

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



Project Name: Alexandria Legacies

Title: *Interview with Natalie Thompson Sanks Vaughn*

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Location of Interview: Home of Natalie Thompson Sanks Vaughn, Alexandria, Va.

Interviewers: Patricia Knock and Henry Mitchell

Transcriber: *Unknown*

Abstract: Natalie Thompson Sanks Vaughn was born in Alexandria in 1920. She worked as a substitute teacher at Parker-Gray School in Alexandria and for a short time during World War II for the Office of Price Administration in Washington, D.C. She then taught in North Carolina and at Manassas Institute when it was the only high school for African American children in rural Northern Virginia. She was Dean of Women at North Carolina A&T College and taught at Bowie State Teachers' College before becoming a teacher, vice-principal, and then principal in the Alexandria public school system. She talks about segregation of the schools in Virginia and about their integration in Alexandria. She talks about what happened in the schools at the time of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (Mrs. Vaughn also gave an interview to the Oral History of the Public School Principalship Program in May 1988; this interview can be read at http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/faculty_archives/principalship/v/224vaughn.html.)

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Introductions	
Patricia Knock:	First, let me say thank you very much from Alexandria Archaeology for talking to us. Like we were talking on the phone, I explained that we are doing a project for the families that settled on Fort Ward Park after the Civil War. I was real happy to talk to Margarette Cooper, who gave me your name. I need to fill out some of this biographical information, so let me just write this down
Natalie Vaughn:	You want a pad or something heavy
P.K.:	I think there is enough here.
Natalie Vaughn:	I can bring you a TV chair or something.
P.K.:	So, your full name is?
Natalie Vaughn:	Natalie. N-A-T-A-L-I-E. My maiden name is Sanks. S-A-N-K-S.
P.K.:	Do you have a middle name?
Natalie Vaughn:	It was Thompson, and that's a long story. I will tell you about itit doesn't have a thing to do with Alexandria but it has something to do with my father's family. That is a family name, but somebody adopted my grandfather from down here in Fairfax, Virginia, and took him to Baltimore and renamed him Sanks. So you see we had quite a bit on both sides.
P.K.:	And you're Vaughn now. Your last name is?
Natalie Vaughn:	Vaughn. V-A-U-G-H-N.
P.K.:	Your address is?
Natalie Vaughn:	2227 Rollins Drive. R-O-L-L-I-N-S.
P.K.:	And your birthplace?
Natalie Vaughn:	Alexandria. 638 South Columbus Street.
P.K.:	638 South Columbus?
Natalie Vaughn:	Uh huh.
P.K.:	Were you born at home?
Natalie Vaughn:	Oh yes. That seemed to be the style in those days.
P.K.:	Do you know who the midwife was that delivered you?
Natalie Vaughn:	Yes, I'm trying to think of her name. Mrs. Brown. But, God knows, I can't think of her first name right now. She was a Mrs. Brown.
P.K.:	Virginia Brown?
Natalie Vaughn:	No. No. She was Ed Bell's grandmother, I think. But anyway, put down there, put in quotation marks, "Ma Brown" is what they called her. I can't think of what Mrs. Brown's real name was
P.K.:	The reason Lock you is because we wented to include the midwives on
	The reason I ask you is because we wanted to include the midwives on the list of significant African Americans and I have the names of two of them

P.K.:	You can let me know later
Natalie Vaughn:	When you get through I will call. It will only take a minute to speak to
	him.
P.K.:	What's your birth date?
Natalie Vaughn:	April 25, 1920.
Dr. Mitchell:	She's rather young.
Natalie Vaughn:	72.
P.K.:	Dates and places of residence in Alexandria?
Natalie Vaughn:	I was born at 638 South Columbus Street. Then we moved to 415 South Royal Street, where Margarette lives now. She bought the house from us. And then I left my mother, and my husband and I bought a home on Oronoco Street. Now we lived in Philadelphia as children. Do you need that?
P.K.:	No, I'll just put a little mark. Then you moved to Oronoco?
Natalie Vaughn:	1220 Oronoco. Then we moved here.
Dr. Mitchell	When did you move here?
Natalie Vaughn:	It will be 30 years in December. December 18, 1962. Just got through writing that up. This subdivision is getting ready [ringing sound] What's that?
P.K.:	Well, unfortunately, that's my beeper.
Natalie Vaughn:	Oh. You want to answer it?
P.K.:	Yes. [User goes off tape while she takes care of the page.]
Early Professional	Life
Natalie Vaughn:	Where's the speaker?
P.K.:	It's on the top. The dates and places of employment in Alexandria? Did you work in Alexandria?
Natalie Vaughn:	As a substitute teacher when I first came out of school in [19]41. I did that for one year.
P.K.:	What school was that?
Natalie Vaughn:	The black school. That would be Parker-Gray predominantly. It was Parker-Gray. A substitute. Then I worked for the government. I worked there with the Office of Price Administration because Pearl Harbor came that December, and then I went to work in the government, at the OPA. I married in April and in May I had the job.
P.K.:	May of 1942?
Natalie Vaughn:	[19]42
Dr. Mitchell:	You've been married 50 years?
Natalie Vaughn:	Yes. Unfortunately, Mr. Vaughn died at the 41st year. He died at the end of our 41st year. He lived through the 41st and died.
Natalie Vaughn: Dr. Mitchell:	
	end of our 41st year. He lived through the 41st and died.

