



City of Alexandria
Office of Historic Alexandria
Alexandria Legacies
Oral History Program



Project Name: *Alexandria Legacies—Freedmen’s Cemetery Project*

Title: *Interview with Lucian Johnson*

Date of Interview: *June 5, 2009*

Location of Interview: *Mr. Johnson’s home in Washington, D.C.*

Interviewer: *David Cavanaugh*

Transcriber: *Shirley Brott*

Abstract: *Lucian Johnson (age 86) was born in 1926. He is a life-long resident of Alexandria, Virginia. His history is one of family strength and community cohesion during the economic strain of the Depression; integrity through the turmoil of segregation; and the difficulties he encountered attaining an education. Mr. Johnson offers a graphic description of the changes in road ways and housing development in Alexandria. Mr. Johnson was interviewed in his Washington, D.C., home by David Cavanaugh, a volunteer at Alexandria Archaeology. Mr. Johnson uses the spelling Simms (versus Sims) regarding members of his family.*

This transcript has been edited by the interviewee and may not reflect the audio recording exactly.

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Lucian Johnson, 2009

(Credit: David Cavanaugh for Alexandria Archaeology)

Introductions

David Cavanaugh:	...2009 and my name is David Cavanaugh and I'm a volunteer for the Alexandria Archaeology Museum. Today I'm interviewing Lucian Johnson who lived in the Seminary-Oakland Baptist Church community during the late-1920s. The interview takes place at his home at 42 Tuckerman Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C. The purpose of the interview is to record Lucian's recollections growing up in the African American community near the Theological Seminary. Now we can get started. Where and when were you born?
Lucian Johnson:	At 1001 Quaker Lane, Alexandria, Virginia. That's right outside the Theological Seminary—the same place where one of my nieces lives now. January 19, 1926.
D.C.:	Who were your mother and father?
Lucian Johnson:	My mother was Mary Frances Johnson, formerly Mary Frances

	Simms. My father Frederick Douglass Johnson.
Parents' Demographics and Father's Employment	
D.C.:	When did they come to the Alexandria area? When do you recall?
Lucian Johnson:	My mother was born that particular area. My father came down from Orange County, Virginia and worked at the Theological Seminary for a while where he met my mother...But my mother was born in that particular area.
D.C.:	Oh, she was born there?
Lucian Johnson:	Right.
D.C.:	Simms.
Lucian Johnson:	Right. Mary Frances Simms. Not 1001 Quaker Lane, but King Street, actually.
D.C.:	Did she have family living there?
Lucian Johnson:	Yes. Daniel Griffith Simms and her mother Alice Simms. Alice Wanzer Simms which is of the original Wanzer family that practically dominated.
D.C.:	Very large family.
Lucian Johnson:	Right.
D.C.:	[adjusts microphone] So your dad moved up from Orange County?
Lucian Johnson:	Moved down! Orange, Madison and Culpepper are to the central southwest. He was at Madison County to Orange County and then he worked at Woodburn Forest in Orange County before coming down to work at the Episcopal High School of the Theological Seminary, which was the largest employer within the area at that time before government jobs opened up.
D.C.:	What did he do at the Seminary?
Lucian Johnson:	I guess in general, custodian work.
D.C.:	How long did he work there?
Lucian Johnson:	I know up until the time after the government jobs began to open up under Roosevelt up until 1935, I'd say.
D.C.:	Did he ever work at a gasoline station?
Lucian Johnson:	I am not certain. The only store in this area that also had gas was the Donaldson Store, which has been many stores, the apex at

