described as an “institution on Seminary Hill.”⁵⁶²

As argued by Robert Kenzer, Victor Donaldson’s was a quintessential country store in the American South during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. People went there to “purchase those goods—such as salt, sugar, cloth, and gunpowder—that could not be produced in the neighborhood, and to meet the needs of their friends and relatives.”⁵⁶³ Barbara Ashby Gordon, who probably remembered Donaldson’s either during the late 1930s or the early 1940s, described it as a “little country store” just across the street from Oakland Baptist Church. Her family went there “to buy meat, [and] whatever you couldn’t make.”⁵⁶⁴ Lucian Johnson, a member of the Wanzer and Simms families and who had grown up in Macedonia/Seminary area along Quaker Lane, described Donaldson’s as “an all-purpose grocery store,” functioning as the only place “we had in our particular area without going downtown.”⁵⁶⁵ Maydell Casey Belk viewed it as more as a convenient store where one could buy non-essentials like soda. Unlike stores in the city, it did not have refrigeration

⁵⁶¹ *Hill’s Alexandria City Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory and Co., 1923), 185; *Hill’s Alexandria City Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory and Co., 1928), 566; Advertisement—Holstein-Karvey-Kirk Co., *Herndon Observer* April 8, 1926, 7.

⁵⁶² “Victor Donaldson Obituary,” *Fairfax Herald* December 19, 1941, 1.

Donaldson was also heavily involved in the Democratic Party and local politics. “Fairfax Prepares for Election Day,” *Washington Post* 1 November 1930, 5; Advertisement—End Prohibition Advertisement, *Fairfax Herald* September 29, 1933, 4.

⁵⁶³ Kenzer, 20.

⁵⁶⁴ Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, 25 May 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁶⁵ Lucian Johnson, interview by David Cavanaugh, transcription, 5 June 2009; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

and ice blocks were needed keep perishables cold.⁵⁶⁶ Charles McKnight and Julia Bradby also mentioned going to Donaldson's.⁵⁶⁷

During World War II, new forms of suburban shopping appeared around the Fort that were tied to changes in American consumption habits. In 1944, Shirlington, one of the first shopping centers in the region, was built between Nauck/Green Valley and Fairlington (a publically financed apartment complex built during World War II for white war workers).⁵⁶⁸ The Shirley Food Store, the area's first large scale grocery store, arrived during World War II and continued to operate until 1956 when the small, northern Virginia chain merged with Food Fair Super Markets (Figure 55). Within a year, the store closed, possibly because of the opening of a Safeway nearby.⁵⁶⁹



Figure 55. Shirley Food Stores Advertisement, 1946. Courtesy of Local History Research Room, Arlington Public Library.

⁵⁶⁶ Maydell Casey Belk, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 6 June 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁶⁷ Charles H. McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992; Julia M.A. Bradby, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 28 July 1992; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

In her interview, McKnight also remembered a store called "Mellison's" or "Medlison's" that was near the Fort. This was possibly Donaldson's store or Mendelson's Hardward Store in Alexandria. Mendelson's was on King Street in the 1930s. *Hill's Alexandria City Directory, 1938* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory, Co., Inc., 1938), 620; Edmonia McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, June 2, 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁶⁸ Ron Shaffer, "Shirlington Center: New Spark Needed," *Washington Post* 13 February 1975, C1 and C13.

⁵⁶⁹ *Alexandria/Arlington/Fairfax Telephone Directory* (Arlington, VA: Chesapeake and Potomac telephone Co. of Virginia, 1946); *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory and Co., 1950), 541; "Capital Commerce," *Washington Post* 8 February 1956, 23; "Shirley Store Merge into Food Fair Chain,"

Neighborhood Theaters, Inc. constructed a 940-seat Centre Theatre between Quaker Lane and Fern Street. Joyce (Casey Sanchez) recalled that African Americans “were not welcomed” there.⁵⁷⁰

By 1945, developers completed the Fairlington Shopping Center—consisting of fifteen storefronts—along Quaker Lane and Fern Street.⁵⁷¹ A few stores were memorable among African American residents living at the Fort and Macedonia/Seminary neighborhoods. Seminary Rexall Drugs and later Peoples Drugstore brought the area’s first pharmacies and lunch counters.⁵⁷² Philip Z. Cohen, better known as the father of Cass Elliot from the Mamas and the Papas, ran the lunch counter at Rexall (along with several food trucks located at construction sites) in the late 1940s. Joyce (Casey) Sanchez worked for Cohen in the evenings as his night manager while finishing high school; in the summers, she worked full-time. Sanchez recalled “[a]lthough segregation was in full bloom, Phil Cohen was an outstanding employer. He treated all of his employees well, regardless of race.”⁵⁷³ Mary (Casey) Johnson, Sanchez’s cousin, cooked for Cohen. In the late 1940s, the Rochdale Co-Operative of Virginia opened a fully stocked, member-owned grocery store at Fairlington as well. It later merged with Greenbelt Consumer Services, Inc.⁵⁷⁴ The

Washington Post 14 February 1956, 45. A special thank you to Joyce Casey Sanchez for pointing out the establishment of this store.

⁵⁷⁰ Email correspondence with Joyce (Casey) Sanchez, 29 May 2014; Interview with Dr. Michael Casey, 29 March 2014; “Shop Center Planned for Fairlington,” *Washington Post* 8 May 1944, 4.

⁵⁷¹ “1945 Building in Alexandria Less than 1944,” *Washington Post* [Sports] 8 January 1946, 12;

⁵⁷² Peoples Drugstore was established in Washington, D.C. in 1905; Rexall’s emerged in 1902 in Chicago among a small group of pharmacists trying to pool their limited resources. *Hill’s Alexandria City Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory and Co., 1950), 84; Email Correspondence with Joyce (Casey) Sanchez, 29 May 2014; “The Once Ubiquitous Peoples Drug Stores,” <http://www.streetsofwashington.com/2011/11/once-ubiquitous-peoples-drug-stores.html> (accessed June 2, 2014); “Good health to all from Rexall,” <http://capnrexall.blogspot.com/2011/06/rexall-history-short-version.html> (accessed June 2, 2014).

⁵⁷³ Email correspondence with Joyce (Casey) Sanchez, 29 May 2014.

⁵⁷⁴ The Rochdale Co-Operative was established in 1937 in Washington, D.C. It was named after the nineteenth-century English village that first experimented retail co-operatives in which members receive a

Alexandria National Bank opened a branch in the shopping center in 1952, and was the areas first bank.⁵⁷⁵ The Alexandria National Bank opened a branch in the shopping center in 1952, and was the areas first bank.⁵⁷⁶

During the 1950s, additional stores were established around the Quaker-King-Braddock intersection, including the Woodcraft Shop (also known as the Built-It Yourself Workshop), C & J Delicatessen, J. & J. Supermarket, Armstrong Sandwich Company, Bodie's Seafood Restaurant, and the Braddock Food Shop/Restaurant.⁵⁷⁷ Gas stations also appeared around Macedonia/Seminary, the first of which was part of Donaldson's store some time in the 1920s if not earlier. Other stations followed during and after World War II—Perrine Brothers, Texaco, and Esso.⁵⁷⁸ The world of consumerism—and the social status it represented—became more physically accessible than ever before; however, there were still limits.

Another major development was the opening of the Bradlee Shopping Center, located between Braddock Road and King Street, in 1957. With the opening of Bradlee, Fort residents had easy access to a Safeway and other goods and services.⁵⁷⁹ Frances Terrell, daughter of Delaney and Mary Agnes (Johnson) Colbert, granddaughter of Douglas

dividend. "Two Area Co-Ops are Set to Combine," *Washington Post* [Sports] 19 September 1957, C14; "Rochdale Members Ballot on Closing One of Stores," *Washington Post* 18 March 1948, 17.

⁵⁷⁵ "3 Area Banks are Opening New Buildings," *Washington Post* 11 May 1952, M12.

⁵⁷⁶ "3 Area Banks are Opening New Buildings," *Washington Post* 11 May 1952, M12.

⁵⁷⁷ *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory and Co., 1952), 15, 53, 518, 519; *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory and Co., 1954), 39, and 162; *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory and Co., 1957), 35 and 145.

⁵⁷⁸ Lucian Johnson, interview by David Cavanaugh, transcription, 5 June 2009; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA; *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Alexandria, VA: Hill Directory and Co., 1950), 14, 52, ;

⁵⁷⁹ "Bradlee Shop Center to Open," *Washington Post* 5 October 1957, D1.

and Mary Frances (Simms) Johnson, great-granddaughter of Daniel and Alice (Wanzer) Simms, remembers Bradlee as a segregated shopping center:

[W]e had J.C. Murphy on King St. and we had J.C. Murphy up here in Bradlee and they had counters. Also, they had a People's Drug Store with a food counter and the white folks would sit there and eat, and we couldn't do that. We could go into the store and stand in a certain area and order our food. They would give it to us, but we would have to leave and we couldn't sit there. We had separate water fountains, separate bathroom facilities with labels—white and colored.⁵⁸⁰

Terrell also recalled a story from her uncle, Lucian Johnson, who tried to eat at J. C. Murphy's counter at the Bradlee Shopping Center. He had travelled to Alexandria with his two daughters from Washington, D.C. to visit family and decided to stop for lunch. The three of them sat at the counter—as they usually did in Washington—and waited to be served. After some time had passed, an African American waitress whispered softly in his ear that his family would not be served at the counter and that they had to leave. His girls—who had had very little experience with institutional segregation—wanted to know why they could not eat there.⁵⁸¹

Although many businesses still practiced segregation in Alexandria and Arlington in the late 1950s, this practice would soon come under increasing criticism. The local chapter of CORE (Congress on Racial Equality) and NAG (Nonviolent Action Group) would soon be staging sit-ins at segregated lunch counters and restaurants. City Council—in a closed

⁵⁸⁰ Frances Terrell, interview by Logan Wiley, transcription, 30 July 2009; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁸¹ Email correspondence from Frances (Colbert) Terrell, May 26, 2014.

session—would finally pass a resolution to ban segregation in public spaces in spring 1963.⁵⁸²

Despite the expansion of storefronts around Fairfax Seminary after World War II, the continuation of segregation in Virginia made access to these places uncertain for African Americans. As Lisabeth Cohen argues, the post-war “consumer republic” had little room for African Americans or other nonwhites.⁵⁸³ This was nothing new for African American consumers; for the past one hundred years, their access to white-owned sites of consumption had been fraught with tension. However, as with public schools, these places would also experience dramatic changes as the Civil Rights movement expanded and increased in intensity.

Chapter 2 Conclusion

The 1940s marked the beginning of a series of major changes at the Fort and the neighboring institutions on which it relied. Not only were Donaldson’s, St. Cyprian’s, and the Seminary School closed by the end of the decade, but also new institutions tied to the rapid suburbanization of northern Virginia appeared. Shopping centers and subdivisions along with an increasing number of schools and churches catering to the white middle class all emerged at this time. This new world order, however, struggled to define the role of African Americans, and African American residents responded, questioning the status quo.

⁵⁸² “5 Alexandria Restaurants are Picketed,” *Washington Post*, 27 August 1961, A5; “New Suit Filed on Segregation,” *Washington Post*, 15 June 1960, C10; Susanna McBee, “More Dining Places Drop Racial Bars,” *Washington Post*, 24 June 1960, A1; “Alexandria Lifts All Public Racial Bars,” *Washington Post*, 23 May 1963, C23; CORE Paper, Series V, Reel 43, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Jan Leighton Triggs and John Paul Dietrich, “Freedom Movement in Washington DC: 1960-61 Based on Actions of the Nonviolent Action Group (NAG),” 1961 and revised in 2011, Veterans of the Civil Rights Movement, <http://www.crmvet.org/> (accessed April 16, 2014).

⁵⁸³ Lisabeth Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage, 2003).

Housing developments still maintained “white-only” covenants. Schools had only just begun to embrace desegregation, and most church memberships were still divided along racial lines. Shopping malls, while open to African Americans, were often difficult to patronize; a car was needed to visit and some businesses only offered partial services to African Americans.⁵⁸⁴

By the 1950s, the Fort community experienced further changes tied to new suburban development patterns combined with new attitudes towards historic preservation and urban renewal. These changes altered the physical Fort community forever, but not its memory among residents and their descendants.

⁵⁸⁴ Susanna McBee, “More Dining Places Drop Racial Bars,” *Washington Post* 24 June 1960, A1.

Chapter 3: Making of Fort Ward Historic Park and Museum, 1950s-1960s

With the upcoming one-hundredth anniversary of the Civil War, many white residents of Alexandria—like the rest of Virginia—were focused on celebrating the “Lost Cause” with sensitivity towards the reunification of the nation at war’s end. White social memory was mostly concerned with the trials and tribulations of the common soldier, both Union and Confederate, and the centrality of white supremacy. This was in spite of emerging historical analyses recognizing the partially completed revolution that occurred with the abolition of slavery as well as the growing Civil Rights Movement.⁵⁸⁵ Alexandria’s connections to Robert E. Lee only heightened interest in centennial commemoration and its focus on the Confederacy, which was emphasized throughout Virginia.⁵⁸⁶

Simultaneous to Alexandria’s celebrations of the Civil War was the Civil Rights movement, which began the slow process of dismantling structural segregation in the U.S. South. Like other southern municipalities, Alexandria struggled to breakdown the apparatus that had positioned African Americans as second-class citizens in all aspects of public life. From housing to schools to restaurants and pools, Alexandria was a segregated city through the 1960s. Only through pressures imposed by the federal level combined with local activism did the formal aspects of Jim Crow finally come to an end.

⁵⁸⁵ For more information on the centennial celebrations of the American Civil War, see Robert J. Cook, *Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961-1965* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007); David W. Blight, *American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011).

⁵⁸⁶ For popular histories that emphasize Robert E. Lee in the history of Alexandria, see Reverend Eugene B. Jackson, D.D., *The Romance of Historic Alexandria: A Thrilling Narrative of Events Founded on Facts and Traditions* (Alexandria, VA: Harry W. Wade, Publishers, 1923); Nettie A. Vogas, *Old Alexandria: Where America’s Past is Present* (MacLean, VA: EPM Publications, Inc., 1975); Agnes Rothery, *New Roads in Old Virginia* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929).

It is within this context that one needs to place the creation of Fort Ward Historic Park and Museum, which began in the early 1950s. Despite Confederate sympathies among many local white residents, Civil War enthusiasts were interested in preserving Civil War sites in northern Virginia, no matter which side of the conflict they played a role. With city and later federal funds, government officials purchased land at the Fort over the next three decades, conducted archaeology, and partially reconstructed one of Fort Ward's bastions. On May 30, 1964, Fort Ward Historic Park and Museum opened to the public.

For the decreasing number of African American landowners and residents at the Fort, the sale of land forced many of them to make some difficult decisions. Alexandria had become increasingly segregated after World War II, with the majority of African Americans living in Uptown (the northwest quadrant of Old Town otherwise known as the 16th Census Tract) and in a small number of neighborhoods around the historic district. Increasing housing pressures tied to urban renewal and suburbanization, race-based housing covenants, and inadequate public housing only complicated matters. Thus, African Americans at the Fort had to choose between leaving Alexandria entirely or moving to one of the few areas the white establishment deemed acceptable for African Americans to live. For those African Americans who owned land but no longer lived at the Fort, the establishment of Fort Ward Historic Park and Museum only further disconnected them from their "family land."

This chapter lays out the process by which the City of Alexandria became interested in the preservation of Fort Ward during the 1950s and the impact the preservation process had on African American residents and landowners, both of whom faced increasingly limited landownership and housing options. Ideas surrounding the purpose of the park as

well as its early history will also be discussed. Ultimately, it is hoped this analysis will demonstrate the complex narrative of Civil War preservation in Alexandria and the ways in which it intersected with the issues of racial segregation and historical memory during the mid-twentieth century.

Origin of Fort Ward Park

The initiative to restore Fort Ward into a park and create a museum began with the Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia, which included a handful of Alexandria residents. The Round Table, founded in 1952, was one of the strongest grassroots Civil War history organizations at the time. It used its connections within the federal government to promote the preservation of battlefields and other sites related to the war in the D.C. metro area. By the late 1950s, the Round Table became the central force for the organization of Civil War centennial celebrations throughout the country and lobbied the U.S. Congress for federal appropriations to pay for these events.⁵⁸⁷

Within a year of its founding, the Round Table established the Fort Drive Committee, which was mandated to enlist the support of governmental agencies in the building of a circular freeway around Washington, D.C. that was to align with the Civil War forts that had encircled the nation's capital as part of the Defenses of Washington. Ulysses S. Grant III, the grandson of General Ulysses S. Grant and a member of the Round Table, led the committee. He believed the new freeway would not only help promote tourism, but also alleviate the

⁵⁸⁷ "The Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia: History and Activities," no date; Box 1, Folder 1; Civil War Roundtable of the District of Columbia Collection, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

region's traffic congestion.⁵⁸⁸ Although previous versions of Fort Drive focused on the District of Columbia and Maryland, northern Virginia was now central to the project. In a letter to the Director of City Planning, the Round Table's secretary, Kermit Sloan, stated: "[w]hile the work of this committee has been confined thus far to the DC chain of forts, we have not been unmindful of the situation in Virginia. It is our hope that eventually the entire circle of forts and fortifications can be preserved and made a great attraction for visitors to Virginia and the Nation's Capital."⁵⁸⁹

Sometime in 1953, Moreau B. C. Chambers, another member of the Fort Drive Committee, contacted Alexandria's Department of Planning about Fort Ward. Chambers, a historian and archaeologist who worked in academia and state and federal government, believed the City should acquire and restore the Fort.⁵⁹⁰ Later that year, he made presentations on preserving local forts to the Seminary Hill and Fairlington Civic Associations.⁵⁹¹ The Round Table's description of the Seminary Hill event noted the impact of suburbanization on historic sites in northern Virginia:

Some of the forts in that area, of course, have been bulldozed out of existence in recent years, as new houses, super-markets and apartment buildings have gone up, but a number still remain, and there is growing sentiment in favor of

⁵⁸⁸ "The Fort Drive Committee," *Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia News-Letter*, 3.1 (4 February 1953): 2; Box 1, Folder 3, Civil War Roundtable of the District of Columbia Collection, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

The first versions of Fort Drive appeared as early as the 1890s. . "A Historic Resource Study: The Civil War Defense of Washington Part I and II," (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Parks Service, 2004), http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/civilwar/hrs2-3.htm (accessed June 13, 2013); Kelly Finnegan, *Fort Drive: Reestablishing Its Significance within Washington, D.C.'s Park System* (MA Thesis, Clemson University/College of Charleston, 2012).