	Pearl Harbor was December [1941] and we married November 25, 1942.
Natalie Vaughn:	By that time my husband was in Texas, and then he went overseas for three and a half years.
P.K.:	So you stayed in Alexandria and worked in the District?
Natalie Vaughn:	I didn't stay long, because that wasn't for me. I worked for them, that was in [19]42. In 1944 I went to North Carolina to teach. I went to Henderson. It was an AME [African Methodist Episcopal] Church school in Sedalia. S-E-D-A-L-I-A. There's a Sedalia in Missouri also. [Mrs. Vaughn later clarifies that this school was in Kittrell, North Carolina, rather than Sedalia.]
Dr. Mitchell:	Who founded that school in Sedalia?
Natalie Vaughn:	I don't know who founded that one. That belonged to the AME Church. I really don't know. It just wasn't cared for. It had some pretty buildings and things like that. The church didn't support it the way they should have. Then I came back and went to Howard University to get my master's in history. And decided by that time, when I left Sedalia—now let me get my things together here now. I went to Palmer [Palmer Memorial Institute] in [19]48. That's where Charlie Hawkins Brown was. I worked there too. I worked in private schools. It's nice to work in private schools. It's easier work but you just don't have the facilities and the money to pay the staff.
P.K.:	Palmer is where?
Natalie Vaughn:	It's not in the system now. Wait a minute. I told you it was Sedalia. Palmer is in Sedalia. I worked [earlier] at Kittrell College. It was named for a bishop I think.
Dr. Mitchell:	That's in North Carolina too?
Natalie Vaughn:	Yes. That's the one, in Kittrell, North Carolina, and it's just outside of Henderson, about seven miles outside of Henderson and I forget how many miles to Raleigh. It's straight down [Route] 1 to Raleigh.
P.K.:	Is that in 1944? The first one? Is that the AME Church school?
Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah. That's the AME Church school. Then I went to Sedalia.
P.K.:	Is Sedalia Palmer, then?
Natalie Vaughn:	Yes. Palmer Memorial Institute or just Palmer Institute. It was named for Alice Freeman Palmer.
P.K.:	What year was the Palmer?
Natalie Vaughn:	[19]48 and [19]49.
P.K.:	And Howard University was after that? After thethe history degree was after that?
Natalie Vaughn:	No, I went to Howard University in [19]44, when I finished—while I was in the government, and in between that time I didn't work anymore. I left the government and went to work at Palmer, I mean at Kittrell, for one year, at the school. It was in [19]45 when I came back. I went to Howard in [19]44 and [19]45 for a master's degree in