	Braddock and King Street. It's been many things, but it's still sitting there.
D.C.:	I recall seeing on his draft registration form, he showed like Torpedo School and I thought possibly it was a service station?
Utilities and Services	
Lucian Johnson:	The service station came in later, right at the apex where King Street and Braddock Road cross, but set in the back, I think they're selling flowers or something there now, there's a little half-unit right beside it—well, that just be [where] the only original Donaldson all-purpose grocery store is, of all the stores we had in our particular area without going downtown. Actually, the Theological Seminary and the Episcopal High School was about the only jobs that were available. A lot of people later worked with Arlington County, Alexandria County on the sewer/water lines, during the [19]30s, during the [depression] recovery days they first began to bring the water and sewer lines out of the city. Alexandria—the Seminary area- as you know was really part of Fairfax County first and so we were very set between two counties. Under Roosevelt, during the days after the Depression, Roosevelt recovery days, all rural areas began to bring water, sewage and electricity. Extended out to the rural areas. In fact, Quaker Lane used to be the dividing line—this side of Alexandria and the other side of the street—Fairfax. And you'd walk down to the apex...
D.C.:	Did you have sewer-water where you lived?
Lucian Johnson:	Yes, later [19]30s and [19]40s.
D.C.:	So there was sewer and water there?
Lucian Johnson:	Yes.
D.C.:	But before that—
Lucian Johnson:	We had outhouses.
D.C.:	And did the sewer-water come from Fairfax County or did it come from—
Lucian Johnson:	The City of Alexandria. The City of Alexandria purchased or moved the boundaries out as they could by law all the way out to Quaker Lane. Prior to that we had country living.
D.C.:	Do you remember your grandparents at all?
Lucian Johnson:	Yes. Quite well. My grandfather, my mother's—Daniel Simms—

	lived on King Street almost where the new T.C. Williams School is.
D.C.:	Where Elizabeth Douglas lives?
Lucian Johnson:	Right. Chinguapin Village, right around that corner. My grandpa's name was Daniel Griffith Simms. My grandmother: Alice Wanzer Simms. My father's parents- I never saw his father, but I saw his mother once on a trip back up to Madison County to the old home house that they had there. He came from a very large family, lot of sisters who migrated all around, as people did at that time.
D.C.:	Do you recall what he may have done in Madison County—your grandfather and grandmother?
Lucian Johnson:	They were farmers. Their homestead that they had in Madison County—it was 185 acres, but I'm sure this was deeded...I do know [that] his parents or his grandparents were born in slavery and after the Civil War, the land—they divided acres in Madison County, all of Madison was very rugged territory [and it] became part of the family...I know they had a large farm and a large family. Like most people who grew up on a farm, they migrated towards the city.
D.C.:	Were there any oral histories of what it was like living in Madison County prior to the Civil War or after the Civil War? Stories? Family stories?
Land Ownership, Relocation, and Housing	
Lucian Johnson:	Yes. It's too bad a lot of it got away from me, but I would like to reiterate some of the history. As I said, my father came down here, met my mother, then they moved back to Madison County and worked on the farm as a sharecropper type thing for another family. And this where they earned enough money to come back and buy the home at 1001 Quaker Lane which my mother had always remembered was there—it belonged to another family and eventually they got \$2500 to purchase it. And it was a quite a spread. I don't know if you're familiar with Quaker Lane, but the originally property extended from almost down to Woods Lane. It was quite large. There's three houses on it now. Our area went through transference a while back when they decided to build T.C. Williams, they tried to purchase all the land. People sort of got together—with good lawyers—fought and that's why part of the neighborhood still stands, where later some of the original families would be able to rebuild and relocate—sell your property and then rebuild.
D.C.:	Were you living there at the time when they were doing this urban

	renewal?
Lucian Johnson:	Yes.
D.C.:	You were living there—
Lucian Johnson:	With my parents.
D.C.:	There is an indication of Johnson's Lane in kind of a lane on the south side that would go all the way back and Mollie Nelson lived back in there
Lucian Johnson:	On the hill, right. Johnson Lane, we lost it after the renewal. They had the chance to reopen it again, but the argument was after opening T.C. Williams, kids in the neighborhood would take a shortcut. All the way down to Woods Lane and there. People would be cutting across your property and all that kind of stuff. [phone rings] Some of the people that lived west of us they wanted to close it down. It was one of those political things to keep exclusions from everyone. But we could have had the lane reopened 'cause of the State—it was a federal landmark attributed to us, but going back to what you were saying, Johnson Lane back on the hill—which is Haals Hill which is part of what we call Chinquapin Village, the Nelson family, an old family that used to be some Wanzers lived down there. Taylor—the Roger Taylor family.
D.C.:	If you are on Seminary how far back does the property go to the Johnson property?
Lucian Johnson:	From Johnson Lane, there'd be a bridge that come out of the Seminary, down toward where the Woods property (not Woods Lane), we owned two and a half acres at the time—one of the largest stretches individually-owned stretches other than the original property that the Wanzer family had. The Wanzer family was—I would call them a clan—they owned about everything else. I don't know how they got it, but I guess after the Civil War. The largest clan in our particular area was the Wanzer family—Joe Wanzer and his wife.
D.C.:	Lots of Wanzers. I haven't done very much research...but I've been wanting to figure out when did they come to the area and where did they come from.
Lucian Johnson:	You'd have to go back to slavery—pre-Civil War days. To be frank, it was quite common after the Civil War... Well, it happened in Gum Springs and a few other places—a proclamation: ex-slaves