⁵⁸⁹ Sloan later moved to Alexandria and was a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and possibly Alexandria's chapter of the Civil War Round Table. Kermit Sloan, Secretary, Civil War Round Table, Washington, D.C., to Denis Cahill, Director of Planning, Alexandria, VA, 9 April 1954; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁹⁰ "Moreau B.C. Chambers," *Washington Post* 14 June 1994, B7.

⁵⁹¹ No title, *The Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia News Letter*, 3.3 (3 December 1953): 3; No title, *The Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia*, 3.9 (8 January 1954): 3-4; Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia Collections, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

preserving as many of them as possible as historic landmarks. Those old earthworks are a tangible link to our past, and the whole national capital area has an interest in their maintenance.⁵⁹²

Because of Chambers' interest in Fort Ward, it can be speculated that he included it in his presentation.

The minutes of the Alexandria Planning Commission, which were later published by the Civil War Round Table of Alexandria, noted that Fort Ward—unlike the five other forts built in Alexandria for the protection of the nation's capital—was relatively intact. "Ft. Ward, while heavily overgrown, is in a remarkable state of preservation and not only the outlines of the perimeter of the fort but several of the magazines and bombproofs are easily defined."⁵⁹³ To protect this site and others in the City, the Commission established a committee to begin discussions with local landowners and the federal government about the possibility of acquiring the land. It also organized a tour of Fort Ward for the entire Commission led by Chambers, who then invited Commission members to join the Civil War Round Table.⁵⁹⁴

By April 1954, the Director of Recreation, Eugene L. Barnwell, requested the City acquire the Fort Ward site. It eventually allocated \$37,000 to purchase land and created

⁵⁹² No title, *The Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia News Letter*, 3.3 (3 December 1953): 3; Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia Collections, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁹³ Denis H. Cahill, Secretary, to Members of the Civil War Round Table of Alexandria, 4 March 1958; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

In a few newspaper articles generated during the time, the Fort Ward area was described as undeveloped. In one article, it was described as "a tangle of underbrush, avoided even by vagrants." Another article called the area a "tangle of underbrush and a haven for derelicts and adventurous children." Another noted that it was "little better than a hobo jungle." "Ritual Plans are Complete at Fort," *Alexandria Gazette* 28 May 1964; John A. Reichmann, "Museum at Ft. Ward Get Wide Recognition for many War Relics," *Alexandria Gazette* 29 January 1965; "Full Use of Fort Ward Park," *Alexandria Gazette* 29 May 1972; Fort Ward Publicity, 1961-1983 Scrapbook; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

another committee to determine the size of the park. This committee consisted of the Planning Commission as well as Barnwell and members of the Seminary Hill Association (a primarily white community association), which had been vocal in its support. In a statement to the Commission, President of the Seminary Hill Association, E. H. Wiecking, argued that his organization was very interested in the establishment of a park at Fort Ward, but was concerned the land would be developed if the City did not move quickly. The Association also had its own ideas as to what the park would look like:

The Ft. Ward Historical Park would be, in our thinking, a ‘natural’ park, kept essentially in a natural state, with a minimum of roads and structure and other developments, and a minimum of expense. Possibly some picnic areas. No athletic fields, no tennis courts, no playgrounds.⁵⁹⁵

To facilitate the establishment of the park, the Seminary Hill Association created a subcommittee to focus on this one issue.⁵⁹⁶ In 1957, the Round Table of the District of Columbia dropped the Fort Memorial Freeway Committee from its list of activities and shifted its focus to the war’s centennial. Karl Sawtelle Betts and Ulysses S. Grant III, both of who were central to the Memorial Freeway Committee, eventually chaired the federally funded U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission and organized Civil War commemorations throughout the country.⁵⁹⁷ Meanwhile, Chambers, who had been such a supporter of Fort Ward’s preservation, had left Washington, D.C. and was conducting archaeological excavations for Colonial Williamsburg by 1955.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁵ E. H. Wiecking, President, Seminary Hill Association, “Notes for Statement to Alexandria Planning Commission,” 1 April 1954; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 20-23.

⁵⁹⁸ Moreau B.C. Chambers, “Shields Tavern Archaeological Report, Block 9 Building 26B Lot 25 & 26,” 1955, Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library, <http://research.history.org/digitallibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=researchreports%5Crr1142.xml> (accessed on 23 April 2012).

The quest to develop Fort Ward into a historic park, however, was not left rudderless because of the changes within the Round Table. Dorothy Starr, who lived about a half mile from Fort Ward on Seminary Road, had already become the main advocate for the historic preservation of Fort Ward by 1954.⁵⁹⁹ A native of Chicago, she had moved to Alexandria before World War II. In a letter written in 1982, she recalled that Chambers' work inspired her, and he recommended she should "get the city to acquire the fort."⁶⁰⁰ By 1954, it was Starr who shared her personal research on the site and insisted the City study the possibility of purchasing Fort Ward and the land surrounding it.⁶⁰¹ In the meantime, she became actively involved in urban planning and historic preservation throughout northern Virginia, most notably representing Alexandria on the Northern Virginia Regional Planning and Economic Development Commission (1956-1964), which she chaired from 1961 to 1963.⁶⁰² In order to further promote the preservation of Fort Ward, she also chaired the Alexandria Civil War Centennial Committee's and Seminary Hill Association's Fort Ward subcommittees.

Based on her research and understanding of planning, Starr wrote City Council to describe what she felt was the best lay out of the park:

- A recreation of the gate on the east side of the park
- A gravel roadway for cars that looped around the park and exited at Howard Street
- Parking
- A walking path at the top of the earthen works
- Woodland areas with walking paths

⁵⁹⁹ "Dorothy Starr, Civic Leader, Historic Project Activist, Dies," *Washington Post* 30 October 1982, B7.

⁶⁰⁰ Dorothy Starr, Upperville, VA, to Wanda S. Dowell, 29 January 1982; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁰¹ Eugene L. Barnwell, Assistant City Manager, "Resume of Actions in Re Fort Ward Park Development," to P. B. Hall, Acting City Manager, 8 June 1962; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁰² "Starr, Dorothy Clara Simpson" (ca. 1971); Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

- Picnic areas separated from the Fort by the access road
- Restoration of only the North Bastion⁶⁰³

Starr's vision and passion were central to the development of Fort Ward Park in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1964, Civil War Centennial Commission recognized her involvement in the preservation of Fort Ward. Starr was the only woman the organization recognized.⁶⁰⁴

By the late 1950s, Alexandria's government officials and residents were also discussing the importance of Fort Ward Park as open space. Alexandria had few parks in the 1950s and early 1960s, which was a cause for concern among city planners and other officials who were trying to improve the quality of life for residents.⁶⁰⁵ In July 1958, City Council endorsed a resolution from the National Capital Regional Planning Council that highlighted western Alexandria as the only area within the city in which a large park could be developed. Because of this analysis, the Seminary Hill Association again wrote to City Council and argued that Fort Ward fulfilled Alexandria's need for open space as delineated by the Regional Planning Council. They also noted that it was located in a prime location (namely in close proximity to King Street, Braddock Road, and Shirley Highway), had "undeveloped" land around it, and was historically significant.⁶⁰⁶

Tied to the issue of open space, the potential of Fort Ward as a public garden was discussed among local government officials and boosters as early as 1958. The City

⁶⁰³ Dorothy Starr, et al., "Seminary Hill Association Support and Gift of Bronze Historic Marker," 6 October 1961, Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁰⁴ "Civil War Certificate is Awarded," *Washington Post* 2 September 1964, A7.

⁶⁰⁵ City Planning Commission, "Report on the Generalized Land Use Plan of the City of Alexandria, VA, February 1962," Box 70B, File 17; Special Collections, Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁰⁶ Charles E. Beatley, President, Seminary Hill Association, to Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council, Alexandria, VA, 17 November 1959; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

Arborist, Charles W. Hendryx, believed azaleas could be planted in the park to appeal to tourists or potential residents interested in gardening or “passive recreation,” much like the Tidal Basin and National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. With support from the Kiwanis Club, he suggested Fort Ward could host an Azalea Festival where a Queen of the Azalea Festival would be crowned and then sent to compete in the statewide Miss America contest representing Alexandria.⁶⁰⁷

The centennial of the Civil War put additional pressure on Alexandria’s leaders to preserve Fort Ward and build a park and museum as part of the city’s celebrations. On April 9, 1959, Mayor Leroy S. Bendheim created the Alexandria Civil War Centennial Committee per the request of Virginia Governor Lindsay J. Almond.⁶⁰⁸ Almond was one of the few southern governors to strongly support the centennial commemoration of the Civil War and recruited fellow southern governors to create statewide centennial commissions. Central to the concerns of southern governors, including Almond, was the fear that any discussion of the Civil War might further foment the Civil Rights Movement, which was growing in intensity. Almond, however, also believed the centennial was an opportunity for Virginia to bring in tourist dollars, a prospect he could not ignore.⁶⁰⁹

Alexandria’s Civil War Centennial Committee focused on Fort Ward as one of the lynchpins of the city’s celebrations. In a letter to Mayor Leroy S. Bendheim and City Council, S. W. B. Hurd, President of the Civil War Centennial Committee and Alexandria’s

⁶⁰⁷ Additionally, Hendryx stated that the park was really too small for the purposes he was suggesting and that more land should be acquired before the area became developed, especially on the eastside of the park. Charles W. Hendryx, City Arborist, to Dorothy Starr, Alexandria, VA, 11 May 1959; Alexandria Archaeology, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁰⁸ S.W.B. Hurd, Chairman, Alexandria Civil War Centennial Committee, to Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council, Alexandria, VA, 27 January 1960, Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁰⁹ Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 43-47, 64.

Civil War Round Table, requested additional funds be put aside for Fort Ward, the reconstruction of which was to be “the City’s major contribution to the Centennial observance.”⁶¹⁰ For those white Alexandrians enthusiastic about the Civil War, the creation of Fort Ward Park was extraordinary as many locals aligned their family histories with the Confederacy. In the same document in which the Committee made recommendations for Fort Ward’s reconstruction, it also stated Alexandria should begin its centennial commemoration with a rededication of the Confederate statue in Old Town led by the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy on May 24, 1961 (the 100th anniversary of the occupation of Alexandria by Union troops).⁶¹¹ Alexandria’s chapters of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederate also organized their own events and activities as part of the commemoration.⁶¹²

By the summer 1961, City Council hired Edward McM. Larrabee, a historical archaeologist, to investigate the condition of Fort Ward’s earthworks and write a report on his findings.⁶¹³ The Northwest Bastion was found to be in excellent condition, and money was approved to reconstruct it along with its gun emplacements, platforms, powder magazines, filling room, and traverses in fall 1961. Other components of the reconstruction—such as its cannon and gate—had to be made for the site; the U.S. Corps of

⁶¹⁰ S. W. B. Hurd, Chairman, Alexandria Civil War Centennial Committee, to Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council, Alexandria, VA, 27 January 1960, Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² Scrapbook of Sons of Confederate Veterans, Robert E. Lee Camp, No. 726, Alexandria, VA, ca. 1965, Special Collections, Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library, Alexandria, VA.

⁶¹³ At about the same time that he was working at Fort Ward, Larrabee was excavating the Fortress of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island. The Fortress, which was to protect France’s colonies in the eighteenth century, is the largest historical reconstruction in North America. Edward McM. Larrabee, Bruce W. Fry, and Ian C. Walker, *Archaeological Research at the Fortress of Louisbourg, 1961-1965; A Rescue Excavation at the Princess Half-bastion, Fortress of Louisbourg* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1971).

Engineers recreated the original gate, a drawing of which had been found at the National Archives (the gate was built after the Civil War to commemorate the Engineers' work at the Fort).⁶¹⁴ The rest of Fort Ward was not to be restored, but cleared of brush and demarcated with interpretative signs.⁶¹⁵ City Council's decision to use public funds to restore Fort Ward was celebrated in the regional press as one of the first city-funded archaeology projects in the country.⁶¹⁶

The City of Alexandria agreed to build a museum as part of the historical interpretation at Fort Ward by the early 1960s. Historian William D. Hershey, who had been hired by the City of Alexandria to research the history of Fort Ward, proposed a museum building that was consistent with the Civil War period, but not necessarily historically accurate to the site. He believed the museum should house some of the archaeological findings from Fort Ward along with information on the Defenses of Washington, and the fort's architecture and ordnance. A second room would focus on Alexandria, including the shooting of Colonel Ellsworth and "the occupation and division of the City will be related as well as the wartime presence in Alexandria of such notables as the young Andrew Carnegie."⁶¹⁷ The Confederate flag and any donations from the public

⁶¹⁴ Wanda S. Dowell, Curator, Fort Ward Museum, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form," U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 30 March 1981; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶¹⁵ "Alexandria Asks Federal Aid for Park," *Washington Post* 31 July 1962, B2; "Text for Restoration Guide," circa 1963, Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶¹⁶ Docket Item 27, A Review of Civil War Centennial Commission Recommendations," 10 October 1961, Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶¹⁷ William D. Hersey, "Proposal for Museum at Fort Ward Park," ca. 1963, 1, Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

would also be displayed in this room. Finally, he noted that the museum could make connections to other historic sites and draw visitors into Old Town.⁶¹⁸

The park, which originally was to open in 1961 to commemorate when the fort was first constructed, was delayed several times until spring 1964 (Figure 56). After the archaeological excavation in 1961, the Northwest Bastion and several other elements

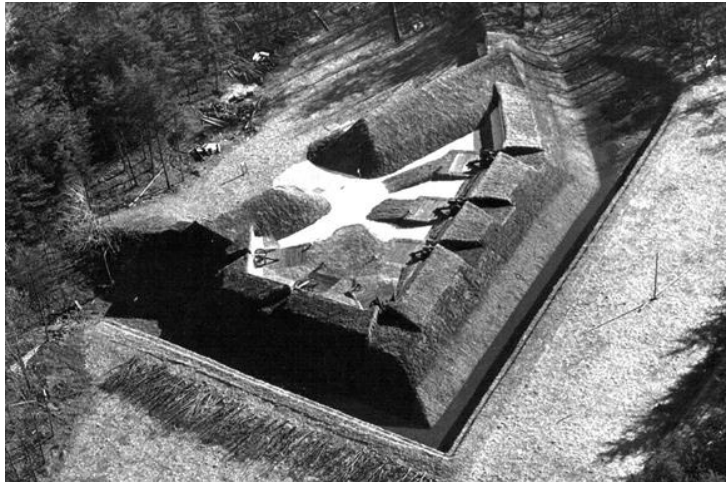


Figure 56. Aerial View of Fort Ward Reconstruction. Date Unknown. Courtesy of Alexandria Archaeology.

of the Fort were reconstructed over the following year. During the spring and summer of 1962, bids and designs were submitted for the grading of roads and parking lots, the design of the museum and other historically-inflected structures, and the layout of the entire park.⁶¹⁹ Hershey's final summary arrived by the fall of 1963.⁶²⁰ All plans, including design and substance, had to be approved by the City Manager, Albert H. Hair Jr.⁶²¹

The opening of Fort Ward Park on Memorial Day in 1964 was seen by many white Alexandrians involved in its creation as a moment celebrating local civic involvement in the

⁶¹⁸ William D. Hersey, "Proposal for Museum at Fort Ward Park," ca. 1963, 2; City of Alexandria, Department of General Services, n.d.; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶¹⁹ Eugene L. Barnwell, General Services Director, "Memorandum 'Resume' of Actions in Re Fort Ward Park Development," to P. B. Hall, Acting City Manager, 8 June 1962; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶²⁰ William D. Hershey, Harpers Ferry, W.V., to Eugene Barnwell, General Services Director, Alexandria, VA, 19 August 1963; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶²¹ Memorandum, Department of General Services, Alexandria, Virginia, n.d.; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

preservation of the region's Civil War past. The Civil War Centennial Commission recognized Alexandria as one of six cities to significantly contribute to the Centennial because of the Fort Ward preservation project. Alexandria's designation earlier that year as an "All-American City" by the National Municipal League marked the event. The city was also noted in *Look Magazine* for its "'action to rescue the historic old Virginia City from the results of explosive growth'."⁶²² The celebration included free balloons for children, a band concert, and speech by James I. Robertson Jr., a noted historian and the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission's executive director.⁶²³ In a tourist brochure produced by the Northern Virginia Regional Planning and Economic Development Commission in 1966, Fort Ward was praised for its partial fort restoration along with its reconstructed officers' hut and museum, which "house[d] a private collection of Civil War material, reportedly one of the finest in the country."⁶²⁴

Alexandria and Urban Renewal

In contradistinction to the celebrations surrounding the establishment of Fort Ward Park and Museum were the experiences of those African Americans who lived or owned land at the Fort. Alexandria in the 1960s was a segregated city, with African Americans fighting to obtain equal access to public spaces, housing, education, and the vote. Although African Americans and their white supporters had minor success in fighting segregation

⁶²² Walter B. Douglas, "Alexandria Celebrates 'All-America City' Award," *Washington Post* 27 March 1964, A18.