	history. In the meantime I started teaching and I realized that I was more interested in history than the kids were. So they got disgusted with me. Then I left Howard and then I worked at Manassas Institute. Miss Jennie Dean founded that school. It was called Regional High School when I worked there.
P.K.:	And what year was that?
Natalie Vaughn:	I went there from [19]49 to [19]53. And then II didn't finish Howard because, as I was teaching, I decided thatI would get excitedI mean, to me Pearl Harbor was recent news, but it was just seven or eight years for the children, but they couldn't care less. So I
P.K.:	Kids are like that sometimes. I didn't appreciate history enough when I was a child.
Natalie Vaughn:	And, see, I am a history buff.
P.K.:	That's why you love this then? Right?
Natalie Vaughn:	I just have to remember the dates. It seems so long ago.
Dr. Mitchell:	That's what my daughter's field is. She is a professor of history at City College in New York.
Natalie Vaughn:	Oh What is her specialty?
Dr. Mitchell:	African history. She is going to Rutgers in September.
Natalie Vaughn:	She's going to work there?
Dr. Mitchell:	She is going to work there, yes.
Natalie Vaughn:	That school is really getting a lot of attention. I went on their campus two years ago. It is beautiful up there. Then I decided to go to New York University, so we went after—my mother died and that's what threw everything off. When she died I just chucked everything and that's when I went back and worked at A&T [Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro, North Carolina]. I stayed in Manassas and went from Manassas to A&T. In the meantime, my mother died at the end of my term in Manassas. She died in [19]52. I must have stayed in Manassas from [19]49 to [19]53. It was too late for me to resign. I just stayed there. I had a friend I had gone to Howard with who was working at A&T College and I told him that I wanted any type of job, and I went on the dean of women's staff down there. I just needed to get away from Alexandria. See those two houses next door to Margarette Cooper, there was a lot and I was going to build on it, and thank God I didn't build on them, because when Mama died, I just sort of—you know how you get sort of, you just need to get away. So I went to NYU [New York University] and worked. I told you I went to Palmer in [19]48. I had a master's when I went to Palmer because I went to New York University and spent the whole summer, the summer the war ended in [19]45. I was in New York and I got my master's degree from New York University in March of [19]48. Then I came back and went to Palmer and from Palmer I went to Manassas. I believe that was the only black high school in any part of the rural part of Northern Virginia. See, Parker-Gray, the black school here, wasn't

	anastad viiti I had finishad sallaga Manassas taali in they had the
	created until I had finished college. Manassas took inthey had the children from Prince William County.
P.K.:	I'm from Prince William County.
	e, A&T College, and Bowie State Teachers' College
Natalie Vaughn:	They had all the children—all along the Occoquan—and all the
	children were bused to Manassas every morning, but that's not the
	worst of it. Fairfax County, even Fort Belvoir, had to take their
	children. Now, the whites were able to go to some of the local Fairfax
	County schools, but Virginia schools were still segregated. So the black children rode all the way from down to Fort Belvoir—all the
	way to Manassas, about 30 miles each way. And they would get on the
	road. Well, we thought that was bad enough. Well, up in Fauquier
	County the only black high school was in Warrenton—but the City of
	Warrenton did not take the county children, so all the children that
	lived in Fauquier County had to come down to ManassasSome of
	them lived all the way in a place called Hume, Virginia. They have a
	lot of dairy farms out that way, too, and I had some boys that used to sleep all the time in my class—and when I finally spoke to one about it
	(I always made a habit of not being angry when I spoke to him), I,
	"Are you sick? What's wrong? Are you going to bed late at night?" He
	said, "No, Mrs. Vaughn. I go to bed as early as I can but I have to get
	up at 4:00 o'clock every morning." They had a dairy farm, and the
	father worked for the post office in Washington, D.C., and he said that
	he left home on Sunday night and he didn't come back anymore until Friday night, at the end of his workweek. This boy had to get up and
	get the cows milked and the cans had to be brought to the milk
	cooperative. He had to have those milk cans out there by 5:30 or 6:00.
	He had to run, and there was a lady who drove the elementary school
	bus and she would take him down to where he could pick up the high
	school bus, and that was still a long drive at that point. It is a place
	called Gordon Run, you may have heard it. I stayed there. I finished at
	NYU in [19]48 and went to Palmer, stayed a year, came back, and got a job working from [19]49 to [19]53, that's four years. And I would
	have been there still I think had it not been for the fact that my mother
	passed.
P.K.:	After you were dean of the women's staff, where was that?
Natalie Vaughn:	North Carolina A&T [Agricultural and Technical] College.
P.K.:	Okay. You went to A&T College on the dean of women's staff?
Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah, on the staff; then later I became the dean of women down there.
P.K.:	And when did you leave there?
Natalie Vaughn:	In [19]56.
P.K.:	Then you come back up here?
Natalie Vaughn:	Then I came back to Bowie State [Teachers' College] because by that
	time my husband and I had bought this home, andhe would come