	were deeded certain property. The only thing that would be the occupation around here in the rural farming [area] was the theological seminary and the Episcopal high school, so everybody either worked for the high school [or seminary] and there were a number of other people associated with the school who were also large land owners...this land had to be deeded. Our particular area—you spoke of the Johnson area, but our particular—we were almost isolated, 'cause it went all the way down to Chinquapin which is south of T.C. Williams now. In other words, from Johnson Lane all the way over to King Street and down King Street, down Braddock Road almost up to Chinquapin—Scroggins Lane was almost owned—at the time by—blacks. Then of course, things change. It had to have been deeded at some time as no one could have afforded to purchase what with that type of money. A land grant—
D.C.:	They had steady employment and they were probably able to save—
Lucian Johnson:	Right. Or to hold it once you got because you still had to pay taxes and various other loans. My father went back up to earn the money to come back here to buy our property...obviously, you made a dollar, you saved fifty-cents of it.
D.C.:	You were associated with the Wanzers and to the Seminary.
Lucian Johnson:	My mother always admired that particular place because that was a corner house at the time. Right on King Street/Quaker Lane. Quaker Lane was a dirt road, later gravel. It was still a choice spot.
D.C.:	How long did the homes last?
Lucian Johnson:	Our house lasted from the entire time I lived there until they rebuilt. They were rebuilt because it had to be done again after... It was frame. All the homes were of cedar, blocks...even the house that was torn down, the base of that house was—
D.C.:	So, it was built out of cedar wood?
Lucian Johnson:	Right. But propped up. So you had a breezeway.
D.C.:	Underneath.
Lucian Johnson:	Right. You didn't have basements at the time. Some people had raised porches later on...storage there. Even when it was torn down to rebuild the area the base material was just as good as new—no infestation or anything.
D.C.:	Homes were probably built by the people who lived there—the Wanzers...

Lucian Johnson:	Correct. Although not highly educated, everybody learned trades—you learned to be a mason...to be a carpenter...to work with your hands. Most of the homes were built by the Wanzers. They were somebody who had the unique ability at everything, not only buildings and trade, but musical...a wide variety. There was a time...going towards Duke Street—Janneys Lane—there's a wooded area- used to be all open, it was like an open field. We used to go play baseball. Janneys Lane.
D.C.:	That was open? It's now wood?
Lucian Johnson:	It's now woods and built. And of course we were right across from the [Virginia] Theological Seminary which was always a pleasure area. You could get, if you need it—people in the neighborhood knew how to use the saw mill and things. What I'm trying to say is you could get open timber.
D.C.:	Very self-reliant. If you need some timber, you cut a tree, use carpentry tools.
Lucian Johnson:	Right. And the houses were quite well built. It wasn't a log cabin or something you see in a shantytown. Maybe a few, but the houses were really something. Our area was—at the time- was quite well kept.
Education and Segregation	
D.C.:	I understand you went to Seminary School.
Lucian Johnson:	Right. Elementary.
D.C.:	Can you describe that school house?
Lucian Johnson:	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 go downtown. Three teachers. The one in sixth and seventh was also the principal. And a substitute teacher, if needed. But three teachers were assigned, which were certified teachers. One of them came from the District, where she had actually had been certified...the other two grew up in Alexandria. We went through—at the time—the regular [unclear] authorized by the...by this time we were under the Alexandria school system so we had the authorized courses up to basic math. We didn't have algebra 'til you got in high school. After seventh grade we had to go downtown to Parker-Gray.
D.C.:	Is that where you went to high school?