⁶²³ "Today's Events," *Washington Post* 30 May 1964, B4. For a more detailed description of the opening ceremony at Fort Ward, see "John Reichmann, "Ritual Plans are Complete at Fort," *Alexandria Gazette* 28 May 1864; Fort Ward Publicity, 1961-1983 Scrapbook, Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶²⁴ Northern Virginia Regional Planning and Economic Development Commission, *Historic Northern Virginia Buildings and Places* (Arlington, VA: no publisher, 1966), 9.

during this period, housing continued to be a major point of contention as inadequate public housing and residential racism persisted.

Tied to population increases that began with the expansion of the federal government under the New Deal, Alexandria struggled to adequately house all of its residents, both black and white. To address this problem, city leaders turned to a set number of strategies to make room for the influx of new residents as well as to improve the conditions of its older housing stock, much of which pre-dated the Civil War. Both urban renewal and historic preservation were not only central to the establishment of Fort Ward Park and Museum, but also were used during this period to make improvements throughout the city. White government and business leaders and private developers, however, were focused on the needs of middle and upper class white residents, and implemented policies that negatively impacted poor whites and African Americans.

Throughout the U.S., city leaders had first begun discussing urban renewal during the Great Depression, focusing on “blight.” Jon C. Teaforde in *The Rough Road to Renaissance* defines blight as “the process of physical deterioration that destroyed property values and undermined the quality of urban life.”⁶²⁵ To fix these problems, it was argued that cities just needed new highways, sewers, up-to-date housing and commercial buildings, and less pollution.⁶²⁶ Then, as the argument went, white, middle-class families would return to the city to live, shop, and work. Thus, physical improvements would solve a city’s problems and not a re-alignment of social and economic conditions, such as racism, that relegated many African Americans to overcrowded and potentially dangerous housing.

⁶²⁵ Jon C. Teaforde, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 11.

⁶²⁶ Teaforde, *The Rough Road to Renaissance*, 12.

There were many pressures within Alexandria that led white community leaders to pursue urban renewal. Individuals and organizations had been restoring historic buildings in Alexandria since the early twentieth century, but these small-scale attempts to improve the city were no longer seen as enough by community leaders in the post-war era.⁶²⁷ Competition from newly established shopping centers, most notably Shirlington in 1944 followed by Seven Corners in 1956, also meant that consumers could park and shop without facing the congestion of the historic district.⁶²⁸ City leaders recognized that the ability to attract tourists—as part of the city’s quest for a new industry to bring in income—would be predicated on the attractiveness of downtown, parking availability, and accessibility of house museums and other historic sites.⁶²⁹ Finally, the majority of the city’s residents were no longer working within the city limits, but commuting elsewhere to federal-government related or other office jobs along the region’s new highway system.⁶³⁰ These men and women, trying to escape the congestion of cities, were looking to live in the suburban neighborhoods idealized in the post-World War II era.⁶³¹

Alexandria began its pursuit of urban renewal with the establishment of the Alexandria Housing and Redevelopment Authority (ARHA). Established in 1939, ARHA’s role in Alexandria was (and still is) to carry out approved urban renewal projects and operate low-income housing in the city. Because it operates under state and federal

⁶²⁷ Patricia Miles Fenwick, *Urban Restoration in Old Town, Alexandria, Virginia* (MA Thesis, Kent State University, 1969), 85; Peter H. Smith, “The Beginnings of Historic Preservation in Alexandria—Moving Toward the Creation of the Old and Historic District,” *The Alexandria Chronicle* 4.4 (Winter 1996): 2.

⁶²⁸ Ron Shaffer, “Shirlington Center: New Spark Needed,” *Washington Post* 13 February 1975, C1 and C13.

⁶²⁹ Fenwick, *Urban Restoration in Old Town, Alexandria, Virginia*, 48-49.

⁶³⁰ “Accessibility Big Factor in Area’s ‘Success Story,’” *Washington Post* 13 October 1949, C1.

⁶³¹ Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage, 2003), 194-256; Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 231-245.

guidelines and funding, ARHA has extensive autonomy within Alexandria; however, it still needed to work with City Council in order to accomplish its mandate.⁶³² Within the next few years after its establishment, ARHA began its first slum clearance program and focused primarily on African American neighborhoods north of Old Town. It also constructed its first public housing at this time: John Roberts and George Parker Homes, with the former catering to whites and the latter for African Americans.⁶³³

During World War II, the federal government also directly converted part of the “Hump,” another African American neighborhood on the northern outskirts of Old Town, into housing. This land, which had been condemned in 1941, was used to temporarily house African Americans displaced by local slum clearance or working in the defense industries. Like many people living in federally operated public housing, these men and women lived in trailers. After World War II, the land was given to ARHA, which built James Bland Homes on the site in the early 1950s.⁶³⁴

The City’s first attempt at large-scale urban renewal and commercial redevelopment began in 1951. An ARHA study of an eleven-block area centered on Peyton Street between Prince and Duke reported that sixty-four homes had no private baths and only cold water plumbing and fifty had no private toilets out of the 100 homes in the five-block area. Thirty homes were in such a dangerous structural state that ARHA recommended they be

⁶³² Low-Income Housing Study Committee, “Final Report: Low-Income Housing in Alexandria Prepared for The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council,” August 1971, City Council Minutes, Regular Meeting, Box 213B, File 4; Special Collections, Barrett Library, Alexandria, VA.

⁶³³ Application for Permit to Build, February 24, 1941; “Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Council of the City of Alexandria,” Sept. 24, 1940, City Council Proceedings; “Recessed Meeting,” Sept. 11, 1940, City Council Proceedings, Alexandria Archives and Records Center, Alexandria, VA; Clarence M. Pierce, et al., “The Social Survey: Alexandria County,” 1947, p. 145-146, Microfilm 275, YWCA of the USA Records, 1860-2002, Sophia Smith Collection, Women’s History Archives at Smith College, Northampton, MA.

⁶³⁴ “51 Alexandria Negro Families to be Moved,” *Washington Post* July 30, 1944, M4; Pierce, 145-146; Sipe and Snyder, “Documentary Study and Archaeological Resource Assessment for the James Bland Homes.”

demolished.⁶³⁵ ARHA, along with City Council, endorsed the seizure of these properties by eminent domain and their sale to a private developer, who would build a shopping center as part of the city's new commercial district.⁶³⁶ During a public hearing on this project in June 1954, downtown business owners were outraged that City Council even considered giving land to a private developer. Local residents—who were small, white owned businesses and a mixture of white and black renters and homeowners—were also up in arms about the possibility of losing their livelihoods and homes. ARHA also wanted to use federal funds; however, no federal funds could be employed for a project that was geared primarily for private development. A year later, the project was permanently put on hold.⁶³⁷

Within a year, the City government was again talking about urban renewal, this time in alignment with new federal guidelines. The passage of the Housing Act of 1954, which included major revisions to the original 1949 law, required the City to supply the federal government with an overall plan to address community development (including low-rent public housing for those displaced by any federally subsidized project) and the passage of ordinances requiring owners to maintain their properties to locally established standards of structural integrity and healthfulness. It also created an exception for the first time in which federal funds could be used for non-residential purposes.⁶³⁸ To gain access to these funds and to develop community support, City Council set up a Community Development

⁶³⁵ Fenwick, 34.

⁶³⁶ *Prince Street Shopping Center* (Alexandria, VA: Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, 1953).

⁶³⁷ "Alexandria Shop Center Hearing Set," *Washington Post* 8 June 1954, 15; "Alexandria Council Sends Plan Back," *Washington Post* 14 July 1954, 42; "Alexandria Council Kills Plan on urban Renewal," *Washington Post* 23 November 1955, 36.

⁶³⁸ Ashley A. Foard and Hilbert Fefferman, "Federal Urban Renewal Legislation," *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed. James Q. Wilson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966), 93-99.

Committee of seventy-seven residents to analyze Alexandria by U.S. Census Tracts and delineate the specific needs of each neighborhood.

Simultaneously, City Council focused on updating its housing codes in compliance with the Housing Act. The Minimum House-Hygiene Ordinance, passed in December 1957, required that all structures be safe and sanitary; have access to natural light, ventilation, and heating; install toilets, bathtubs/showers, bathrooms and kitchens with cold and hot water; and limited occupancy based on square footage (150 for one person and 70 feet for each additional person).⁶³⁹ Sanitarians, who were hired as part of the Division of Environmental Health in the Health Department, worked alongside the fire department inspecting buildings throughout the city, citing residents for violations and condemning homes.⁶⁴⁰ By December 1960, city sanitarians reported that 203 homes were in violation of the new law and between 1,000 and 1,500 homes in the city were “substandard.” Two of the owners cited, attorney Alfred H. Collins and former mayor Richard L. Ruffner, held property at the Fort although it is unknown whether these properties were specifically in violation.⁶⁴¹

Within a year of the House-Hygiene Ordinance’s passage, the Community Development Committee published its report, which emphatically stated that older sections of the city lacking some level of individualized historic preservation should be slated for urban renewal. These areas happened to have a sizable number of African American residents. Census Tract 16 contained “the most serious blight problems (with

⁶³⁹ This is a condensed version of the code. See *The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1963* (Charlottesville, VA: Michie City Publications Co., 1963), 415-420.

⁶⁴⁰ *Neighborhood Analysis: Alexandria, Virginia* (Urban Renewal Office: Alexandria, VA, November 1966), 10.

⁶⁴¹ “Alexandria Steps Up Anti-Slum Program,” *Washington Post* December 16, 1960, B6.

the attendant social problems of disease, crime, and juvenile delinquency)” with 51% of its housing needing major repairs.⁶⁴² This area, known as “Uptown,” was described as the largest African American neighborhood in the city.⁶⁴³ Like other older sections of Alexandria, Uptown was not completely African American in its residential make-up. In another report by the Planning Department written two years earlier, the population of Census Tract 16 was only 60% nonwhite and its residents were the poorest in the city, making incomes 50% below the city average. The Planning Department also recommended that there be housing redevelopment in this area with federal assistance as “[p]rivate enterprise has not assumed the responsibility of providing decent living quarters for the people, and more than likely, will not be anxious to do so.”⁶⁴⁴ However, as noted in the Planning Department’s report, such a project would mean relocating residents to publically subsidized housing, aggravating the housing problems Alexandria already faced.

Despite the emphasis on Census Tract 16 in City reports, Alexandria’s first urban renewal projects were located elsewhere. The Gadsby Commercial Urban Renewal Project began in 1959, and was named after Gadsby’s Tavern, a late eighteenth-century building converted into a museum by the American Legion in 1929. In the preliminary plan submitted by ARHA to City Council, the Gadsby Project would create a completely new commercial corridor, destroying a twenty-block area between Washington, Prince, Fairfax, Princess, Pitt, and Pendleton Streets. Various versions of the plan included a mixture of

⁶⁴² *Report of Alexandria Community Development Committee* (Alexandria, VA: Newell-Cole Co., Inc. 1958).

⁶⁴³ Uptown was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2010. See African American Historic Sites Database, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, http://www.aaheritageva.org/search/sites.php?site_id=493, (accessed 19 February 2012).

⁶⁴⁴ *A Look at our City...Alexandria, Virginia: Report One of the Land Use and Economic Base Survey* (City Planning Department: Alexandria, VA, September 1956), 84, Alexandria City Records, City Planning Department, Box 19JJJ, File 1, Barrett Library, Alexandria, VA.

new structures: a municipal center, parking lots, a park, high-rise apartment buildings, an auditorium, department store, civic center, and a 200-room hotel.⁶⁴⁵

Again, local residents and businesses organized against such a massive demolition in the historic core and demanded a more concentrated renewal project. Alexandrians were concerned that such sweeping destruction would hurt the historic and architectural uniqueness of the city as well as the city's growing tourist industry.⁶⁴⁶ It can also be speculated that African Americans and poor whites, who were 75% of the residents affected by the Gadsby Project, were concerned with displacement.⁶⁴⁷ Over the next few years—as the City and its residents and business owners wrestled with urban renewal along King Street—a greatly narrowed plan emerged. The new limited Gadsby Project only focused on the businesses and homes around City Hall.⁶⁴⁸ The project was done in phases, focusing only on six blocks. Many historic structures were demolished and around twenty-six families were displaced.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁵ Victoria Stone, "Plans Revealed for Alexandria Urban Renewal," *Washington Post* 20 July 1960, C1; Everard Munsey, "Gentler Renewal Plan Wins Alexandria Over," *Washington Post* 21 February 1961, A3; Fenwick 52-58.

⁶⁴⁶ Although beyond the scope of this chapter, the fight between historic preservationists and Alexandria's urban renewal program continued into the late 1960s when the City finally won its case in the courts to start phase two of the Gadsby Urban Renewal Project, which included the 400- and 500-blocks of King Street. In 1975, the city created the Alexandria Archaeological Commission, an appointed board that reported to City Council on archaeological matters. Gail Bensinger, "Suit Filed to Block Old Town Razings," *Washington Post* 16 December 1967, B1; "Alexandria Approves Renewal; Architectural Board Overruled," *Washington Post* 30 July 1969, C5; Francine Bromberg and Pamela Cressey, "Digging the Past for Fifty years: A Model for Community Archaeology," Society for Historical Archaeology Conference, Baltimore, MD, January 2012.

⁶⁴⁷ "Redeveloping History," *Washington Post* 31 January 1962, A16; Walter B. Douglas, "Parking Lack Stirs Alexandria," *Washington Post* 19 Feb. 1965, B6;

⁶⁴⁸ Everard Munsey, "Alexandria offers Plan on Renewal," *Washington Post* 17 Nov. 1960, A22; Everard Munsey, "Alexandria Urged to Stress Colonial in Renewal Plans," *Washington Post* 22 April 1961, B2; "Redeveloping History," *Washington Post* 31 January 1962, A16.

⁶⁴⁹ *Gadsby Commercial Urban Renewal Project Phase No. 1, Alexandria, Virginia*, (Alexandria, VA: Office of Urban Renewal, 1963), 17-19.

At the same time the Alexandria's City Council approved the Gadsby Project, it also decided to destroy the "blighted" Macedonia/Seminary neighborhood to build a new high school. Macedonia/Seminary, as noted earlier, was another African American neighborhood on the southeast side of Fairfax Seminary along King Street. Like the Fort, Macedonia/Seminary's African American residents appeared in the area after the Civil War, largely working in agriculture or at Fairfax Seminary. Even in the mid-twentieth century, the area was still regarded as rural although it was clearly part of northern Virginia's suburbanization.⁶⁵⁰

In its 1958 review of land use and housing, the Community Development Committee had reported that Macedonia/Seminary should have some parts rehabilitated and other parts cleared for redevelopment. Streets also needed "proper access" and "sound development."⁶⁵¹ In 1960, City support for rehabilitation disappeared. The need for a third high school to serve the city's white students finally became the impetus for City Council to claim the land through eminent domain. In the *Washington Post*, an anonymous reporter wrote: "School Superintendent T.C. Williams has emphasized the need for a new high school to avoid serious overcrowding in the city's two predominantly white high schools."⁶⁵² It should be noted that Alexandria's school system had only recently embraced the pupil placement program in 1959, allowing a nominal number of African Americans into formerly all-white schools. With the passage of the Civil Rights Act (1964), all public

⁶⁵⁰ Some time after World War II, her family had the opportunity to connect to the city's sewer line; however, the project was expensive—reportedly the city charged them a \$250 fee. Her family then had to pay a contractor and a plumber to build a bathroom. Elizabeth Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock, Henry Mitchell, Bradford Henderlong, transcription, 28 March 1992, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁵¹ *Report of Alexandria Community Development Committee* (Alexandria, VA: Newell-Cole Co., Inc. 1958).

⁶⁵² "Alexandria Picks Site for School," *Washington Post* 29 Sept. 1960, B1.

schools systems in the U.S. were required to fully desegregate to continue to receive federal funds.⁶⁵³ By fall 1965, all of Alexandria's high schools were desegregated, including its newest one built on the Macedonia/Seminary site. It was named after T. C. Williams, who was pro-segregationist and ran Alexandria's public schools from 1933 through 1962.⁶⁵⁴

The recently passed Minimum House-Hygiene Ordinance also helped justify the City's use of Macedonia/Seminary for the location of what would become T.C. Williams High School. As noted earlier, the Minimum House-Hygiene Ordinance allowed sanitarians within the Health Department to fine and even condemn housing deemed structurally unsound or unhealthy.⁶⁵⁵ In the city's report on the "Mudtown Project," the name given to the urban renewal project at the site of the Macedonia/Seminary neighborhood, sanitarians declared that forty-eight buildings were substandard and "[t]he area was never properly developed with dedicated streets, layout of lots, storm and sanitary sewers, city water, electricity, fire protection, etc."⁶⁵⁶ What the report failed to recognize was that these "proper" developments were all services that city government was supposed to provide for all local residents.

⁶⁵³ "Alexandria Votes Local Pupil Plan," *Washington Post* 8 Apr 1965, G2.

⁶⁵⁴ "New School to Honor Williams," *Washington Post* 22 May 1964, F9; Peter S. Diggins, "Alexandria Carefully Smoothing Way for Total High School Desegregation," *Washington Post* 1 Aug. 1965, B1; Maurine McLaughlin, "Alexandria Achieves Desegregation in All Schools," *Washington Post* 23 Sept. 1968, B1.