	down to Greensboro. But that's not any way to live if you're married, so I got to Bowie. And I was hoping that I would be able to commute, but Bowie is such an inaccessible place. I'll tell you—somebody must have said, "Let's find a desolate place," and, boom, and that's where they put the college. Anyway, that's
P.K.:	That's Maryland, right?
Natalie Vaughn:	Right.
P.K.:	And how long were you there?
Natalie Vaughn:	Two years.
P.K.:	So that would be 1958?
Schools in Alexan	dria
Natalie Vaughn:	That's right. That wasn't close enough, since I couldn't commute. Got snowed in one winter and I didn't need to be snowed in that close to home and not be able to get there. So then I got a job as assistant principal at Charles Houston Elementary School. By that time Parker-Gray had moved into a new building. That's where they knocked down the place over there on Madison Street, and it was on Madison Street that they built the new Parker-Gray. Then of course by that time they integrated the school, and the next thing you knew it was gone. I just read an article, I think in [19]65, that was the last class.
P.K.:	I need to turn this over—you've worked so many places
Natalie Vaughn:	Oh yes.
P.K.:	Where did you go after that? You were at Charles Houston Elementary School as the assistant principal? For how long? How many years?
Natalie Vaughn:	I started in 1958 and I stayed there until [19]68 at that particular school. From [19]68 to [19]70 I was at Cora Kelly. That's when they started integrating the schools. I was assistant principal there.
P.K.:	Did you know a teacher named Donna Westinmeyer?
Natalie Vaughn:	I met her a long time ago. Tell her you saw me. Her husband knows me too.
P.K.:	He is in charge of the school program where I work.
Natalie Vaughn:	He came up to me two years ago—I went up there about my health insurance—and he said, "I bet you don't remember me?" He started laughing. Yeah. I knew him very well. I just talked to him. It was about two years ago.
P.K.:	Let me speed you up here. [19]68 to [19]70, Cora Kelly—principal?
Natalie Vaughn:	No, assistant principal.
P.K.:	Assistant principal. And then what next.
Natalie Vaughn:	Then I came down to Lee in [19]70 and [19]70 to [19]71 I was the assistant principal down there and in [19]72 I became the principal. I stayed there until [19]78. I moved and went to Stonewall Jackson in 1975 because they were getting ready to close Lee out. By the time I left Lee, half of the building was administrative offices, so I moved over to Stonewall Jackson, and that's closed too now. That's right

	down there off of Quaker Lane today. Somebody said the school was done over there; it's an office building. I worked there from [19]75 to [19]78 as principal. I worked at Lee from [19]72 until [19]75 as principal. That's when we had that merge. You probably heard about how they merged—paired—the elementary schools. So Lee was paired with MacArthur. Then, I left there and I was transferred from Stonewall Jackson over to John Tyler, and that's part of NOVA (Northern Virginia Community College) now, and I worked there from [19]78 to [19]80—that's two years—as their principal. And then I told them I was about ready to come outside, and I went to Lyles-Crouch for my last two years, and that was from [19]80 to [19]82, and by that time, I was 62 and I said, "Thank God."
0 0	nools in Alexandria
P.K.:	You said something back there that just sparked my personal interest in Alexandria, I guess because I think of myself as a Yankee—tell me about how that went when you integrated the schools. How did it seem to go here?
Natalie Vaughn:	When they integrated the schools, that was earlier—that was a pairing of the schools. See, it got so that housing determined which neighborhood schoolMost black students lived in the old part of Alexandria and then some of them remained and the rest lived in Seminary. And then, of course, well you see the projects, and of course that was black and therefore the schools were black. Even after integrating. They integrated the teachers first. We got our first white teachers around 1965, and the black teachers were sent to predominantly white schools, and for each one you sent, you had a white teacher. That's how they did that. But then people began to move and you had children living in certain places. Most schools weren'tthe inner-city school would be maybe 90% or 96% black. You didn't have the Hispanics here then, and not too many Asians either. They decided to pair the schools, and I never will forget that.
P.K.:	And they called it "pairing the schools"?
Natalie Vaughn:	Pairing the schools. The last pairing, I think, has just been broken up this year, and that's Ramsey and Houston. That's the oldest of the pairing.
P.K.:	So you take half of the kids from one school and put them in another
Natalie Vaughn:	No, you break them in half by grades. For instance, they had put all the black children in the receiving schools, as I called them. They would take all grades kindergarten to third. That meant all the little black children would be traveling across town, so someone asked during the meeting time, "Do you think that's really fair taking those little children?" Now, you've got every black school—every school in a predominantly black area—had become, you know, grades 4, 5, and 6. See, they didn't want to fool with the big black children, you know. I think they were afraid of them or something. Wait just a minute. Excuse me. [Telephone rings; tape is stopped and started again.] Some