Lucian Johnson:	Right. And I graduated.
D.C.:	Did you walk to Parker-Gray or did they have bus service?
Lucian Johnson:	Had bus service. If you [unclear]...you walk back.
D.C.:	You could take your bus to school? If you had your money.
Lucian Johnson:	Right.
D.C.:	If you bought an extra ticket, you could ride back?
Lucian Johnson:	It was the Alexandria, Barcroft, and Washington—the old AB&W—belonged to the mayor.
D.C.:	It was ten cents a ride.
Lucian Johnson:	Right. It was 1939. You'd go to Washington for twenty-five cents. It went all the way to Washington.
D.C.:	This was public transportation. Were blacks able to ride anywhere on the bus?
Lucian Johnson:	No.
D.C.:	You had to ride in the back?
Lucian Johnson:	Right. The law. Strange enough, you cross the line in the District [of Columbia, also called Washington, D.C.] you could go up front, but coming back the other way—
D.C.:	In the District it was different. I didn't realize that.
Lucian Johnson:	Yeah. Just because it was the District. The Emancipation Proclamation in the District...that's why some of the people flocked to the District. But the states, of course, even after...they re-injected their laws.
D.C.:	Going back to your mother and dad. What type of person was your mother?
Lucian Johnson:	My mother was beautiful. Father was a hard-worker. Nice, easy-going. He was a hard-worker, a generous hard worker because during the war years right after the depression the government began to open up in about 1939 employment began to pick up. He had an elementary education. People made themselves to read and learn. My mom hit a milestone by going to school and completing all the way up to ninth grade. Originally high schools just went up to go to ninth grade. If wanted to go further up had to go into District to complete High School This was 1937. High Schools in

	the south only went to the 11 th grade. Didn't have 12 th grade.
D.C.:	So, originally Parker-Gray only went to the 9 th grade. So when you went to the 11 th grade and to complete it you had to go into the District to finish it, or someplace else.
Lucian Johnson:	As I was saying, the 11 th grade, this was true all through the South unless you didn't need to go
D.C.:	And your mother went to school in Alexandria area?
Lucian Johnson:	Yes. At Fort Ward. There was the only [the] Episcopal School, black school. Everyone went there. The Episcopal School was established by ex-slaves and was the only vocational school in that area before Seminary school opened. It was still part of Fairfax County at that time. Quaker Lane was dividing line. So she went to Fort Ward to Seminary. Fort Ward was isolated and was occupied by freed slaves. For a long time isolated. Just sitting up there isolated. No one cared or wanted to...
D.C.:	But you think that school at Fort Ward was an Episcopal School?
Lucian Johnson:	Right, right. It was established because the church came from England. First established religion the reason Fort Ward is outside Episcopal School System
D.C.:	We have found there is an "E" [Episcopal] Church there between 1926-1939 or 1943. That was the school?
Lucian Johnson:	That was the school...right, that is the Episcopal Church now down on the 300 block of Alfred Street. 326 North Alfred Street is the same church. That was the one. The church was for rural people all through the south. If it wasn't for the church, there wouldn't be any education. The churches were schools Nobody wanted to sponsor school for...
Church, Community, and County Incorporation	
D.C.:	What I find kind of interesting is [that] Claire Adams lived at the Fort and the church was there on a quarter of acre of land, but she was also a founder of the church...
Lucian Johnson:	Clair Adams. There may have been two Claire Adams. I was trying to think of other streets at Fort Ward that you take in to the Hospital. Howard [Street], related to Episcopal High School. Claire Adams was the last group that moved down to our particular area and tried to open back the church. The original Oakland church was built at Cedar Hill at Chinquapin by Nelson, the Adams and