Three years later, the *Washington Post* reported "all Alexandria public schools have at least *token* racial integration" (emphasis added). Problems with school integration, however, persisted. The threat of law suits from the NAACP and an investigation by Civil Rights officials in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare finally forced the City in the early 1970s to implement bussing and a new school organizational structure. Maurine McLaughlin, "Alexandria Achieves Desegregation in All Schools," *Washington Post* 23 Sept. 1968, B1; Maurine McLaughlin, "The City Still Faces South A Century after the Civil War," *Washington Post* 26 June 1969, G1; Paul G. Edwards, "Alexandria Pupil Shift Plan Supported by Black Residents," *Washington Post* 22 Feb. 1973, B1 & B3; Joanne Omang, "Suit Looms on School Integration," *Washington Post* 12 April 1973, B18.

⁶⁵⁵ *The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1963* (Charlottesville, VA: Michie City Publications Co., 1963), 415-420.

⁶⁵⁶ *The Mudtown Project: Urban Renewal Goes to Work... to Improve Our City* (Alexandria, VA: Office of Urban Renewal, 1963).

Facing criticism from local residents after the City's decision to build a school at Macedonia/Seminary, City government put aside around 5 ½ acres in 1960 for the construction of housing for the 52 families and individuals who were going to be displaced.⁶⁵⁷ The new site for the Macedonia/Seminary neighborhood was measly in comparison to the community's previous iteration. As a result, Macedonia/Seminary residents rejected this "compromise," which the President of the Seminary Civic Association, Marion I. Johnson, argued did not address the real issue—"there seems to be a concerted effort on somebody's part not to sell any land to Negroes."⁶⁵⁸ In the *Washington Post*, another reporter noted: "Negro residents of the area... had charged that selection of Mudtown as a school site was one of a series of devices to force them out of a location their families had occupied since Civil War days."⁶⁵⁹ African American residents of Macedonia/Seminary wanted to own their own homes and not to be forced into public housing or apartments. In the end, 29 homes were built behind T.C. Williams High School, which 16 Macedonia/Seminary families were able to purchase on significantly smaller

⁶⁵⁷ Rochelle H Schwab, *Patterns of Relocation and Adjustment from an Urban Renewal Area* (MA thesis, Howard University, January 17, 1969), 1.

⁶⁵⁸ "Neighbors Back Plea of Mudtown," *Washington Post* 23 Nov. 1960, B1.

Johnson was married to Mary Crozet Wood Johnson and lived on Quaker Lane. He was originally from Texas where he studied mechanical engineering at Prairie View A & M (1934-36) and then law at University of Maryland (1958-59). From 1942-1962, he served in the military, after which he worked as a management specialist with the Agency for International Development followed by the Atomic Energy Commission. He was very active in Alexandria and sat on many committees: Seminary Civic Association (president); Alexandria Council on Human Relations (vice president); Minority Housing Subcommittee appointed by City Council (Vice Chairman); Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations (Treasurer); Alexandria Citizens Advisory Committee; Advisory Committee on Adult Education; Durant Civic Association (Board Member); Northern Virginia Fair Housing; Alexandria Branch NAACP; Burgundy Farm Country Day School; Pigskin Club of Washington; Urban League; Hopkins House (Board Member), and Alexandria Family Services. Leonard S. Brown, "Alexandria Refuses to Put Colored on Top Committees," *Washington Afro-American* 31 October 1961, 16; Art Carter, "Ex-Army Colonel Making Bid for Alexandria Council," *The Afro-American* 12 April 1969, 17; www.afro.com (accessed December 20, 2011).

⁶⁵⁹ "Compromise on Mudtown is Proposed," *Washington Post* 16 Nov. 1960, B1.

parcels of land than previously owned.⁶⁶⁰ The rest of the homes were sold to other African American families, including two landowners at the Fort—Ada Casey and the Young family. This development—known as Woods Place and Woods Avenue—still exists today.

In response to Alexandria’s urban renewal and public housing, African Americans criticized City government for systematically targeting African American homes for modernization improvements throughout the City. Documents written by local Civil Rights activists speak to the housing crisis that African Americans faced in Alexandria. In a letter by Robert I. Terrell, President of the local chapter of the NAACP, to Roy Wilkins, the Executive Secretary of the NAACP in New York City, he notes that “the Housing Program in Alexandria, Va... is comparable if not worse than other cities for non-whites.”⁶⁶¹ By the late 1950s, Terrell was a real estate agent in Alexandria.⁶⁶² Melvin Miller, a local Civil Rights activist and president of the Durant Civic Association (another local Civil Rights group), explained to city government that Alexandria’s current urban renewal and public housing plans “further support... a widely held opinion in the community that Alexandria’s Negro

⁶⁶⁰ In her research, Schwab was able to locate all of those displaced and what type of housing they were living in. The results were the following:

- 16 families were rehoused at Woods Place
- 5 went into private sales housing
- 8 went into private rental housing
- 10 families and 2 individuals went into public housing
- 11 individuals went into private rental housing
- 2 families left town

See Schwab (page 2) for additional information.

⁶⁶¹ Robert I. Terrell, President, 1107 Queen Street, 1 August 1962, to Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary, NAACP, NYC; NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁶⁶² It is unclear whether Robert I. Terrell is related to the Terrells at the Fort and Macedonia/Seminary. In the 1930 Census, his occupation was insurance agent in Alexandria. In the early 1950s, he is listed in the City Directories as a laborer. Based on the Social Security Death Index, he was born on July 14, 1893 and died in April 1972. 1930 U.S. Census, Alexandria, Virginia, 6-B; and Social Security Death Index; www.ancestry.com (accessed May 14, 2013); *Hill’s Alexandria City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co. Inc., 1954), 499; *Hill’s Alexandria City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co. Inc., 1956), 604; *Hill’s Alexandria City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co. Inc., 1959), 641.

citizens must be contained in a tight ghetto of poor houses so that Negroes from the other jurisdictions of the metropolitan area will not migrate to Alexandria.”⁶⁶³ For Miller and others, the only way to solve the housing crisis facing African Americans was for Alexandria to pass Fair Housing legislation, which would halt racial discrimination in the sale or rental of homes and/or apartments.

In spring 1962, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission investigated the state of housing in the Washington, D.C. metro area and contacted local activists. Marion I. Johnson, who had been active in fighting the City’s plans to destroy Macedonia/Seminary, was asked to be one of the speakers at a public hearing on April 12, 1962. Johnson was explicit about the housing crisis that African Americans were facing:

The most serious problem facing the Negro citizens in the city of Alexandria today is unavailability of decent, sanitary housing on any level because of the unwillingness of the financial institutions, private builders, and other segments of the homebuilding industry to provide housing that is available to the Negroes and the various actions of the city government in its urban renewal highway widening and other Government-sponsored projects.⁶⁶⁴

He continued to explain that Alexandria was becoming further segregated, the causes of which were tied to urban renewal, the lack of new housing construction for African Americans, and the refusal of the City government to embrace Fair Housing legislation. Ultimately, without major changes in the local government’s attitudes and practices “the Negro will be almost completely driven from the city of Alexandria. Only the public

⁶⁶³ Walter B. Douglas, “Fair Housing Act Asked in Alexandria,” *Washington Post* 6 Nov. 1962, B2.

⁶⁶⁴ U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, “Testimony of Marion I. Johnson, Vice President, Alexandria Council on Human Relations,” *Hearings before the United States Commission on Civil Rights: Housing In Washington* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), 106.

housing residents will remain to serve as a reservoir of domestic servants for the white community.”⁶⁶⁵

At the same time that the U.S. Civil Rights Commission was investigating housing issues in Alexandria, Ferdinand T. Day, Chairman of the Durant Civic Association’s Housing Committee, wrote a letter to the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency⁶⁶⁶ to reject Alexandria’s housing plans for displaced individuals and families. In it, he documented that Alexandria’s public housing plans did not offer sufficient housing for those in need. Furthermore, the sites for public housing would affect additional African American homeowners and renters, only adding to the number of displaced people. The City’s support of privately funded new construction was also problematic, and he doubted whether this construction would occur based on precedent set by the City. Most importantly, he stated:

The City Council in designating the sites for public housing indicated, as stated in the enclosed newspaper report, that selection was made to get the “Workable Program” recertified but “hoped the project won’t have to be constructed.” This is far from a firm commitment that even public housing will be available within the next two years.⁶⁶⁷

Temporarily, the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency agreed that there was little-to-no plan to help those residents displaced, most notably African Americans. They temporarily withheld funds for the Gadsby and Mudtown Renewal Projects. Within a few months, the City conceded to do more to help African American residents by building more

⁶⁶⁵ “Testimony of Marion I. Johnson” 108.

⁶⁶⁶ The Housing and Home Finance Agency was the umbrella agency for the Home Loan Bank Board, Federal Housing Administration, and Public Housing Administration until 1965 when it became the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

⁶⁶⁷ Ferdinand T. Day, Chairman, Durant Civic Association, Housing Committee, 27 July 1962, to Mr. Warner Phelen, Regional Director, Housing and Home Finance Agency, Philadelphia Regional Office, Widener Building, Philadelphia, PA; NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

public housing and encouraging privately developed housing for middle-class, African Americans families.⁶⁶⁸

Starting in the late 1930s and continuing through the 1960s, Alexandria embraced urban renewal to bring white, middle class families to the City and supposedly improve the overall quality of life of local residents. Unfortunately, to do this, it targeted African Americans neighborhoods, especially lower and middle income ones for demolition and renovation. This process hit African American residents hard, particularly since housing options were already limited due to race-based housing covenants, suburbanization, and the lack of all forms of housing.

The End of the Fort

By the end of 1954, the City of Alexandria had begun the process of purchasing the site of the fortification and land immediately to the north, east, and west of it for the creation of Fort Ward Park (Figures 57 and 58). Much of this land was part of the incomplete Eagle Crest development, and owners, which included George Garrett's daughter (Edith), the Dyes, as well as individual white families who had bought lots, were quick to sell. By August 1955, the City had acquired around seventeen acres, all of which was tied to the Eagle Crest parcel.

Table 11: Fort Ward Land Sales, 1954-1961¹

Name of Owner(s)	Research Are #	Size of Parcel	Date	Price	Acquisition
Eagle Crest—Dye Family	25A & 25B	1 acre	February 9, 1955	?	Sale
Eagle Crest—Edith Garrett	25A & 25B	3 acres	February 10, 1955	?	Sale

⁶⁶⁸ "The Redevelopment Squeeze," *Washington Post* 17 May 1962, A26; "Alexandria Renewal May Begin this Fall," *Washington Post* 17 February 1962, D3; "Housing Plan for Negroes is Approved," *Washington Post* 8 Sept. 1962, C1.

Eagle Crest— Ashton Jones & W. M. Stone ⁴	25A & 25B	1 acre	February 10, 1955	\$5,000	Sale
Eagle Crest—Lt. Colonel W. H. Mercer ⁴	25A & 25B	1 acre	February 10, 1955	\$7,000	Sale
Eagle Crest (Edith Garrett and the Dye Family) ³	24A, 24B, & 31	>11 acres	August 6, 1955	?	Sale
John H. & Ella Peters*	32, 33, & 34	<1 acre	March 5, 1960	?	Sale
Heirs of John Linton Ashby*	30	1.66 acres	March 16, 1961	\$13,798.05	Sale

* Demarcates African American owners.

¹ This chart is based on information in the Davis-Ruffner Papers, deed research in Fairfax County and Alexandria, and reports written by Robert Colton and Elizabeth Drembus.

² Plat-Land Acquisition Map, ca. 1950s; Fort Ward Park Library, Alexandria, Virginia.

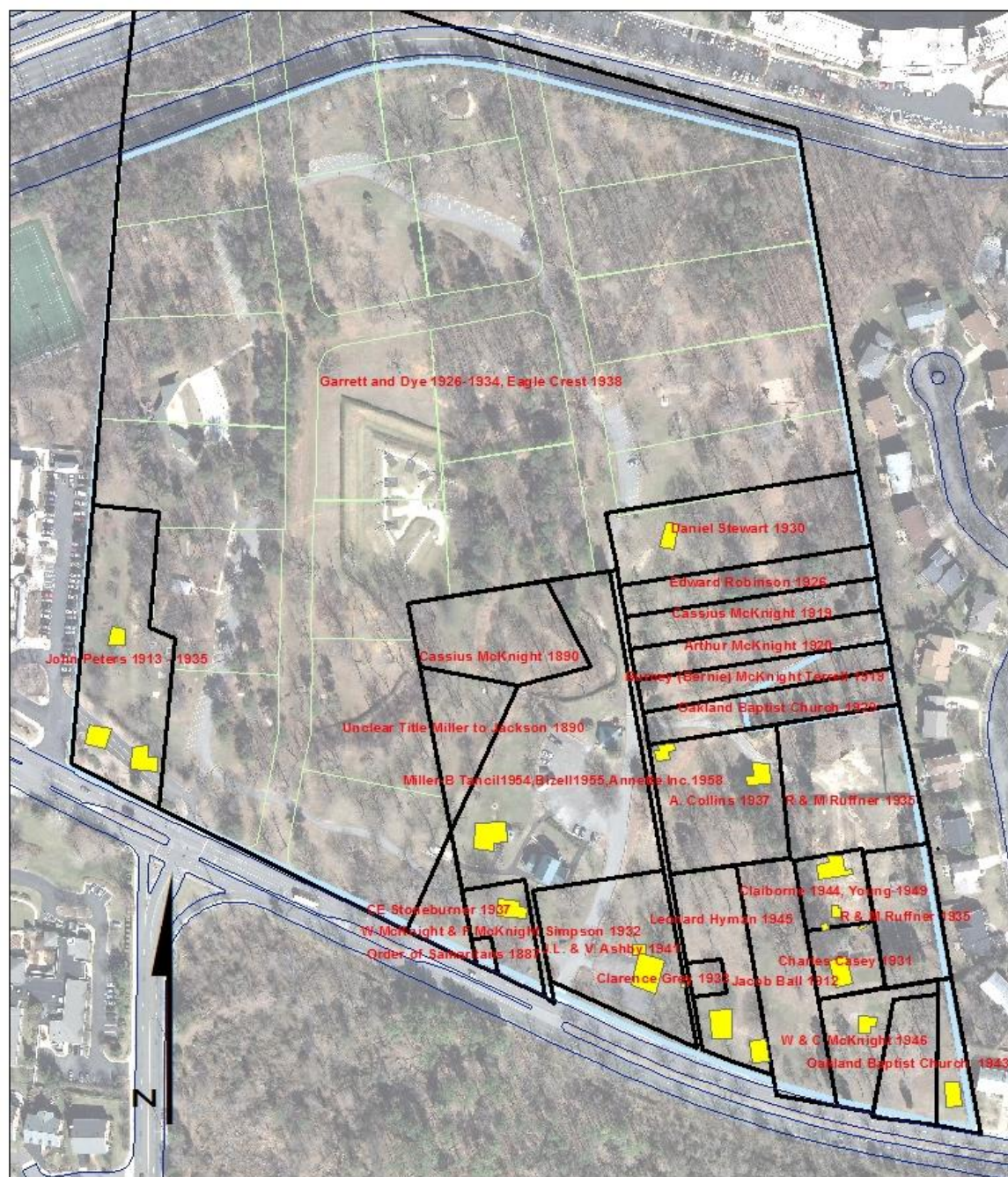
³ City of Alexandria Assessment Map, 1956, Fort Ward Park Library, Alexandria, VA.

⁴ Information on Eagle Crest lots comes from 1954 correspondence from the City's Right of Way Engineer. Leroy E. Peabody, Right of Way Engineer, Department of Public Works, to Ira F. Willard, City Manager, Alexandria, VA, 5 August 1954; Leroy E. Peabody, Right of Way Engineer, Department of Public Works, to Ira F. Willard, City Manager, 9 September 1954; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

Several African American landowners in this portion of what would become the park were not so keen to sell. Since the inception of Fort Ward Park and Museum in the early 1950s, the Alexandria Planning Commission had hoped to purchase John H. Peters' 4.77 acres on the western side of the park site. Peters, however, avoided selling most of this land to the City. Despite the Planning Commission's objections, Alexandria City Council gave Ascension Academy, a Catholic school established in 1958, a permit to build a school on the westernmost parcel of Peters' homestead.⁶⁶⁹ Peters then sold this property, the

⁶⁶⁹ "Synagogue to House School for Catholics," *Washington Post* 25 July 1958, B1; "'Canine Corps in Alexandria to be Enlarged," *Washington Post* 15 January 1960, B1.

In 1983, Ascension Academy joined St. Stephens after facing declining student numbers and increasing debts. St. Stephens would later merge with its sister school and become St. Stephens and St. Agnes in 1991. Michael Martinez, "Alexandria Considers Condemning School Land," *Washington Post* 23 February 1984, VA1.



The Fort Community, 1950s to 1960s

- Structures on 1949 Aerial
- Parcels/Landowners 1949
- Eagle Crest Development Lots
- Fort Ward Boundaries

0 50 100 200 300 400 Feet

Surnames of Families at The Fort
City Directories 1955-1965: Allen, Ashby, Belk, Bethea,
Birch, Cooper, Craven, Faulconer, Frame, Healy (park
superintendent), McKnight, Peters, Randall, Robinson,
Ross, Sims, Wanzer, Young



Office of Historic Alexandria
Alexandria Archaeology

Figure 57. The Fort community in the 1950s and early 1960s. 2014 aerial photograph. Courtesy of Alexandria Archaeology.



The Fort Community, 1950s to 1960s

0 37.5 75 150 225 300 Feet

- Parcels/Landowners 1949
- Eagle Crest Development Lots
- Fort Ward Boundaries

Surnames of Families at The Fort
 City Directories 1955-1965: Allen, Ashby, Belk, Bethea,
 Birch, Cooper, Craven, Faulconer, Frame, Healy (park
 superintendent), McKnight, Peters, Randall, Robinson,
 Ross, Sims, Wanzer, Young



Figure 58. The Fort community in the 1950s and early 1960s. 1949 aerial photograph. Courtesy of Alexandria Archaeology.

majority of his land, to Ascension Academy in March 1960 for \$40,616.⁶⁷⁰ His remaining parcels were sold to the City of Alexandria for Fort Ward Park for an undisclosed amount.