	of the irregularities. It got so that they had paired, let's see, Houston—the new Houston which you see now on West Street—was paired with Ramsey on the West End where it is predominately white. Now, it ends up that they have so many Asians out there now, and this year they decided to make it a separate school—kindergarten through sixth—and then the people that lived at Landmark, there is one section that is still going to have to be bused, and they are asking that they do something for them, but that's today's history. Then we at Lee were paired with MacArthur. MacArthur nearly died when they were paired with Lee because Lee was downtown. We had little or no children down there, frankly speaking, and I told Mr. Sanger that was reverse busing really. The whites were really being bused, because we had no blacks to bus to them hardly. They only had two grades down there, grades 5 and 6. They had given us the upper grades, but now Houston got the lower grades—they got the primary grades and Ramsey took grades 4, 5, and 6. I'm trying to think—Cora Kelly was paired with John Tomlin, and, who else, and Polk was paired with Old Fickland, and Lyles-Crouch was paired with Maury, and they still employ this invisible line even today. That's what it was, and the Nazis showed up when they were having this meeting at George Washington High School (G.W.). These men had seated themselves right on the front row, They had coats on and nobody knew anything, and all of a sudden you heard this thing like "ATTENTION" and all of them threw their coats off and stood up and gave the "Sig Heil."
P.K.:	Nazis in Alexandria?
Natalie Vaughn:	They were stationed up here in Arlington.
P.K.:	What year was that?
Natalie Vaughn:	It was in 1972.
P.K.:	What did the people do?
Natalie Vaughn:	Well, the meeting was canceled and we never gained any
P.K.:	That was a School Board meeting?
Natalie Vaughn:	Yes, but the Board was meeting in the school so they would have more room for the people. Well, that's what I say, don't ever get me to talking about this.
Neighborhoods in	Alexandria
P.K.:	Okay. I am going to move on. I have a feeling it will take you a long time to answer this to, so let me fill this out later. This is community participation. Do you have any old photographs, diaries, letters, or any items that might be of interest?
Natalie Vaughn:	No. Not dealing with the Adams family. I have pictures of my mother, but not even that many of her.
P.K.:	So you don't have any of that? Do you have younger family members or friends that you could get that from?
Natalie Vaughn:	Well, you said you are going to see Julia Bradby. See, now, Julia Bradby knows—remembers—Uncle Bob and Aunt Clara very well

	because they used to visit her mother. Her mother incidentally is
D IZ	buried up there in that cemetery—up there at the city gardens.
P.K.:	What was her maiden name?
Natalie Vaughn:	Her mother's maiden name was Roy, but she was married to an Adams, you see. That's my mother's brother she was married to.
P.K.:	Oh. Let me explain the legal document, all right?
Natalie Vaughn:	All right.
P.K.:	After we take this tape, the lawyers are writing up a paper that gives Alexandria Archaeology the okay for using this tape. Specifically, I'll be using it to write up that report on the Fort Ward project. But then other people, other historians that will come in to Alexandria, will be working on certain projects and the tape will be indexed about certain things that you spoke about. The pairing and things that I wasn't sure about and somebody might want to be educated on that.
Natalie Vaughn:	Well I've done that for George Mason University. Because they asked about the school system in this area.
P.K.:	So, you're familiar with the process. That process. Um, I don't know exactly where to start. When you lived downtown in Alexandria as a child did you go to Fort Ward? Were you familiar with that area?
Natalie Vaughn:	I didn't know a thing about Fort Ward until after World War II. Then they started developments, so check and see when it was developed. It was after World War II. Now, the blacks, my family, used to call it "the Fort." I had no idea there was a real fort up there. I'd been up there and we had a cousin named Lucy Casey who lived up there. But the point was, I had never—I didn't have any idea it was Fort Ward, I just knew it—they just said that we were going up to the fort. Now, for instance, they would tell me about the girl drowned at the fort
P.K.:	Did you hear it called "The Hill"?
Natalie Vaughn:	No. We lived out on what they call in Alexandria "the Hill." The south side of Alexandria had a section called the Hill on Gibbons and Alfred Street. That was the Hill. Then where we lived in the 400 block of South Royal Street, that was called Hayti, which I think was the dialect for Haiti. We lived out there on Royal Street. We moved in there—I think I was about three or four years old. My brother was born there in 1924. We either came in the spring of [19]24 or the winter of [19]23. I think it was the spring of [19]24.
Family History	
P.K.:	Your relationship with Clara and Robert Adams is on Robert's side of the family, isn't it?
Natalie Vaughn:	The Adams side, yes.
P.K.:	And how is it—can you explain that to me?
Natalie Vaughn:	Oh yes. Robert Adams—Uncle Bob as they called him—was my mother's uncle. That was her father's brother. Her father's name was James Adams. He had two sisters.