	Nelsons. [It] was burned down and moved to King Street. I think there is a sign there about this on a stone. There is a bibliography inside the church.
D.C.:	The original Oakland Church was back fairly close to Chinquapin near Nelson's home and was very small where people gathered then across the street was a place called Liberty Hall. Do you remember that?
Lucian Johnson:	Yes, yes. That was the community center and all the social affairs. Generally, we have been looking at this side of the area where it opened all the way to Johnson Creek, King Street all the way to Chinquapin to Braddock Road all the way almost to Kennel Road. Free slaves were along that road. Johnson Lane, King, Braddock to city limit. The whole city limit was Russell Road. If you lived down one side of Kings Street you were in Arlington and the other side you were in Alexandria. And, if you were on the other side of Seminary and not until 1950...they called it the West End.
D.C.:	Let me check to be sure this is still running...okay.
Lucian Johnson:	Of course, this was the inner city, Fairfax County. If you became incorporated, this doesn't always work. At the time, Alexandria was independent from Fairfax. People began to migrate to Alexandria. The State of Virginia has 101 counties and one city. Alexandria was one city.
Burial Grounds	
D.C.:	Did you ever go to any funerals up at Fort Ward?
Lucian Johnson:	Yes, Fort Ward is isolated by rule there were only a dozen different families. The Adams, Craytons, and it was rural enough the burial ground was by the church. Burial was very cheap. I do have family members, grandfather [Daniel Simms], mother, grandmother [Alice Wanzer Simms], Simmons Walter, Anna Simmons, Morris Johnson, my brother was buried there and other relatives.
D.C.:	And they are buried at the Oakland Baptist Cemetery.
Lucian Johnson:	Rights became restricted. Alexandria bought more land and the place did not care for it and the church was responsible for the up keep, but it wasn't. Now, it is a big beautiful park, nobody cared about the burial grounds, but now they have the grave site. For some many years, I never thought. It was not until T.C. Williams and a white school. Then land was needed. The idea was to

	purchase the entire place and pay you off. It became incorporated.
D.C.:	Who were the community leaders that fought city hall?
Lucian Johnson:	No. No relation, but Par Johnson who married into the Woods family then Booth led the fight and luckily so many people worked for him he took up the fight. It was wrong to uproot people who have been there hundreds of years and you give them a couple a hundred of dollars through eminent domain. It was not right.
D.C.:	Did you know Booth is buried in Seminary Cemetery?
Lucian Johnson:	Yeah.
D.C.:	Did you own land at that time?
Lucian Johnson:	My father.
D.C.:	Did your father get a house?
Lucian Johnson:	The Woods property. He probably got a pretty good sale. He had ...two and a half acres. The first three houses, General 1,3 5, and 7 are still in there. I lived there. It is still in the family. Were able to retain it. A few professional people have also relocated there. [<i>end side 1</i>]
D.C.:	[<i>begin side 2</i>] Are you aware of any other family burial grounds outside of the Fort Ward, Oakland Baptist Cemetery? There are other burial areas. Are you aware of this?
Lucian Johnson:	Other than the one in town?
D.C.:	I'm talking about the Fort Ward area.
Lucian Johnson:	Before people talked concentrated on the certain burial ground...people buried on the property. People removed them "respectfully." We have several outside the school old family places there are even behind us that the city was supposed to remove them.
D.C.:	So, the ones buried on the property—the Wood's property—or the Johnsons property or Wanzer property, they were respectfully moved from the Fort.
Lucian Johnson:	Right, right.
D.C.:	I didn't realize that. So, there were several removed during that period moved to the Fort,
Lucian Johnson:	I can remember when my mother grew up, there were people buried on the farm property with grave stones...It was cheaper and closer to the family, didn't have cars. Now, the official burial ground for