The Ashbys, who owned property east of the southern bastion, were also not interested in selling what had become a family retreat. By the post-World War II era, the family was living in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere, primarily staying at the Fort homestead during the summers and holidays. Two years after John Linton Ashby's death in 1959, his wife, Jennie (Wanzer); daughter, Carlita; nephew, John Linton Jr.; and siblings, Arthur S. and Julia Virginia, sold the family property to the City of Alexandria.⁶⁷¹ Oral histories, however, provide a more complicated history of this transaction than the deeds provide. In her transcribed interview with her daughter, Barbara Ashby Gordon (the daughter of Carlita Alva Ashby) describes her memory of how the City of Alexandria treated her family after the deed was signed:

Fairfax County, Falls Church [NOTE: she means Alexandria, for this was shortly after the City annexed the area] took our house with everything in it. They didn't give us a chance to go and clean it out. They just took it, by decree of whatever. They wanted it for a museum or something. The government made an offer which John [John Linton Ashby Jr.] refused and then they took it.⁶⁷²

Although a deed exists for the sale of the Ashby property, Gordon remembered a much different experience in which the City used its power to claim her family's property. Despite this experience, Gordon and her family have not stopped coming together to honor the Ashbys who lived at the Fort, and every few years holds a family

⁶⁷⁰ "Memo from the Desk of Harry P. Hart," no date; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁷¹ Alexandria Deed Book 530-180, Alexandria Court House, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁷² Barbara Ashby, Gordon, interview with Stephanie Gordon (daughter), transcription, May 25, 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

reunion in Alexandria with the Wanzer family. As eloquently stated by Gordon's daughter, Stephanie, "[w]e were upset with the government's treatment of the families, but did not let the anger keep us from celebrating our heritage at Fort Ward."⁶⁷³

It is important to note that since the mid-1920s, African Americans had been steadily selling their landholdings to whites, who owned a majority of the land at the Fort by the post-World War II era (see Table 12). Some African Americans, however, continued to own property at the Fort, but resided elsewhere where there were more opportunities.

Table 12: Percentage of Land Owned Based on Race and Residency, 1900-1960¹

Date	African American Owners ²	Original White Owners ²	Descendant Non-Resident Owners ⁴	Investor Non-Resident Owners ⁵	Institutional Owners	City of Alexandria
1890	37.65%	62.27%	0%	0%	.08%	0%
1900	72.32%	26.98%	0%	0%	.7%	0%
1910	72.32%	26.98%	0%	0%	.7%	0%
1920	44.72%	0%	27.61%	26.97%	.7%	0%
1930	30.70%	0%	15.78%	51.61%	1.91%	0%
1940	8.55%	0%	19.80%	69.74%	1.91%	0%
1953 ⁶	8.28%	0%	19.80%	69.66%	2.26%	0%
1960	7.67%	0%	8.76%	2.46%	14.81%	66.30%
1970	0%	0%	2.37%	0%	1.18%	96.45%

¹ Robert Colton generated this data for Alexandria Archaeology.

² This percentage includes original and more recent African American families that owned land and lived at the Fort.

³ This percentage includes white families who owned land at the Fort and sold it to Fort residents.

⁶⁷³ Email correspondence between Stephanie Gordon and that author, March 24 and 26, 2014.

⁴ This percentage includes original families or their descendants who owned land at the Fort but were temporarily or permanently not living there. This group consisted of African Americans.

⁵ This percent includes individuals who purchased land from Fort residents for investment and/or development purposes. This group was mostly white with one exception (Alfred Collins).

⁶ The 1950 U.S. Census is not available. This is the year after the Fort was annexed and residents appeared in the City Directory.

Only a few African American families—such as the Peters and Ashbys—remained who both owned property and lived at the Fort by the 1950s and early 1960s. By the end of 1961, Alexandria had purchased about nineteen acres, including the remains of Fort Ward.

Besides the Gadsby's and Mudtown Projects, Fort Ward Park and Museum was the next major urban renewal project to receive federal funds. Until the early 1960s, land acquisition and redevelopment relied on local funds from the City of Alexandria. With the passage of the Housing Act (1961), local governments could apply to the Housing and Home Finance Agency for funds to purchase land for parks and other forms of open space for the first time.⁶⁷⁴ Although Alexandria had already obtained federal funds for Gadsby's and Mudtown, City Council immediately pursued federal monies to purchase the remaining nine acres of land in the southeast corner of the park (which had been part of the original Burr and Harriet Shorts' homestead). This land was estimated to cost \$132,150, of which the Federal government would cover one-fifth.⁶⁷⁵ By September 1963, City Manager, Albert M. Hair Jr. was granted permission to use funds supplied through the Housing and Home Finance Agency to purchase this and other property around Fort Ward, including lands the city had bought in the previous year.⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷⁴ Ashley A. Foard and Hilbert Fefferman, "Federal Urban Renewal Legislation," *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed. James Q. Wilson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966), 93-99.

⁶⁷⁵ "Alexandria Ask Federal Aid for Park," *Washington Post* 31 July 1962, B2.

⁶⁷⁶ Docket Item 23-B, 10 September 1963, City Council Proceedings; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

Unlike the majority of the land procured prior to 1962, the expansion of Fort Ward Park met with many forms of resistance from the remaining owners or residents of the Fort neighborhood, both black and white. Some parcels had multiple owner(s) who had died and left no will. To find possible descendants or to delineate ownership, the City would have to turn to the courts and research family and deed histories (Figure 59). Others who



Figure 59. Aerial Photograph of unidentified home—possibly the Randalls' House—at Fort Ward, ca. 1960s. Courtesy of Adrienne T. Washington.

lived at the Fort or owned land there were not necessarily interested in selling. A handful of African Americans were possibly resistant because of the prejudicial nature of the local housing market, which made it difficult for African Americans to rent or purchase.

Others had a long family history at

the Fort, where their formerly enslaved ancestors were able to purchase land for the first time. In addition to these men and women, were a growing number of whites who saw the Fort as an investment, whether as rental property or the possible site of a suburban development. Eventually, all of these people sold their property to the City.

Richard L. Ruffner, a white lawyer and former mayor of Alexandria, had bought land from Fort families beginning in the 1930s. In a public hearing in January 1962, he convinced the Alexandria Planning Commission to stop any pursuit of his property—and others—for the park. Ruffner explained that he “object[ed] strenuously to my property on

Table 13: Fort Ward Land Sale/Condemnation/Exchange, 1962-1987¹

Name of Owner(s)	Research Area #	Size of Parcel	Date	Price	Acquisition
David and Bertha Schrott	16	.75 acre	August 7, 1962	\$5,000	Sale
Leonard G. and Thelma M. Hyman*	13 & 15	.60018 & .181313 acre	September 15, 1962	\$14,000	Sale
Arthur McKnight*	7	.47 acre	September 25, 1962	\$2,550	Sale
R. L. & Mary E. H. Ruffner	11, 20, 22, & 23	.2437, .36, .5106, & .0115 acre	January 28, 1963	\$25,000	Sale
Alfred & Sarah Collins*	10	1 acre	February 25, 1963	\$8,000	Sale
Heirs of Bernice Terrell*	8A & B	.47 acre	March 28, 1963	\$2,550	Sale
Free Methodist Church of Alexandria	1, 2 & 3	5 acres	December 20, 1962	\$43,500	Sale
Lee T. and Della Gray Young*	17	.25 acre	December 2, 1964	\$15,520	Sale
Willis R. (Jr.) & Rebecca M. McKnight, Charles H. & Edmonia S. McKnight*	21	.3894 acre	October 16, 1964	\$8,700	Sale
Heirs of Cassius and Rachel McKnight*	26	.7517 acre	October 20, 1964	\$2,842.32	Condemnation Proceedings
Ada Casey*	18 & 19	.2118 & .03455 acre	August 18, 1965	\$9,000	Sale
E. Joel Treger, Executor of Will for Amanda McKnight Grey*	14	3.1 acres	May 22, 1968	Unknown	Sale
Trustees of Oakland Baptist Church* and City of Alexandria	8B & 9A	.23 acre	June 9, 1969	None	Land Exchange
Annette, Inc.	4	4.2 acres	July 17, 1969	\$14,392.40	Condemnation Proceedings
Annette, Inc., Edith B. Garrett, Estate of Bertha Tancil*, Charles Stoneburner, & Heirs of Robert M. Jackson*	27, 29, & 35	4.93 acres	September 23, 1969	Garrett/Attorney: \$600; Estate of Bertha Tancil/Attorneys: \$2,093 Stoneburner/Attorney: \$1,709.42 (50% of Area 35) Annette, Inc./Attorneys: \$45,170.28 (area 4, 27, & 29) Heirs of Robert M. Jackson:	Condemnation Proceedings

				\$1,709.42 for 50% of area 35	
Heirs of Cassius and Rachel McKnight*	6	.47 acre	April 14, 1970	\$5,610	Condemnation Proceedings
Heirs of Edward M. Robinson*	5	.47 acre	August 17, 1970	Heirs of William W. Robinson (son): \$1,204.08; Heirs of Maybelle V. Robinson Smith: \$1,204.08	Condemnation Proceedings
Trustees of St. Mathew's Lodge, #220 Independent Order of Good Samaritans and Daughters of Samaria*	28	.0344 acre	1987	None	Consolidation/ Adverse Possession
Diocesan Missionary Society of Virginia	12	.00115 acre	1987	None	Consolidation/ Adverse Possession

* Demarcates African American owners.

¹ This chart is based on information in the Davis-Ruffner Papers, deed research conducted in Fairfax County and the City of Alexandria, and reports written by Robert Colton and Elizabeth Drembus.

Braddock Road being planned as a park” because he wanted to “develop single-family houses in the future.” The Planning Commission responded that there was not enough money to purchase his land anyways (although the federal funds provided within the year would help).⁶⁷⁷ He eventually sold about an acre to the City in January 1963, receiving a handsome sum of \$25,000. The rest of his estate would become a housing development, known as Marlboro Estates, in the 1970s.

Sergeant Lee T. Young and his family also had no interest in selling their home at the Fort and felt the City of Alexandria was offering too low of an appraisal price (Figure 60). Possibly because of Young’s resistance, the City Attorney, William S. Banks, appears to have discussed the possibility of some kind of condemnation proceedings although he never

⁶⁷⁷ *To Serve 165,000* [Master Plan] (Alexandria, VA: Office of Planning and Urban Renewal, 1963), 4.

formally authorized it.⁶⁷⁸ In fall 1964, Young hired attorney Armistead L. Boothe, a former delegate to the Virginia General Assembly and an advocate for Civil Rights, to conduct a private appraisal and represent his family's interests with the City. Alexandria, which



Figure 60. Aerial Photograph of Sgt. Young's home, ca. 1960s. Courtesy of Tom Fulton.

appraised the property at \$9,740, was \$5,510 lower than the appraisal given by the person hired by Boothe. The City agreed to the higher price, and Young mailed his keys directly to Alexandria's City Attorney a few months after the home had been destroyed.⁶⁷⁹ With the sale of his home at the Fort, the Youngs moved to Woods Place, a neighborhood—as noted earlier—initially constructed to house African Americans displaced by the construction of T. C. Williams High School. In an oral history, Young said that he liked his new home at Woods Place because it had “good facilities” and was a “nice house.”⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁸ Armistead L. Boothe, attorney-at-law, to William S. Banks, City Attorney, November 30, 1964; Davis-Ruffner Files, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁷⁹ Armistead L. Boothe, attorney-at-law, to William S. Banks, City Attorney, November 30, 1964; William S. Banks, City Attorney, to Claude Wolford, Public Works, Alexandria, VA, April 19, 1965; Davis-Ruffner Files, Alexandria, VA; Alexandria Deed Book 615-90, Alexandria Circuit Court's Research Room, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁸⁰ Sergeant Lee Thomas Young, interview by Pamela Cressey, transcription, 7 March 2009, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

In other instances, residents fought the City's requests to sell their property until the last possible moment. The City of Alexandria repeatedly tried to buy Ada (Adams) Casey's property at the Fort. Casey never lived at the Fort, but was living at Macedonia/Seminary along the north side of King Street and was in the midst of losing a portion of her land to the widening of Kenwood Avenue.⁶⁸¹ The home at the Fort, which had once been her brother's, Charles Casey, was rented to her daughter, Maydell Casey Belk, and her family. Joyce (Casey) Sanchez recalled hiring an African American lawyer named J. Clarence Young from Alexandria to assist with the assessment and sale of her uncle's former home. He obtained an additional \$2,000 for the property.⁶⁸² City documents point to a different attorney representing the Caseys—Armistead Boothe; however, it is possible that Alexandria had hired Boothe to facilitate the Casey sale. In 1965, a letter from the City's Right of Way Agent mentioned Boothe in a letter threatening condemnation to obtain Casey's property:

Since January the 3rd, 1962, I have been in negotiation with you for the Purchase of Parcels 3953-12 and 13 for Fort Ward Park. I have had this property appraised several times and have submitted the appraisal prices to you which you would not accept. Your attorney Mr. Armistead Boothe had your property appraised and I agreed to accept his appraisal but you would not accept your own appraisal and Mr. Boothe withdrew from the case.

I have offered you four hundred dollars more than your appraiser price on the property making a total of \$9,000.00. If this offer is not accepted by you



Figure 61. Maydell Casey Belk, ca. 1980's. Courtesy of Joyce C. Sanchez.

⁶⁸¹ *Hill's Alexandria City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co. Inc., 1959, 112). 112.

⁶⁸² Joyce (Casey) Sanchez, "Finding the Fort Review," email attachment, March 27, 2014.

within 10 days from the date of this letter I will be compelled to request City Council to authorize the City Attorney to file condemnation proceedings in the local Court. This is our final offer.⁶⁸³

In an interview with Patricia Knock in the early 1990s, Belk also recalled that her mother refused to sell her house and land to the City of Alexandria. She stated: “the city told her [mother] that if she didn’t sell it she would lose out because they were going to condemn the houses because they didn’t have any bathrooms, no running water and stuff, so that is when she gave in.”⁶⁸⁴ By threatening to condemn her home under the guidelines laid out in the Minimum House-Hygiene Ordinance, Ada Casey was forced into selling; however, she fought Alexandria for a better price and won. A couple of months after receiving the above letter, Ada Casey finally sold her property to the City.

The involvement of federal funds in the procurement of lands for Fort Ward Park required the City to help find housing for all those displaced. Some individuals, like the Caseys and Youngs, were able to purchase a home with a federally subsidized loan at Woods Place or Woods Avenue. Those without enough funds or who were renters at the Fort were either placed into public housing or could find their own housing through the private market. At least for one family of renters, this meant moving to Fairfax County. James and Matilda/Malinda Bethea, who had rented several different homes at the Fort from 1935 (if not earlier), were facing eviction by fall 1962. Because of the federal monies involved in the second phase of the park project, the City Manager, Albert M. Hair Jr., wrote to the Executive Director of ARHA, John Kerr, about the Betheas, noting that “every effort

⁶⁸³ C. H. Wolford, Right of Way Agent, to Ada Casey, Alexandria, VA, June 15, 1965; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁸⁴ Maydell Casey Belk, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, 6 June 1994, Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

can be made to rehouse this couple.”⁶⁸⁵ By February 1963, the Betheas still had not moved out of their home. In a letter to James Bethea, the Director of General Services explained that “the City has the right to request your vacation of the property without further notice” as it had already given the Betheas an extension to stay in the house.⁶⁸⁶ No letters from the Betheas in response to city demands appear in the archives; by 1964, the Betheas moved to Quander Road in Fairfax County just a mile to the south of the City of Alexandria.⁶⁸⁷

Several other properties were tied up in the courts in condemnation proceedings, also known as eminent domain, because there was no clear chain of title. One of the first properties in this situation was Cassius and Rachel (Wormley) McKnight’s land that contained the east bastion of the fort. The McKnights died intestate and had no living children. Thus, the courts conducted extensive genealogical work to discover possible heirs. For Cassius McKnight, the court decided to split ½ of the proceeds among the descendants of his five sisters and two brothers. For Rachel (Wormsley) McKnight, they split the monies between her maternal aunt’s descendants, of which there were twenty-nine. The process of mapping out their family began in 1958 and took five years to complete. The City did not acquire this parcel until 1964.⁶⁸⁸

The purchase of two plots of land owned by the descendants of Edward M. Robinson and Cassius McKnight—original parcels in the Harriet (McKnight) Shorts subdivision based

⁶⁸⁵ Albert M. Hair, Jr., City Manager, Alexandria, VA, to John Kerr, Executive Director, ARHA, 18 October 1962; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁸⁶ Eugene L. Barnwell, Director of General Services, Alexandria, VA to James Bethea, Alexandria, Va. 6 February 1963; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁸⁷ *Hill’s Alexandria City Directory* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co. Inc., 1964), 50.