P.K.:	Do you know what James's father's name was?
Natalie Vaughn:	Somebody told me and I don't remember. I know it was either James
	or George. But, I know—what do you have there?
P.K.:	I have George.
Natalie Vaughn:	That's it.
P.K.:	Okay. Now, I don't have James down. This is the 1870 census. Was James younger than Robert?
Natalie Vaughn:	I can't tell you that because I don't really know.
P.K.:	So Robert and James were brothers. Is that right?
Natalie Vaughn:	That's right.
P.K.:	Okay. This is an 1870 census here. It's kind of—this is an 1870 census—up here is George Adams and this gives his age.
Natalie Vaughn:	How old was he at the time?
P.K.:	He was 45.
Natalie Vaughn:	45.
P.K.:	In 1870. Then it lists the children. This is Anne—no, that's his wife, who is 30—then Robert, and this is one that married Clair, he was three years old, then Sarah was eight, Mary two, and they had a little one, Kizzia
Natalie Vaughn:	Now, that's what I was getting ready to tell. They had more than that. The only ones I knew would be Kizzy, Aunt Kizzy, and Aunt Ada, because Aunt Ada was under her. I don't know Mary. On my mother's side they had Marys and Sarahs.
P.K.:	How was—was Kizzy older than Ada or Ada was younger than
Natalie Vaughn:	I couldn't tell you which one was older or younger. But both of them I knew.
P.K.:	Was James and Ada and Kizzia about the same age?
Natalie Vaughn:	Well, there brothers and sisters.
P.K.:	I know, but were they close in age?
Natalie Vaughn:	I don't know because the first name that you have up therewhat's the first name you have up there?
P.K.:	The first name is Robert.
Natalie Vaughn:	He must have been the oldest, then?
P.K.:	Actually, no. Sarah is the oldest, 8 eight years old.
Natalie Vaughn:	Then who is up next?
P.K.:	Then who comes next is Robert, then Mary, then Kizzia. So, I'm guessing that these other two children were born after.
Natalie Vaughn:	I have no idea.
P.K.:	Okay. I'm going to just write their names down.
Natalie Vaughn:	James is my mother's father. Then there is Aunt Ada and she married a Casey. She died a long time ago too. I was grown when she died. I was in college.

Natalie Vaughn: Discreption of Mrs. Belk. Discreption of Mrs. Belk.
Natalie Vaughn: Virginia. P.K.: [Laughs] I work with Mrs. Belk. Natalie Vaughn: I know. P.K.: I like her. Natalie Vaughn: Their mother and my mother were all first cousins. Her grandmothernow Mrs. Belk doesn't remember her grandmother too well because Aunt Ada died when they were little toddlers. P.K.: No, she doesn't. No, she doesn't remember her at all. She remembers her step-grandmother and we called her Mrs. Price. That was her married name. They were closer to her because that's who they called grandmother. I think the older boysthe brothers would remember. P.K.: Have you heard stories about Robert and Clair? Natalie Vaughn: No. All I knew that theyI don't even knownow Julia knows her maiden name and everything, but I did not. And she said that she is not a McKnight; she's another name. P.K.: Was it Shorts? Natalie Vaughn: No. P.K.: Clair, before she was married Natalie Vaughn: I have no idea. Julia will have to tell you that. P.K.: Okay. We will ask Julia. Natalie Vaughn: See, what happened—we did not see them that much because, as I told you, there were no buses or anything between here and Seminary. We would walk to Seminary and From downtown Alexandria?
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Natalie Vaughn: Yeah. Then, the biggest thing on Sunday was get on King Street and
walk all the way from the 400 block to King and Royal all the way up to Union Station, sit there, watch the trains and come back home. That would be our fun.
P.K.: And that was only halfway to the Fort, right?
Natalie Vaughn: Right. Well, we never did go to the Fort.
P.K.: Never went.
Natalie Vaughn: I remember going to see Lucy one time. That was one of our cousins. But now, I do remember seeing this Uncle Bob—when you live there we will take you to see Uncle Bob and all that—actually, they came to visit. I knew one of them died. Now, when did Robert die? Does it show?
P.K.: I'm sorry—I don't have that with me.
Natalie Vaughn: What about his wife?