	the church at Collingwood [now referred to as the Snowden and Bethlehem Cemetery] is situated adjacent to Coleman Cemetery, my mother and father and several brothers were there. Outside Gum Springs [which is in Fairfax County, south of the City of Alexandria]. Collingwood is down at Gum Springs.
D.C.:	Right, right.
Lucian Johnson:	I found Douglas Woods marker on the very edge of Collingwood. He had originally been buried there at the corner of Seminary and Beauregard and he was moved down there. We could never find where his wife, Matilda Wood, was buried.
D.C.:	[Laugh] You are speaking of Douglas Woods Senior. Douglas Wood and Matilda Wood. Then you have Douglas, Jr.
Lucian Johnson:	Yeah, my mother spoke of her. She was old and I was little. The Woods and Wallace's, Adams. The Woods family donated the property. We all got cheated on this. [The Woods] who donated the property for the Seminary, the school, in the land grant. That all got demolished for T.C. Williams. He was a long time principle there. He spoke at our graduation when I graduated in 1944. I can understand. He was trying to be encouraging so the colored people could get ahead. He also did [unintelligible] in [19]39. He wanted to make the school...he made a colored high school. I guess he did a lot of things and it was a big thing. We elevated from a junior high school to high school level.
D.C.:	He died in 1963 and that was kind of toward the end of segregation and employment for the blacks was starting to pick up and there was movement. But prior to that it was "black and white."
Lucian Johnson:	Oh yes.
D.C.:	It was still "black and white" until the 1970s.
Lucian Johnson:	Definitely
D.C.:	T.C. Williams, the Titans...it was early 1970s.
Integration, School, and Sports	
Lucian Johnson:	It did begin to integrate. At George Washington. This part of Alexandria. When the Supreme Court said "the law of the land" High Schools ought to be open. Northern Virginia was trying to recommend, but got pressure from the South. But Alexandria has already been interchanged [integrated] and especially for the music and shop [classes]. The main trouble with any small schools,

	underfunded schools was we didn't have the good shop. All we had was wood shop, [we did] not have machine shop or electrical shop. So before the state allowed would integration, the population was changing. The shop teachers taught at GW [George Washington] and T.C. Williams. So, in Northern Virginia there was a small exchange.
D.C.:	So the shop classes, they were integrated?
Lucian Johnson:	Right, right. Behind the scenes...[laugh]
D.C.:	When you graduated in February 1944, so there was some integration of shop classes and music classes?
Lucian Johnson:	Different situations have different things. We used to have annual football at Municipal Stadium off Jefferson Davis Highway where we played football. They got rid of it, torn down. We had an annual Thanksgiving game with George Washington and Jefferson back in the 1940s.
D.C.:	So there was a black school playing against a white school?
Lucian Johnson:	Oh yeah.
D.C.:	After World War II?
Lucian Johnson:	Before. [laugh] Intercity rivalry. It was clean.
D.C.:	So, it was Parker-Gray playing against "unscheduled" playing against Washington-Lee [in Arlington, Virginia]?
Lucian Johnson:	Yeah. Baseball game...there was an open field across from...[interrupted]
D.C.:	There was E. Simpson Field down there.
Lucian Johnson:	Simpson Field was off from the train station. Braddock Road. George Washington was the newest thing. It is now a secondary school. Right off Braddock and Mount Vernon.
D.C.:	So, they would play there on the open field?
Lucian Johnson:	The friction wasn't there. Certain things, but it was a game.
D.C.:	Guys from the west end...the small portion of whites out there would come up the hill there off Parker Lane and play.
Lucian Johnson:	Our original baseball field down by the Donaldson store where Fairlington is there now was our neighborhood.
D.C.:	Do you recall when Joe Lewis came in that area to train?