⁶⁸⁸ *City of Alexandria v. Cassius McKnight and Rachel McKnight*, (Chancery No. 9809), Alexandria Circuit Court Research Room, Alexandria, VA.

on her 1919 will—faced a similar delay. As with Cassius and Rachel McKnight’s other parcel, the City turned again to the courts to disaggregate Robinson’s heirs and then to use eminent domain to purchase the land. On March 26, 1968, City Council passed a resolution to condemn these properties in order to discover their proper owners and put aside \$10,200 total to pay for the two 0.47 acre lots. In response to the condemnation proceedings, some of the McKnight heirs contacted Armistead L. Boothe to assure the property was properly appraised.⁶⁸⁹ By August 1968, Alexandria found twenty-three descendants of the McKnights who could have some claim to the property; Robinson had far fewer descendants—four, whose whereabouts were known, and two whose were unknown. Some of the McKnights and Robinsons still lived in northern Virginia, while others lived as far away as New Haven, Connecticut and Amityville, New York.⁶⁹⁰ Two years later, the courts issued deeds for both properties and transferred the land to the City of Alexandria once it had deposited money for the heirs. Citizen commissioners were also appointed to assess the land, making sure that the City paid the fair market price. Their findings led to an increase in the money paid for both lots, from \$5,100 to \$5,610. Robinson’s four known heirs received payment in 1971, with \$2,408.15 being deposited with the General Receiver of the Corporation Court of Alexandria for the two heirs whose

⁶⁸⁹ Armistead L. Boothe, to Dayton Cook, Deputy Director of Public Works, 2 May 1968; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

For more on Boothe’s political activism and fight against segregation, see Douglas Smith, “When Reason Collides with Prejudice’: Armistead Lloyd Boothe and the Politics of Desegregation in Virginia, 1948-1963,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 102.1 (Jan. 1994): 5-46.

⁶⁹⁰ E. W. Ruyle, Right of Way Agent, Alexandria, VA, to Harry P. Hart, Attorney-at-Law, Alexandria, Va., 19 August 1968; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

whereabouts were unknown. Two years later, monies were dispersed among Cassius McKnight's numerous nieces and nephews.⁶⁹¹

Numerous parties claimed two other lots at the Fort, which required Alexandria to turn to the courts again to disaggregate who owned what through condemnation proceedings. For developers, the land was seen as a key part of Fort Ward Park and Museum, containing 4.2 acres, which included the location of the proposed museum and a museum caretaker's cottage. The inability of the City to quickly obtain these lots also impacted the reconstruction of the Northwest Bastion.⁶⁹² One lot was empty with no street access; however, the other lot included a "one-and-a half story brick house 20 x 26 and a one story extension 20 x 29," which was described as being in "poor condition" and in violation of the Minimum House-Hygiene Ordinance.⁶⁹³ In a memorandum dated September 20, 1962, Eugene L. Barnwell, the General Services Director for the City of Alexandria, explained that the Health Department's Environmental Division had contacted Max and Benjamin London, who were believed to own the brick house, for violations:

One of the violations is inadequate and contaminated water supply. When it became evident that the City wished to acquire the property Mr. V. Floyd Williams, City Attorney, recommended that the enforcement procedures be commenced again. This was suggested in order to keep the City from paying a higher price for the property.⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹¹ Robert Colton, "'Fort Ward Research Area 5,' and 'Fort Ward Research Area 6,' 2012; Alexandria Archaeology, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁹² Eugene L. Barnwell, General Services Director, "Memorandum 'Resume' of Actions in Re Fort Ward Park Development," to P.B. Hall, Acting City Manager, 8 June 1962; P. B. Hall, Director of Public Works, to Albert M. Hair, City Manager, 23 July 1969; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁹³ Robert L. Kane, Real Estate Appraiser, to Phillip B. Hall, Public Works, Alexandria, VA, 17 August 1962; Memorandum, Eugene L. Barnwell, General Services Director, to Albert M. Hair, Jr., City Manager, Alexandria, VA, 20 September 1962; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁹⁴ Memorandum, Eugene L. Barnwell, General Services Director, to Albert M. Hair, Jr., City Manager, Alexandria, VA, 20 September 1962; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

Barnwell believed that the Health Department needed to visit the property and “that every measure should be taken to have the present occupants removed. Mr. [V. Floyd] Williams [City Attorney] indicates that the case will not be introduced into court for some time, therefore, the continued occupancy of the property will serve as a deterrent [sp.] to the progress of park development.”⁶⁹⁵

Prior to the City’s 1962 internal correspondence related to the Minimum House-Hygiene Ordinance, Max London—who had purchased this land from Shirley and Anthony Bizel in 1958—had offered to sell these lots for \$37,000 to the City of Alexandria. The City said “no,” as it had already appraised the land for \$22,250.⁶⁹⁶ To complicate matters further, the London brothers only owned part of the property.⁶⁹⁷ Edith Garrett, whose father, George Garrett, had tried to establish Eagle Crest on the remains of Fort Ward, explained to the court that she had an interest in the property. In 1969, she settled her claim with Annette, Inc. so that Alexandria could then purchase the land directly from the London brothers. Charles Stoneburner, who was from Washington, Virginia, had also purchased two partial shares in Robert M. Jackson’s 0.2397 acre in the late 1930s, which was part of this parcel. He and the Jackson heirs split part of the proceeds from the sale to

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁶ Max London had reportedly not paid taxes on the property for several years and had been using the land to locate several trusts in his name along with the company he owned with his brother, Benjamin, known as Annette, Inc. Alexandria Deed Book 482-347 and Alexandria Deed Book 482-349; Chancery No. 11427; Alexandria Circuit Court Research Room, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁹⁷ In 1962, Maude S. Stewart, wife of Daniel B. Stewart, Jr. and daughter-in-law to Daniel and Kate (McKnight) Stewart, wrote a letter claiming that her name was forged on a 1954 deed to a Shirley Bizel. Four years later, Bizel sold land to the London brothers. The Special Commissioners to the Court did not recognize Maude S. Stewart’s claim. Maude S. Stewart, Washington, D.C., to Davis and Ruffner Attorneys, Alexandria, VA, November 30, 1962; Chancery Case 11427, Alexandria Circuit Court Records, Alexandria, VA; C. H. Wolford, Right-of-Way Engineer, to P. B. Hall, Director of Public Works, 3 November 1960; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA; Davis-Ruffner Files, #741-8100-2 through -4, 35; City Clerk’s Office, Alexandria, Virginia; Transcription by Elizabeth B. Drembus, Fort Ward History Working Group; Robert Colton, “Fort Ward Research Area 4, 27, and 29,” 2012; Alexandria Archaeology, Alexandria, VA.

the City. Bertha Tancil and, later her estate, also claimed partial ownership of her parent's (John and Lavinia (McKnight) Miller) land, of which she was the sole owner after she had bought out her nephews' portion of the property in 1954. The entire transaction was finally completed on September 23, 1969, and the City incorporated the land into the park.⁶⁹⁸

In 1987, the City consolidated all of the parcels purchased starting in the 1950s through the early 1970s for the creation of Fort Ward Park. The plat accompanying the deed of consolidation indicates five properties taken by adverse possession.⁶⁹⁹ There is no explanation for the title issues for these properties in the consolidation deed, but as indicated in the Tables 11 and 13, research has shown that four of them were sold to the City. However, researchers have not discovered a deed transferring one small parcel on Braddock Road to the City. In 1887, John A. Miller sold this property to the St. Mathews Lodge Number 220, Independent Order of Samaritans and Daughters of Samaria.⁷⁰⁰ No record has been found to indicate how this property was used before being included in the Fort Ward Park deed of consolidation.

The presence of known graves and cemeteries located throughout the Fort neighborhood presented issues to the City of Alexandria as they purchased land and planned for development of the park. A 1962 site plan of the landscape and existing park conditions generated by the City Department of Public Works shows two cemeteries on the

⁶⁹⁸ Chancery Case 11327, *City of Alexandria, v. Annette Inc. et al.* (1969); Robert Colton, "Fort Ward Research Area 4," "Fort Ward Research Area 27," "Fort Ward Research Area 29," "Fort Ward Research Area 35," 2012; Alexandria Archaeology, Alexandria, VA.

⁶⁹⁹ Fairfax County Deed Books 1216:388-393, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

⁷⁰⁰ Fairfax County Deed Books F-5:608, Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

Fort Ward Park property—Jackson Cemetery west of the fort and the “Old Grave Yard” to the east of the entry road.⁷⁰¹ Archaeological excavations in 2010 and 2012 have indicated that both of these cemeteries are larger than depicted on the 1962 plan. A third burial area included the marked grave of Clara Adams, who was possibly interred next to her husband, Robert, whose grave has no headstone.

Because of state regulations pertaining to burial sites, these and other possible burial areas were of particular legal concern as land for the park was purchased and development planned. These laws focused primarily on disinterment. In 1919, the Virginia Assembly had passed a law giving counties and cities permission to obtain burial grounds through eminent domain if they were abandoned, unused, or neglected by owners. The county or city could choose to maintain the graveyard or remove the bodies “to some repository used and maintained as a cemetery.”⁷⁰² Alexandria, however, did not use eminent domain to claim this property, but purchased it from the owners or their descendants. By the late 1940s, additional legislation was passed regarding cemeteries. “If a person or entity was planning to sell land in which a graveyard was located and none of the descendants of those buried there could lay claim to it, then the owner could file a bill in equity in circuit or corporation court and have the graves disinterred and moved to another location.”⁷⁰³ Under this law, the sellers were the ones responsible to descendants, but only if they wanted to disinter the bodies. In 1950, the law was expanded again to make it a crime for the following:

⁷⁰¹ Contour Map of Fort Ward Park, Department of Public Works, Alexandria, Virginia, 2-2-62, File No. 251-6, Transportation and Environmental Services Department/Engineering, Alexandria, VA.

⁷⁰² Virginia Code 1919, sec. 57-36.

⁷⁰³ Virginia Code 1946, sec. 58a.

[a]ny person who willfully or maliciously destroys, mutilates, defaces, injures or removes any object or structure permanently attached or affixed within any church or on church property, any tomb monument, gravestone, or other structure placed within any cemetery, graveyard, or place of burial, or within any lot belonging to any memorial or monumental association, or any fence, railing, or other work for the protection or ornament of any tomb, monument, gravestone, or other structure aforesaid, or of any cemetery lot within any cemetery is guilty of a Class 6 felony.⁷⁰⁴

This legislation, however, did not clarify how it was related to the other laws on cemeteries or how it was applied to land owned by private individuals or local and county governments, as was the case on the Fort Ward property. It only focused on church-owned properties.

Questions surrounding the cemeteries and the park first arose with Jackson Cemetery, which was part of the Eagle Crest development and originally situated on James Jackson's property. One border of the cemetery on Jackson's land was documented in a survey conducted of Walter Craven's adjacent property in 1913, recorded in 1921. The burial ground also appears in several deeds recorded in the 1920s prior to its sale to George E. Garrett, one of the developers of Eagle Crest.⁷⁰⁵

Archaeological investigations point to at least 20 burials on Jackson's property, although the area has not been fully excavated. Oral histories and a 1925 chancery case mention many people, besides members of the Jackson family, who were buried in the cemetery. This list includes Arthur and Lee Henry; Carlyle and Kate Adams; members of the

⁷⁰⁴ Virginia Code 1950, 18.1-244; 1960, c. 358.

⁷⁰⁵ Fairfax County Deeds Y-8-431, K-9-573; P-9-67; G-10-539-541; J-10-555; Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

Glascoe family; a daughter of John Wesley Casey (possibly Annie (d. 1914) or Mary (d. 1920)); and William Carpenter, who had formally bought plots from Jackson.⁷⁰⁶

The Jackson Cemetery was situated on the glacis of Fort Ward, one of the man-made earthen features of the fortification. Based on a 1960 memorandum, Park planners wanted to remove burials because they believed they were not relevant to the Civil War era and Fort Ward. In a letter dated October 7, 1960, the City Manager, E. G. Heatwole, requested information from the City Attorney, V. Floyd Williams, about removing graves from the Fort Ward Park site.

Mr. P. B. Hall, Public Works Director, reports that there are several graves located within the Fort site. It is not believed that they have any relationship with activities of Fort Ward during 1861-1865. Also it is questioned as to whether there are bodies still buried there.

If possible, we would like to have the area cleared. Would you please advise me as to what action should be taken by the City to accomplish this? ⁷⁰⁷

The response to Heatwole's request of the City Attorney is not known.

Edmonia McKnight's oral history points to the removal of remains from the "Old Jackson Cemetery," which reportedly no longer had headstones, by the early 1960s. She stated: "[o]nly thing I tell you they called it the old Jackson Cemetery. But when they started to building Fort Ward, they exhumed... All the bodies out." When asked where they were moved to, McKnight responded that she did not know.⁷⁰⁸ Elizabeth (Henry) Douglas,

⁷⁰⁶ *James Jackson and Anna Jackson v. Shadrach et al.* (1925), Fairfax County Circuit Court's Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA; Elizabeth Douglas, interview with Frances Terrell and Glen Eugster (Fort Ward and Seminary African American Descendant's Society), ca. 2012; as cited in Francine Bromberg, "Cemeteries and Graves in Fort Ward Park: A Summary of the Archaeological Investigations in 2010 and 2012" [DRAFT] (Alexandria, VA: Alexandria Archaeology, 2013).

⁷⁰⁷ E. G. Heatwole, City Manager, Alexandria, VA, to V. Floyd Williams, City Attorney, 7 October 1960; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

⁷⁰⁸ Edmonia Smith McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, June 2, 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

who had an intense personal connection to the Jackson Cemetery because two of her brothers were buried there, never mentioned disinterment, but recalled the removal of headstones in the early 1970s—much later than McKnight’s oral history. When she went to the City government to find out what happened, it took her three visits to get a response. An unnamed city employee reportedly stated that “what they didn’t throw away, they sold.”⁷⁰⁹ Archaeological investigations do not indicate the disinterment of any burials from the Jackson Cemetery, but given Elizabeth Douglas’s testimony, it is almost certain that gravestones were removed from this site.

The eastern side of Fort Ward Park also contained known and possible burial areas.⁷¹⁰ Several gravestones still remain in the “Old Grave Yard,” the name for which comes from land deeds. It was on land originally owned by Burr and Harriet (McKnight) Shorts that was then willed to Amanda Clarke. This cemetery dates from at least 1897, the date of Cornelia Spence’s death, which is listed on her headstone. While the deed identifies the western edge of the “Old Grave Yard” as the west line of a parcel of land that comprised the northeast corner of Clarke’s holdings at The Fort, archaeological excavations indicate that it extended into a parcel farther west that Clarke sold to Wallace and Cynthia Smith in 1930, who then sold the land to the well-known African American lawyer, Alfred Collins. Clarke’s estate sold the lot that contained the majority of the cemetery to Richard L. and

⁷⁰⁹ Elizabeth Douglas, interview with Frances Terrell and Glen Eugster (Fort Ward and Seminary African American Descendant’s Society), ca. 2012.

⁷¹⁰ Armistead Boothe asked about the status of some graves in 1968 in a letter related to the Robinson and McKnight condemnation proceedings to find their heirs, and these areas remain possible burial places for future park management purposes. Armistead L. Boothe, to Dayton Cook, Deputy Director of Public Works, 2 May 1968; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

Mary Ruffner in 1937.⁷¹¹ Both Collins and Ruffner held onto these parcels until they sold them to the City of Alexandria in 1963 (see Table 13).⁷¹²

Archaeological investigations identified the locations of 17 burials in the “Old Grave Yard.”⁷¹³ It is possible that grading had removed most of one possible burial; only a piece of possible coffin wood remained. The excavation indicated rows of graves with an unusual orientation, heads toward the northwest and feet toward the southeast, rather than the traditional east-west orientation for Christian burials. It is probable that this distinctive section in Amanda Clarke’s lot is what was thought of as the “Old Grave Yard.”

It is noteworthy that the deed identifies only the western border of the “Old Grave Yard,” and archaeological investigations have identified locations of four additional graves in other sections of the northeast corner of Clarke’s original inheritance. These graves have the more traditional east-west orientation and are not contiguous with the “Old Grave Yard.” Two of the graves discovered are situated in a location mentioned in Amanda Clarke’s 1923 will in which she requested that she be “buried in the corner next to Clara Adams Line in the little grove on my property, located on Seminary Hill, in Fairfax County, Virginia.”⁷¹⁴ This grove appears in aerial photos from 1927, matching Clarke’s description.⁷¹⁵

⁷¹¹ Fairfax County Will Book 6-391; Fairfax County Deed Book N-8-404; V-10-142; 286-479; Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

⁷¹² Some descendants of the Fort and Macedonia/Seminary community and members of the Oakland Baptist Church believe that those buried here may have been members of their church and would like to see this area incorporated into the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery. Email correspondence with Frances Terrell, 1 June 2014.

⁷¹³ Bromberg, “Cemeteries and Graves in Fort Ward Park [DRAFT].

⁷¹⁴ Fairfax County Will Book 14-458, Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

⁷¹⁵ Bromberg, “Cemeteries and Graves in Fort Ward Park [DRAFT].

Archaeologists also found two additional graves on this lot in line with the gravesites of Clara Adams and her husband, Robert. These latter burials are situated on the property that Harriet Shorts sold to her daughter in 1898.⁷¹⁶ The row of four graves straddles the property line, with two burials on one side and two on the other, perhaps a grouping of family members. Thus, while Robert and Clara were buried in a far corner of property that they originally owned, their gravesites are contiguous with at least two others in the Amanda Clarke lot.

Oral histories give additional information on the “Old Grave Yard” and other burials on the eastern side of Fort Ward Park. Elizabeth Douglas’ interview focused at length on the headstone of Virginia Fitzhugh in the “Old Grave Yard:”

P.K.: I know last time we were here we talked about the tombstone down at Fort Ward that said, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Could you tell me about that?

Elizabeth Douglas: I used to cry. Oh, yes. [Pause] “Well done, my good and faithful servant, Virginia.”

P.K.: Virginia!

Elizabeth Douglas: Virginia. Well, I’ll tell you we were going to school up there and we would take our lunch. Time for lunch, we would go down there. We would set there and we would cry. I would cry over and cry over. I wondered why the Lord, if she was so faithful, why did the Lord put her down in that hole down in there and put dirt on her? But we, at the time, being small, we did not realize that she wasn’t there. It was only the old house she used to live in was there.⁷¹⁷

Douglas was too young to have known Virginia Fitzhugh, who died in 1917, but her gravestone was meaningful to her as a child.