P.K.:	[19]52. Do you remember?
Dr. Mitchell:	Yeah, [19]52. It's on the stone.
P.K.:	It's on the stone.
Natalie Vaughn:	Okay. Well, then she died the same year that my mother died.
P.K.:	Did you knowthis is from the 1910 census. Did you know any of these names? James Young? John Peters?
Natalie Vaughn:	Are those the people you said about in the Seminary area?
P.K.:	Right. They are the ones that lived
Dr. Mitchell:	Peters? I know a Peters
P.K.:	Right.
Natalie Vaughn:	Right. The Peters belonged to the Episcopal Church
Dr. Mitchell:	Right. Her daughter1 talked to Juanita Peters, I talked to her about three weeks ago and I am supposed to call her and get some information.
Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah. One of them married a girl named Margaret Peters and they used to live in the 100 block of North Henry Street, and then they took all those homes. That's where they put those office buildings. But, I don't know what happened to Margaret. They had at least one daughter.
P.K.:	Did you know Javins? Samuel Javins?
Natalie Vaughn:	Javins or Gavins?
P.K.:	Javins.
Natalie Vaughn:	Julia would know this. I don't.
P.K.:	So you're mostly a downtown girl, huh?
Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah. We lived downtown. See, I'll tell you what happened too. My mother's father James Adams died when he was 35 years old. He had a heat stroke—sunstroke—walking from downtown Alexandria where he was either working in a restaurant or some place and it was so hot he had a sunstroke and he died at 35.
P.K.:	Do you know what month it was?
Natalie Vaughn:	It must have been the summer as hot as it was.
P.K.:	The summer of [19]35?
Natalie Vaughn:	No. He was 35.
P.K.:	He was 35. What year was that?
Natalie Vaughn:	I have no idea. If my mother were living today she would be 100 on November 25, 1992. She would have been 100; she was born 1892. My father was 35 when he died. So, it would be [19]92 and 35, that would be
Dr. Mitchell:	I thought he died at 35 years old?
P.K.:	No. She's trying to subtract backwards to get the

Dr. Mitchell:	Oh, 35 from
Natalie Vaughn:	My mother was five years old when her father died. He must have died around 1897.
P.K.:	Is he buried in Alexandria?
Natalie Vaughn:	I have no idea. My grandmother is. I was old enough when she died to recognize what was going on. I was eight. My grandfather had been dead a long time. So she [my mother] was five when he died and she was 100 in 1992. So he died in 1987. He was 35 at the time.
P.K.:	What job did he have? What did he do?
Natalie Vaughn:	I think, if I'm not mistaken, I heard it said he would go away every summer and work, and he'd go at on that boat we'd call the [unintelligible]. He would spend the summer working at the Chamberlin Hotel [Hampton, Virginia]. She told me that much.
P.K.:	This is James we're talking about?
Natalie Vaughn:	Yes. That's her father. James Adams.
Dr. Mitchell	Chamberlin Hotel. That's the one down there.
Natalie Vaughn:	Yes. Point Comfort. That's right. I decided about two years ago I was going to stay in that place.
P.K.:	Where is Point Comfort?
Natalie Vaughn:	Old Point Comfort. It's nearyou heard of Fort Monroe?
Dr. Mitchell:	Just outside of that.
Natalie Vaughn:	All right. You come off it just as you get ready to go to that bridge that takes you to Norfolk, you make a turn—it says Pembrooke or something—and you turn right there and one part will take you up to Monroe and the other part will take you all the way to the water's edge, and that's where the Chamberlin Hotel is.
Dr. Mitchell:	Did you stay in the Chamberlin?
Natalie Vaughn:	I doubt it.
Dr. Mitchell:	Did you stay there?
Natalie Vaughn:	I stayed there for historical reasons.
Dr. Mitchell:	Oh yeah. 'Causethey're trying to restore it, you know. There's not much going on around there.
Natalie Vaughn:	No there's not.
Dr. Mitchell:	My brother-in-law and sister-in-law had their 50th anniversary celebration there about four years ago.
P.K.:	Is that at the top of where Virginia Beach is?
Natalie Vaughn:	No. Not that far. It's rightif you've been down 64 going over to Norfolk, you have to enter the tunnel and then you get off and then
Dr. Mitchell:	It's before you get to the tunnel. That'sit would be to the left of the tunnel. One road you can go into Fort Monroe and Old Point Comfort they call it and the Chamberlin Hotel is right down there. It used to be a majestic hotel. A lot of people used to work there I know.