Lucian Johnson:	He camped down in Arlington what we now call Shirlington. (We call it “old camp” because the Fort Myers troops would maneuver). He used to come to our area and run through Parker Lane and run through our area. We had an open lane. [unintelligible] Max Spears used to be a boxer. The reason I remember him that was the fight Joe Lewis had at old [River] Stadium outside. That was 1939. That was to raise money for the military group. The strange things about it: Max Spears and the brother, real gigantic guy, he actually won the fight against Dempsey. He and Lewis fought outside together in April. Lewis knocked him out but technically he should have won the fight in nine rounds. That was a big fight. Joe Lewis would be out there 5:00 in the morning—
D.C.:	So, he was a real hero—
Lucian Johnson:	Oh, definitely. As a matter of fact...there weren't many people...natural thing.
Military Service, Marriage, and Family	
D.C.:	You lived there with your parents. Did you leave anywhere at all?
Lucian Johnson:	Yes. After second marriage. And in the military of course.
D.C.:	You fought in World War II?
Lucian Johnson:	Yes.
D.C.:	Where were you stationed?
Lucian Johnson:	I graduated in 1943 and in January 1944 did my training at Fort George, Washington, and later in Fort Belvoir. Last part of 1944 I went to India. Served several months in India. After I served, I went to Howard University for a while, got married [for the] first time. Drew a small paycheck through Journeyman's Pay through the government, no matter what the job they equaled it to make sure.
D.C.:	This is under the G.I. Bill?
Lucian Johnson:	Right. For four years. After that I went back to George Washington. Then I got married the second time in 1978. I was always in and out of the District.
D.C.:	Do you have any children?
Lucian Johnson:	Yes, yes, I have three, and my wife has six children. There are nine of us in all together. All my children live in Maryland. Two in Mitchellville, the other down in Landover. I have a daughter who lives down the street. Another lives near [unintelligible] Hospital,

	another lives downtown. They are all within the area. During and after I went to George Washington at night and worked at the Naval Research Laboratory for 10 years I transferred to the Census Bureau. I retired 50 years and six months. [Break in recording.]
D.C.:	I'm going to wrap this up and I really appreciate the time you have taken.
Lucian Johnson:	Yeah...I didn't retire from the government until 1996.
D.C.:	What year did you leave the Seminary area?
Lucian Johnson:	1948 after my first marriage was dissolved and stayed there until 1965.
D.C.:	How did you get your mail? Was it delivered or did you have to go to the Seminary Post Office?
Lucian Johnson:	Our address for our area. 1001 Parker Lane Theological Seminary because that was where all the mail was routed. Somebody in the neighborhood would pick up the mail and deliver it. Later they did have a contract a mail guy and we had a mailbox outside.
D.C.:	When you lived there did you have a car?
Lucian Johnson:	I didn't, but everybody else did.
D.C.:	...and this was in the late [19]30s, mid [19]30s.
Lucian Johnson:	I remember the old 1926 Chevrolet; 1933 Dodge; [and] they had canvas tops. The windshields were plastic and got broken because there was no defrost. People always had some sort of transportation even during the times of depression. We even had horses and buggies, but I was real young then.
Remarks Regarding Current Event, Election of President Obama	
D.C.:	One last question. Is there anything you would like to add to our conversation about growing up in that area?
Lucian Johnson:	It was a wonderful, close-knit area. You didn't really know until you were grown up that everyone was related. The burial ground there was one downtown off Duke that was first dedicated to the black soldiers. The Civil War. My brother used to tell me about it. It was dedicated at the National Cemetery. I didn't know for years it was dedicated to the Black soldiers. Something that is little known, originally the first Black soldiers were buried at Arlington Cemetery, along with Lee. Can you imagine? But then after the war went on, they figured was too much honor.

Lucian Johnson:	Douglas Woods's father is William Wood and he is buried at the Alexandria Cemetery.
D.C.:	He was a USCT [United States Colored Troops] and died at Petersburg.
Lucian Johnson:	That was a heck of a battle. It took them longer to get through Petersburg than to get through Richmond. Petersburg is a burial...that is where the coalminers...they got in but couldn't get out. Poor generalship. That's why they always now say when going to battle...What is your action? Like Iraq! That ends up being the longest war. It costs a lot of money and sooner or later we are going to have to pull out. It is like a trap. The existing military want to get out of there. Used to be after five years, you came home. Now they serve three or four [tours of] duties.
D.C.:	What do you think of President Obama? Did you think that would ever happen?
Lucian Johnson:	I prayed for it, but didn't think it would happen. I feel sorry for him [Obama]. He is in a heck of a position. The debt...he is trying to use new things. As life and luck will have it...why are we there?
D.C.:	My personal thought is we have a wonderful President who is up to the task.
Lucian Johnson:	I'm not knocking him...I'm just talking about the situation. We are fighting all of Asia and the Middle East.
D.C.:	Well, it's time to turn the tape recorder of. Again, it has been a pleasure speaking with you. [END]