⁷¹⁶ Fairfax County Deed Book B-6-512; Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

⁷¹⁷ Elizabeth Douglas, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

Joseph John Moraski, who grew up nearby, recalled in an oral history the presence of wooden headstones that “were encapsulated in what looked like was galvanized metal” among the vines and trees, near a gate between a wooded area of the Fort neighborhood and Richard L. Ruffner’s land. Moraski might have been describing where Clarke and other(s) were buried.⁷¹⁸

Sergeant Lee Thomas Young described graves in the woods behind his home, which had been a schoolhouse and St. Cyprian’s Episcopal Chapel. “We knew someone was there because they had... a little old headpiece, washed out, and the weather wears that down” but that they were “old and no one knew who they were.” In another interview, he noted that there were “plenty of graves here, 18 and 17... little short ones behind his home in the woods.”⁷¹⁹ These were possibly located in the Amanda Clarke lot.

Charles McKnight, who was Clara and Robert Adams’ nephew, and his wife, Edmonia McKnight, recalled in oral histories the location of Clara and Robert’s burials behind the “old Seminary school” building. Sergeant Lee Thomas Young also remembered giving permission to Clara Adams’ kin to have her buried on what they thought was his land (NOTE: Richard L. Ruffner actually owned the property).⁷²⁰ Robert Adams did not have a

⁷¹⁸ Preliminary archaeological research points to at least two burials in the area, one of which is probably for Amanda Clarke and the other for someone unknown. Joseph John Moraski, interview by Pamela Cressey et al., transcription, July 16, 2009; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁷¹⁹ Sergeant Lee Thomas Young, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, November 19, 1996; Sergeant Lee Thomas Young, interview by Pamela Cressey, transcription, March 7, 2009; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

⁷²⁰ Edmonia McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock, transcription, June 2, 1994; Charles McKnight, interview by Patricia Knock et al., transcription, March 28, 1992; Sergeant Lee Thomas Young, interview by Pamela Cressey, transcription, 7 March 2009; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

grave marker; however, Clara Adams did. It still stands today and reads: “Clara W. Adams; June 2, 1865; Feb. 1, 1952; A Tender Aunt and a Faithful Friend.”⁷²¹

Finally, Oakland Baptist Church’s cemetery, which was established in the 1920s, is surrounded by the park on three sides. The City of Alexandria and Oakland Baptist Church exchanged ½ of 0.47 acres of land in 1969, with Oakland trading a portion of the land originally deeded by the Javins for a portion of land the City bought in 1963 from heirs of Bernice Terrell.⁷²² Its members used the cemetery through the 1990s.

As the City of Alexandria moves forward with new plans for Fort Ward Park, preservation and interpretation of these and other possible burial sites remains paramount. Although some gravestones have undoubtedly been removed, archaeological investigations indicate that bodies of the deceased still lay under the ground at the Park, their initial grave shafts still intact.⁷²³ How will the recently identified grave locations be marked? How will the burial areas be demarcated? How much more archaeological investigation is needed? These are the questions that need to be answered to restore dignity and respect to the individuals who lived, worked, and are laid to rest in Fort Ward Park.

Chapter 3 Conclusion:

In the post-World War II era, urban renewal combined with historic preservation negatively impacted Alexandria’s African American community, including the remaining African American residents and landowners at the Fort. The creation of Fort Ward Historic

⁷²¹ Preliminary archaeological investigations point to at least four graves in this vicinity. Francine Bromberg, “Cemeteries and Graves in Fort Ward Park: A Summary of the Archaeological Investigations in 2010 and 2012” [DRAFT] (Alexandria, VA: Alexandria Archaeology, 2013).

⁷²² Alexandria Deed Book 578-213, 698-98; Alexandria Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Alexandria, VA; Fairfax Deed Book I 13-515, Fairfax County Circuit Court’s Historical Records Room, Fairfax, VA.

⁷²³ Francine Bromberg, “Cemeteries and Graves in Fort Ward Park: A Summary of the Archaeological Investigations in 2010 and 2012” [DRAFT] (Alexandria, VA: Alexandria Archaeology, 2013).

Park and Museum, as well as an updated commercial corridor along King Street and a new high school at Macedonia/Seminary, were all part of the City's quest to create a modern, suburban environment. There were costs, however, and African Americans, along with a handful of whites, faced the brunt of them.

By this time, the majority of Fort landowners were not African Americans; however, those African Americans who still lived and/or owned land at the Fort faced a very different reality in comparison to whites at the time. For African Americans, purchasing or renting a home was a difficult proposition because of Alexandria's hyper-segregated and inflated housing market. Many of these men and women also felt harassed by the City. A 1966 report by the City's Office of Urban Renewal celebrated the removal of "11 substandard units" with the construction of Fort Ward Park and Museum, which reportedly removed almost all blight in the area.⁷²⁴ Thus, the Fort's former residents and landowners dispersed, with some leaving Alexandria altogether. Others, however, were able to stay and continued to live nearby in the Seminary neighborhood off of Quaker Lane.

Despite conflict with City government, a handful of African Americans partially used the system against itself. Individuals, such as Sergeant Lee T. Young, were able to hire a lawyer, who fought for a higher appraisal of their property and won. Other descendants—long removed from the Fort—received monetary compensation for vacated property through the courts. And, through pressure from Civil Rights organizations and the federal government, homes were made available at Woods Place and Woods Avenue, which were originally part of the Mudtown Urban Renewal Project. The construction of these homes,

⁷²⁴ *Neighborhood Analysis*, 48.

however, was still not the Fair Housing that Melvin Miller and other Civil Rights activists were fighting for in the 1950s and 1960s.

What stood in the Fort's place was Fort Ward Historic Park and Museum, a monument to the Union occupation of northern Virginia and the Defenses of Washington. The creation of the Park was an uneasy reconciliation between the North and South, a common practice of memorialization throughout the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, in which whites celebrated the day-to-day lives of soldiers without any discussion of African American history during the Civil War. Ironically, the establishment of Fort Ward Park displaced the descendants of the very people whose lives were inextricably changed by the Civil War. In a city struggling to unravel the effects of Jim Crow segregation, the creation of Fort Ward Park and Museum on the site of an African American neighborhood represents many of the core contradictions faced by Alexandria and American society by the mid-twentieth century.

Conclusion

Sitting beside her cousin who had also recalled her memories about the Fort neighborhood, Barbara Ashby Gordon articulated what she felt the City of Alexandria should have done when it established Fort Ward Historic Park and Museum to commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary of the Civil War. “Alexandria should have preserved some of that area as a salute, if nothing else, to the former slaves who once lived there.”⁷²⁵ For former slaves, free blacks, and their descendants at the Fort, the Civil War was a major turning point transforming their lives in every possible way. Yet, the City of Alexandria—like other southern municipalities—chose not to recognize African Americans’ connection to the war. Instead, they focused on white soldiers and great military leaders, both Union and Confederate, glossing over how the war put in motion the end of slavery.

For most white government officials, historians, and archaeologists during the immediate post-World War II period, discussions of slavery and the outcome of the war were never even considered as subjects for study and research, perhaps because they would only have highlighted the problems the country was currently facing. During the Cold War, politics celebrated the United States as the beacon of “freedom” (in contrast to the Soviet Union) and condemned any form of dissent that criticized this triumphant image of the past. Alexandria, too, tried to portray itself in a celebratory manner, which impacted Fort Ward Park and Museum. The city focused on George Washington, who lived nearby and visited the city frequently, and Robert E. Lee, whose family had a long history in the

⁷²⁵ Dorothy Hall Smith and Barbara Ashby Gordon, interview with Patricia Knock, transcription, 25 May 1994; Office of Historic Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

In the fight to save Mudtown from demolition during the early 1960s, local residents also told a reporter for the *Washington Post* that “their families had occupied [this site] since Civil War days.” “Compromise on Mudtown is Proposed,” *Washington Post* 16 Nov. 1960, B1.

region. Discussions of their slaves or their attitudes towards slavery were limited or nonexistent in Alexandria's historical self-representation. African Americans, then and now, were well aware that they, too, had a history worthy of being recounted and memorialized.⁷²⁶

At Fort Ward Historic Park and Museum, the exhibits made no mention of the presence of African Americans and the Fort neighborhood. Edward McM. Larrabee, the contracted archaeologist who excavated only the northwest bastion of the fort to evaluate it prior to reconstruction, only commented on the lack of artifacts and the relative undisturbed nature of the remains of Fort Ward. William D. Hershey, another expert hired to write a historical report on the Civil War fort, emphasized white Union and Confederate soldiers and tried to connect his museum displays with Alexandria's colonial past.⁷²⁷

Under the direction of Colonel Joseph B. Mitchell from 1964 to 1979, the lack of consideration for African American historical actors continued. Mitchell, a respected military historian who was active in the planning of Alexandria's Civil War Centennial events in the 1950s and 1960s, had previously worked as a historian for the American Battle Monuments Commission from 1955 to 1961, which oversaw cemeteries and

⁷²⁶ For further analyses of the public portrayals of slavery and race, especially as they are related to George Washington, see the following authors: Seth C. Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington was Born: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008); James M. Lindgren, *Preserving the Old Dominion: Historic Preservation and Virginia Traditionalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993); Karal Ann Marling, *George Washington Slept Here: Colonial Revivals and American Culture, 1876-1986* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton (ed.), *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh (ed.), *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

⁷²⁷ William D. Hershey, "Proposal for Museum at Fort Ward Park," ca. 1963; Edward McM. Larrabee, "Fort Ward, Alexandria, Virginia: Exploratory Excavation of the Northeast Bastion, June-July 1961; Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA.

memorials for the American military located overseas.⁷²⁸ Under his leadership at Fort Ward, displays and lectures at Fort Ward Museum and Park did not include direct discussions with the public about slavery, African American soldiers during the Civil War, or the Fort neighborhood, although one of his professional publications did recognize the contributions of African American soldiers to the war effort.⁷²⁹ Clippings from scrapbooks illustrate the types of information Mitchell disseminated during his time as director at Fort Ward. In 1964, Mitchell was instrumental in obtaining the private collection of Dr. Francis A. Lord of Rockville, Maryland, which consisted primarily of a wide variety of Civil War military arms and equipment, historical documents, and prints that eventually became the foundation for the museum's collections. Other temporary exhibits during his tenure included displays of Confederate daguerreotypes, etchings, and flags; eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Alexandrian newspapers; artillery replica models from throughout world history; antebellum carpentry tools; and a photograph of Abraham Lincoln taken a few days before the Gettysburg Address.⁷³⁰

By 1983, the park was accepted onto the National Register of Historic Places for its military significance during the Civil War. The partially reconstructed earthwork, reproduction period military buildings, and recreational areas were all recognized on the

⁷²⁸ Mitchell was a member of both the Alexandria and District of Columbia chapters of the Civil War Roundtable. He was also active in the Alexandria Historical Society, the American Revolution Round Table, the Military Order of Stars and Bars (an organization started in 1938 for descendants of Confederate officers), and the Sons of the Confederacy. In almost all of these organizations, Mitchell took a leadership position. "Joseph B. Mitchell, Retired Colonel and Historian, Dies," *Washington Post* 24 February 1993, C7.

⁷²⁹ Mitchell's publication of letters written to and from James Otis Kaler from the Charles Kohan Collection has a chapter entitled, "Negro Troops at Chaffin's Farm," which addresses African American Congressional Medal of Honor winners. See *The Badge of Gallantry: Recollections of Civil War Congressional Medal of Honor Winners*, edited by Joseph B. Mitchell (New York: Macmillan, 1965).

⁷³⁰ Fort Ward Publicity, 1961-1983 Scrapbook, Dorothy Starr Civil War Research Library, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Alexandria, VA; Scrapbook of Sons of Confederate Veterans, Robert E. Lee Camp, No. 726, Alexandria, Va., ca. 1965; Special Collections, Kate Waller Barrett Library, Alexandria, VA.

application, with the latter element described as a separate component that complimented Fort Ward. The museum was also identified for maintaining “an extensive collection of Civil War military memorabilia as well as items of social significance of the period” and holding two major exhibits a year. Finally, its Civil War Research Library was praised for providing the public with over 2,000 volumes and educational outreach programs.⁷³¹

In the 1990s, the City of Alexandria began to highlight the role of African American soldiers in the Civil War and address the long ignored story of African Americans at the Fort.⁷³² In 1991, archaeologists, volunteers, and students excavated around the remains of Fort Ward and found domestic goods dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Archival research pointed to African Americans who had purchased land beginning in the 1870s and 1880s. Records also connected these men and women with Oakland Baptist Church, which is still located at the intersection of King Street, Quaker Lane, and Braddock Road. The report ended with a recommendation to pursue “further detective work, delving into more documents at the National Archives and the Fairfax County Courthouse as well as interview[s with] members of the Oakland Baptist Church and descendants of its original founders.”⁷³³ Within a year, Patricia Knock started researching and interviewing former residents of the Fort and members of Oakland Baptist

⁷³¹ H. Bryan Mitchell, National Register of Historic Places Application—Fort Ward, 16 February 1982; National Park Service, U.S Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

⁷³² Fort Ward Museum featured an exhibit, *Fighting For Freedom: Black Union Soldiers of the Civil War*, in 1993-1994. The exhibit pamphlet is available on line, <http://alexandriava.gov/historic/fortward/default.aspx?id=40018> . A special thematic unit on African American soldiers is also included in the Museum’s school outreach educational kit call “Life During the Civil War.”

⁷³³ Francine W. Bromberg, “1991 Excavations at Fort Ward” (October 1991); <http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/FWabstract1991.pdf> (accessed July 12, 2012). See also Francine Bromberg, “Fort Ward Revisited: Archaeological in Alexandria,” *Alexandria Antiques Show Catalog* (Alexandria, VA: n.p., 1991), 20-23; <http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/FWarticleHistoricAlexAntiques1991.pdf>.

Church. Transcripts of these interviews are available on Alexandria Archaeology's website.⁷³⁴

Nearly two decades later, the City's preparation of new Master Planning documents for Fort Ward Park, which did not mention the Fort community, sparked intense, renewed concern about African American heritage preservation and graves within the park. At public meetings in 2008 and 2009, Alexandria residents—including descendants of the Fort's residents—overwhelmingly supported an approach to Fort Ward Park planning that considered these resources and incorporated an interpretation of the full range of history within the park, including Native American life and, especially, information about the Fort Community.⁷³⁵ City Council passed a resolution to establish the Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park and Museum Stakeholder Advisory Group to "advise the [City] staff team on Fort Ward issues and opportunities related to interim park/historic area use, management of Fort Ward and long term goals to be then transmitted for consideration to a future City-wide park master planning process."⁷³⁶ In addition, the resolution acknowledged the creation of the Fort Ward Park History Work Group "to assist the Office of Historic Alexandria and Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities with the documentation, research and interpretation of cultural and historic resources of Fort Ward Park...that existed on the site

⁷³⁴ "Alexandria Legacies—The Alexandria Oral History Program;" <http://alexandriava.gov/historic/info/default.aspx?id=29666> (accessed July 12, 2012).

⁷³⁵ There have been numerous studies and community findings that can be found on the Department of Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Activities website related to the history and heritage preservation at the Fort Ward site. See the following website for a list of reports: <http://alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=29640> (accessed October 10, 2013).

⁷³⁶ Memorandum, James K. Hartman, City Manager, to The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council, Consideration of a Resolution Establishing an Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group, June 19, 2009, <http://dockets.alexandriava.gov/fy09/062309rm/di41.pdf> (accessed October 10, 2013).

until it was acquired by the City of Alexandria for park and preservation purposes.”⁷³⁷ A community organization, consisting primarily of Fort descendants who live in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, has also been formed—the Fort Ward and Seminary African American Descendants Society Inc.—“to preserve and promote the history and cultural heritage of communities in the geographic proximity of Fort Ward, Virginia Theological Seminary, Seminary Hill, and the historic Oakland Baptist Church in the City of Alexandria.”⁷³⁸

Today (which is the 150th anniversary of the Civil War), the Fort community speaks to the multiple histories that can coexist in one location or community. There is not one, immutable history of the Fort. Descendants, neighbors, archaeologists, historians, and other stakeholders are part of a dialogue about the site, which will shape the preservation planning and memorialization of African Americans in the City of Alexandria. And each of these constituencies has their own interests and concerns. Through conversations and debates, palpable changes have occurred at Fort Ward Historic Park and Museum. New archaeological excavations have been conducted and new signs have been installed that outline many elements of the African American experience at the Fort. Descendants and their supporters have organized public events to talk about African American history at the Fort and to memorialize their families and friends. Finally, City plans now officially call for the rewriting Fort Ward Historic Park and Museum's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places to include the Fort neighborhood because of its historical significance.

A very different idea of the Fort's past has been put into motion, and this history is part of it.

Appendix A: Timeline

Yellow Highlighting="The Fort"

Blue Highlighting=Virginia

No Highlighting=National

- **April 1865:** General Robert E. Lee surrenders to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia. The Civil War (1861-1865) ends. Fort Ward is decommissioned and the land is returned to its owner, Philip H. Hooff.
- **December 1865:** Thirteenth Amendment is ratified formally abolishing slavery in the United States.
- **January-February 1866:** The Virginia legislature passes a series of Black Codes (such as new vagrancy and apprentice laws) that re-institute a slave-like status for African Americans.
- **April 1866:** The Civil Rights Act is passed, which grants citizenship to all male persons "without distinction of race or color, or previous condition of slavery or involuntary servitude."
- **November 1867:** Future residents of the Fort appear on voting registration rolls for eastern Fairfax County. They participate in a vote to convene a convention for rewriting the state constitution.
- **Winter 1867-1868:** The Virginia State Constitutional Convention is convened to re-write the state constitution (also known as the Underwood Constitution). The new state constitution includes language from the 13th and 14th Amendments.
- **July 1868:** The Fourteenth Amendment is ratified, which grants full citizenship to "all persons born or naturalized in the United States."
- **September 1868:** William Massie is the first African American to purchase land in the Fairfax Seminary neighborhood.
- **February 1870:** The Fifteenth Amendment is ratified, guaranteeing the right to vote "shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."
- **July 1870:** The first African American residents of the Fort community are documented in the U.S. Federal Census living on or around the remains of Fort Ward.
- **Fall 1870:** The State of Virginia puts in place a new public school system requiring separate schools for African Americans and whites.

- **1870:** The Virginia State Legislature requires race be included as part of a citizen's voter registration.
- **1873:** The newly, conservative-dominated Virginia State Assembly passes several laws (such as a poll tax, a reduction in the number of seats in the Virginia House of Delegates, and the empowerment of the General Assembly to provide funds for city and town governments) to disenfranchise African Americans.
- **March 1875:** The U.S. Congress passes another Civil Rights Act forbidding discrimination in public spaces, such as theaters, streetcars, and stores.
- **1876:** The Virginia General Assembly passes a constitutional amendment that includes a poll tax to be paid by all registered voters. Anyone convicted of petty larceny is to be disenfranchised.
- **1878-1879:** Philip H. Hooff is forced to auction his land, which African Americans begin purchasing at the Fort. John A. Miller and Burr Shorts buy the first plats at auction.
- **1879-1883:** African Americans in Virginia vote in support of the Readjusters, a group of white, Republican-leaning politicians who refuse to pay debts that benefit the state's wealthy elite. Many Readjusters were supportive of civil rights.
- **1880-1881:** Falls Church Magisterial District rents "Oak Hill School" for African American children. The school appears to be located to the southeast of Fairfax Seminary.
- **1882:** The Virginia Assembly, now led by the Readjusters, rescinds the poll tax because of problems with fraud and abuse. The Readjusters also ban the use of the whipping post.
- **1882:** The Episcopal Diocese of Virginia establishes a mission, known as either the Chapel of the Good Shepherd or St. Cyprian's, on the southern side of the Fairfax Seminary campus to cater to African Americans working at Fairfax Seminary.
- **October 1883:** The U.S. Supreme Court rules the Civil Rights Act (1875) unconstitutional.
- **November 1883:** An altercation between two individuals, one black and one white, leads to a white mob attacking African Americans in Danville, Virginia. Four African Americans and one white are killed. The paranoia caused by the event leads to Democrats taking control of the State Assembly in the election held a few days later.

- **1888:** Local African Americans in conjunction with ministers from Alexandria and Arlington establish a Baptist Mission to cater to residents living around Fairfax Seminary.
- **April 1889:** The Episcopal Diocese of the State of Virginia votes to bar African Americans from sitting on its council. All African American churches are demoted to missions of white churches.
- **1891:** The construction of a permanent church for African American Baptists living around Fairfax Seminary begins at the intersection of Quaker Lane, King Street, and Braddock Road. Oakland Baptist Church was completed two years later.
- **1894:** The Virginia Assembly passes the Walton Act, requiring all voters to take a literacy test.
- **September 1895:** Booker T. Washington's delivers his "Atlanta Compromise" speech at the Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia. In it, he argues African Americans should not demand economic and political parity with whites, but should work on their on educational/vocational development as a people. This speech is both celebrated and criticized.
- **1896:** The National Association of Colored Women (Clubs) is founded through the merger of the National League of Colored Women and the National Federation of African-American Women. This is the first nationwide civil rights organization in the U.S.
- **May 1896:** In *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that it is constitutional for "separate" facilities to be maintained for African Americans as long as they were "equal." The case involved the segregation of passengers on the East Louisiana Railroad.
- **April 1898:** In *Williams v. Mississippi*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that it is constitutional for a state to set voting requirements (such as poll taxes, grandfather clauses, and literacy tests) as long as they are applied to all residents.
- **December 1898:** Robert and Clara Adams convey $\frac{1}{4}$ acre to Fairfax County School Board to establish a public school for African American children at the Fort.
- **July 1902:** Virginia holds another state constitutional convention to rewrite its voting requirements. This convention agrees to pass a grandfather clause, poll tax, and literacy test as part of the new requirements for voter registration. These requirements are put in place on January 1, 1904.
- **1903:** Reverend Emmett E. Miller, the son of Lavonia and John A. Miller, receives his ordination from the Episcopal Church of Virginia after attending Bishop Payne

Theological Seminary in Petersburg, Virginia. He leads St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Petersburg, the largest African American Episcopal congregation in the state.

- **1907:** The Chapel of the Good Shepherd/St. Cyprian's is renovated with donations from local blacks and whites.
- **February 1909:** W.E.B. DuBois and other civil rights activists found the NAACP. The NAACP focuses on the promotion of equal rights and the end of racial prejudice.
- **September 1910:** The National Urban League is founded in New York City to address workplace discrimination.
- **1911-1917:** Alice Ashby, who had grown up at the Fort, becomes a teacher there.
- **November 1912:** With the election of President Woodrow Wilson, federal employees are segregated. Many African American employees of the federal government are dismissed.
- **World War I (1917-1918):** African Americans apply for work in defense industries and register for the draft. They worry about increasing racial tensions in the North and segregation in the military.
- **Summer-Fall 1919:** Throughout the United States, race riots and lynchings occur as whites enact violence, often with support from local authorities and the U.S. military, against African Americans. There are three reported lynchings in Virginia as well as one race riot in Washington, D.C. This period is known as the Red Summer.
- **1921:** The Virginia Republican Party professes itself to be a "lily-white" organization to lure white voters dissatisfied with the Democratic Party to its ranks. In response, African Americans create a "lily-black" statewide ticket. The formal renunciation of African Americans by the state Republican Party begins the process of African Americans changing their political allegiance to the Democratic Party.
- **March 1924:** The Virginia Assembly passes the Racial Integrity Act, which requires that the race of all persons be recorded at birth and that society be divided into two categories: white and colored. Colored includes not only African Americans, but also persons of Asian and Native American ancestry. The "one-drop rule" is part of this legislation.
- **1925:** The Virginia Assembly passes a law requiring the segregation of "places of public assemblage."
- **April 1926:** The Episcopal Church of Virginia purchases the former school building at the Fort for a new African American mission.

- **September 1926:** The Seminary School for Colored Children is built on King Street, near present-day T. C. Williams High School on land conveyed by the Wood family. African American residents donated the majority of the money for the new school. Monies from a few local whites, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, and Fairfax County are also used.
- **1929:** Samuel Javins conveys part of his land to Oakland Baptist Church for the establishment of a cemetery. The deed is recorded ten years later in Fairfax County.
- **1931:** The new Episcopal mission at the Fort, known as St. Cyprian's, begins holding services.
- **September 1931:** Permits are filed to rebuild Oakland Baptist Church, which had burnt down and was completely destroyed.
- **1931-1935:** Nine African American young men are arrested for sexual assault of two white women on a train between Chattanooga and Memphis, Tennessee. Known as the Scottsboro Boys, the young men would be embroiled in a series of court cases, with support from the NAACP and American Communist Party. The guilty conviction of the young men is seen as a miscarriage of justice motivated by racism.
- **August 1939:** Oakland Baptist Church obtains a permit to build a one-story addition at the former church site.
- **June 1940:** In *Alston v. School Board of the City of Norfolk*, the Federal Court of Appeals rules that African American teachers need to be paid equal to white teachers with similar training and experience. Norfolk's race-based salary system was seen as a clear violation of the 14th Amendment. The NAACP argues the case.
- **World War II (1941-1945):** African Americans, while in support of America's war effort, see this moment as a time to promote democracy and freedom not only abroad, but also at home (known as the Double V Campaign). White civilians and military, however, do not see African American military service as justification for equality or acceptance, and violence and discrimination continues.
- **May 1941:** Luther Porter Jackson, a professor of history and political science at Virginia State College, establishes the Virginia Voters' League. The organization focuses on helping African Americans pay their poll taxes and register to vote.
- **June 1941:** President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issues Executive Order 8802, which creates the Fair Employment Practices Committee to end racial discrimination in defense industries, federal agencies, and unions. A. Philip Randolph, the head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, had been organizing a March on Washington to

protest segregation. FDR, in fear of a race riot, agrees to some of Randolph's terms in order to avoid the March and potential violence.

- **1942:** James L. Farmer, Jr. and other civil rights activists in Chicago found the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). It uses civil disobedience and nonviolence as a means to fight racial discrimination in housing and public facilities during World War II. The organization is explicitly interracial.
- **April 1944:** In *Smith v. Albright*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules the Democratic Party in Texas cannot have white-only primaries. This ruling helps unravel the disenfranchisement of African Americans throughout the South.
- **1944:** The Episcopal Diocese of Virginia sells St. Cyprian's to a barber from Alexandria. It is no longer able to maintain the mission because of World War II.
- **June 1946:** In *Morgan v. Virginia*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that it is unconstitutional for Virginia to segregate passengers on interstate public transportation.
- **May 1948:** In *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the 14 Amendment prohibits housing covenants that denied people of color from owning or renting property.
- **July 1948:** President Harry S. Truman issues Executive Order 9981, which desegregates the U.S. military.
- **September 1950:** The Seminary School is closed. Students living at the Fort briefly attend school in Bailey's Crossroads before annexation in 1952.
- **February 1952:** In *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, the federal district court finds the educational facilities at Robert R. Moton High School unequal to the all-white high school. The school board promises monies in the future to improve the school. The case becomes one of the many cases involving school desegregation decided in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) by the U.S. Supreme Court.
- **1952:** The City of Alexandria annexes parts of eastern Fairfax County, including the Fort.
- **1953:** The Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia promotes the establishment of a circular freeway around Washington, D.C. that follows the Defenses of Washington. It proposes the remains of Fort Ward be included in the drive.

- **May 1954:** In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the U.S Supreme Court rules that separate schools for black and white children are unconstitutional. This decision is the culmination of several other court decisions related to the segregation of public schools.
- **August 1954:** Governor Stanley creates a commission to study the implementation of the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) ruling. This group is known as the Gray Commission, after its chairman Senator Garland Gray.
- **1954:** Dorothy Starr, a Seminary Hill resident, becomes Fort Ward Park and Museum's main promoter.
- **1954-1961:** The Alexandria Planning Commission begins to purchase homes and land at the Fort for the establishment of Fort Ward Park and Museum.
- **May 1955:** U.S. Supreme Court makes its second ruling related to the implementation of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), known as *Brown II*. In it, the Supreme Court states schools should desegregate "with all deliberate speed." Critics of this ruling condemn it for being too vague.
- **November 1955:** The Gray Commission recommends the following: 1) if white parents refuse to have their children attend an integrated school, then the state should provide tuition grants for children to attend private, segregated schools; 2) local officials should administer a "pupil placement" program in which they would choose which African Americans attend all-white schools; and 3) no child would be forced to attend an integrated school.
- **December 1955-December 1956:** Rosa Parks refuses to move out of her seat for a white person, triggering the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The Boycott cripples Montgomery's public transit system as African Americans, who are the majority users, refuse to ride the bus. It ends with the implementation of the federal ruling in *Browder v. Gayle* (1956), which deems racial segregation on Alabama's buses unconstitutional.
- **February 1956:** U.S. Senator Harry Byrd, Sr., the head of the Democratic political machine in Virginia, calls for "Massive Resistance" against the desegregation of public schools.
- **March 1956:** U.S. Senators Strom Thurmond (SC) and Harry Byrd, Sr. organize almost all, white southern members of the U.S. Congress to support the "Southern Manifesto," in which "Massive Resistance" becomes a national plan.
- **April 1956:** Virginia quietly desegregates its intrastate bus lines after the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the *Browder v. Gayle* (1956) ruling and the

Montgomery Bus Boycott. Some companies had desegregated before the state's decision.

- **August 1956:** The Virginia State Assembly enacts a series of laws based on the Gray Commission's recommendations known as the "Stanley Plan" (named after Governor Thomas B. Stanley). This plan includes the following: 1) the use public funds to pay for private schooling if parents do not want to send their children to integrated schools; 2) the barring of state funds to any school districts that allow integration; and 3) the ability of the governor to close any schools that try to integrate.
- **January 1957:** After the success of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a group of African American ministers, including Martin Luther King, Jr., and civil rights activist meet in Atlanta, Georgia to coordinate nonviolent civil disobedience throughout the South. From this meeting, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was established with Dr. King as its president.
- **September 1958:** Newly elected Governor J. Lindsay Almond, Jr. orders the closure of all integrated public schools as part of "Massive Resistance." Schools in Warren County, Charlottesville, and Norfolk are closed.
- **September 1958-February 1959:** The parents of fourteen African American children, including residents of the Fort, sue to send their children to all-white schools in Alexandria. The NAACP helps argue the case before Federal District Court Judge Albert V. Bryan.
- **January 1959:** The Virginia Supreme Court rules that it is unconstitutional for the state to close public schools. The Virginia Assembly then passes legislation making school attendance optional. The federal courts declare "Massive Resistance" unconstitutional based on the 14th Amendment. Governor Almond concedes defeat and asks the Assembly to repeal the laws.
- **February 1959:** A few African American students, including those living in Alexandria, are allowed to attend all-white schools in Virginia for the first time.
- **May 1959-1964:** Prince Edward County, after being ordered to integrate by the courts, shuts down its entire school system. White children are able to attend private schools with tuition grants from the county; nothing is provided for African American students.
- **April 1960:** African American student activists meet for a conference at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina to discuss their experiences and coordinate future actions against racial discrimination. From this meeting, students create the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

- **Summer 1960:** Sponsored by CORE, African American and white activists test *Boynton v. Virginia*, which desegregated bus terminals, by traveling on buses from Washington, D.C. to cities throughout the South. This is known as the Freedom Rides.
- **September 1960:** A handful African American children from Macedonia/Seminary and the Fort attend Minnie Howard Elementary School. At least one child is permitted to go to Hammond High School.
- **1960-1962:** The Macedonia/Seminary neighborhood is chosen for the building of a new, all-white high school in Alexandria, displacing local African American residents. With pressure from the Seminary Civic Association and the federal government, the City agrees to put aside 5-to-6 acres to house the neighborhood's former residents.
- **May 1961:** Alexandria begins its centennial celebration of the Civil War, which will include the opening of Fort Ward Historic Park and Museum.
- **Summer 1961:** Edward McM. Larrabee, a historical archeologist, is hired to conduct excavations at the Fort Ward site. It is the first time a city has sponsored archeology, which receives extensive regional press.
- **1961:** An expansion of the original law from 1949, the Housing Act (1961) supplies federal funds for the development of parks and other types of open space for the first time.
- **May 1963:** Alexandria City Council quietly ends racial discrimination in all public facilities.
- **May-June 1963:** African American residents in Danville, Virginia, led by the Danville Christian Progressive Association, march through town and stage a protest to demand equal rights throughout the city. Several residents are arrested. On June 10, high school students stage a similar protest. Many of them are also arrested after being beaten by police and sprayed with fire hoses. In total, 600 people are arrested.
- **August 1963:** Organized by the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, SCLC, SNCC, CORE, and the Urban League, the March on Washington is a rally to promote civil rights and economic equality for African Americans.
- **September 1963:** The federal government grants funds for the purchase of additional land at Fort Ward Park for the City of Alexandria. Additional purchases soon follow.
- **May 1964:** In *Griffin v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that the creation of public tuition grants to fund private education so that white children are not required to attend school with African

Americans is unconstitutional. Public schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia are finally reopened after being shut down for five years.

- **May 1964:** Fort Ward Historic Park and Museum opens to the general public.
- **July 1964:** The Civil Rights Act makes many forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and gender illegal. Of particular note is its role in ending school segregation, disenfranchisement, and workplace discrimination.
- **February 1965:** Members of the Nation of Islam assassinate Malcolm X, a civil rights activist and former member of the organization.
- **April 1965:** Alexandria City Council begins the process of desegregating public schools to be in compliance with the Civil Rights Act (1964). The first schools to desegregate are the city's high schools. Parker-Gray High School is closed, and all of its students are transferred to other schools. The newly built T. C. Williams High School is opened as a desegregated school.
- **August 1965:** The Voting Rights Act forces states to abolish literacy tests, grandfather clauses, and poll taxes.
- **November 1965:** The Higher Education Act is signed into law, allowing federal funds to be given to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), which at the time educated the majority of African American students.
- **March 1966:** In *Annie E. Harper et al. v. Virginia Board of Elections*, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia rules that voters are not required to pay a poll tax to vote.
- **June 1967:** In *Loving v. Virginia*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that anti-miscegenation laws are unconstitutional. Richard Loving, who was white, and Mildred Jeter, who was African American, had married in Washington, D.C. in 1958 and then moved home to Caroline County where they had grown up together to raise their family. They were arrested, found guilty of breaking the state's anti-miscegenation law, and were required to serve one- year in prison. The ruling judge, however, offered to suspend their sentences if they accepted banishment from the state. The Lovings decided to pursue the issue in federal court, arguing Virginia's anti-miscegenation laws were an infringement on their rights as stated in the 14th Amendment.
- **April 1968:** Martin Luther King, Jr., one of the founders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the organizer of many protests and marches throughout the American South, is assassinated. Riots ensue, including in Washington, D.C.

- **May 1968:** In *Green v. School Board of New Kent County*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that school districts are required to have racially balanced schools as well as equality in facilities, extracurricular activities, and transportation.
- **1971-1973:** The last lots and homes are acquired at the Fort by the City of Alexandria and are consolidated into the Park.
- **August 1982:** The City of Alexandria submits a nomination form to the National Park Service for listing Fort Ward on the National Register of Historic Places.

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