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Natalie Vaughn:	It's right on the water.
P.K.:	It sounds beautiful.
Natalie Vaughn:	That's what my grandfather did during the summer. He probably
	worked in someplace similar in Alexandria during the off season.
Dr. Mitchell:	My wife's grandfather worked at the Chamberlin Hotel.
Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah. I decided we had the minister here and he was retiring from the Methodist ministry and they had his retirement there, so someone said, "Do you want to stay?" and I said, "Yes." They said, "What hotel?" and I said, "Right at the Chamberlin." I was telling Julia this would have significance for me so when I came back I told her I was disappointed in it just as I was with the old Waldorf Astoria. Because it's got a name and nothing else.
Dr. Mitchell	They're run-down now.
Natalie Vaughn:	They were star hotels in their time. You see, up untilthe last 25 or 35 years, most blacks didn't go to Virginia beaches. What's the name of that beach?
Dr. Mitchell:	Buckroad
Natalie Vaughn:	Buckroad Beach, and my daughter took me over when she went to Hampton. We went to Buckroad. She told me that they had built up over there, they had put some kind of amusements
Dr. Mitchell:	Yeah
P.K.:	Now, your motherdo you have sisters and brothers?
Natalie Vaughn:	My mother?
P.K.:	Your mother and father were who?
Natalie Vaughn:	My mother was Alexandrian—she was born in Alexandria and she was James Adams's daughter. James Adams married Felicia Williams, and she is the youngest daughter. In fact, she was the youngest child they had. They had six children
P.K.:	Can you give me the names of those other children?
Natalie Vaughn:	Well, we had them someplace here. I'll tell you the ones I know first. Uh
P.K.:	Do you have a family Bible with the names in it?
Natalie Vaughn:	No. I have a cousin that has a Bible that belonged to her mother who was my grandmother's sister, and they have everybody's dates in it. I said I was going to start that, but then I didn't. My auntthe oldest one that I can recall is Uncle Jim, that's Julia Bradby's father, and then there is my Aunt Mary and then there is Uncle Robert and my mother. There were only four of them that lived. There was one named Rebecca and there was another one, but I don't know the name. Just like you gave them the names of Sarah and other, I never heard of those people. They must have died when they were little children.
P.K.:	Yeah, it's possiblechild mortality
Father's and Motl	her's Occupations

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Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah, but my grandmother Sanks, my father's mother, had nine children but only two of them [side 1 of tape stops; side 2 begins in the middle of a sentence]I was a little taller. I've shrunk a bit. I'm about four. I always say I'm about five feet but—all the children in the Sanks family—my grandmother was short, my grandfather was nearly six feet tall—so maybe some of those who died if they had survived they would have been the taller ones. But my father worked in the government; he worked in the post office and then after they told him he was too short—he had to reach—and he said [unintelligible]I remember he got in the post office and they didn't have anything for mail clerks. I remember the 22nd Street Post Office in Philadelphia.
P.K.:	In the 1880s, I think, one of the families has a postmana long time ago they did, but then they stopped I guess.
Natalie Vaughn:	Well, no, they had those. Some places in the South had mail carriers before we got them here in Alexandria. I remember there was a man, I heard people who were older and I would hear them call his name, he was the first black letter carrier here and the people refused to take the mail from him. It's really—Daddy went and got on at the post office and that's where he classifiedI remember that he had to go throughI remember it looked like a suitcase that had this little box of numbers and it had a little code thingnow, everything is done mechanically. But they used to have to sort the mail themselves.
P.K.:	I've seen pictures or films of people doing that, and it's like zoom, zoom, zoom.
Natalie Vaughn:	He would bring this suitcase home and it would have these little cards in it. Mama was a hairdresser. First she was a domestic; she worked from the time she was twelve or thirteen in the city and then she went to school and decided to become a hairdresser. In black history they will tell you about a Madam C.J. Walker?
Dr. Mitchell:	Yeah.
Natalie Vaughn:	Well, Madam C.J. Walker started around 1910 or [19]11. My mother, she took it in 1912 I think, and she was one of the oldest hairdressers here for a while. Sheat that time all they did was shampoo and what they called press. She made a straightening comb that you would heat and go through and take the kinks out of the hair. Some people still use that. White and black use a straightening comb now to straighten out their hair—they don't want natural curls. So, anyway, Mama did the hair for quite a while and went to Philadelphia with money from a woman called [unintelligible], but she never did go and take the curling and the waving, she only did the basic.
P.K.:	How much would it cost back then to go to the beauty shop and get your shampoo and press?
Natalie Vaughn:	About a quarter?
P.K.:	A quarter?
Natalie Vaughn:	Or 50 cents. When I was in college, I wasn't paying but 75 cents in Baltimore when I went to undergraduate college. Then it went to a

	dollar and a quarter.
P.K.:	And would you still tip them a little?
Natalie Vaughn:	We didn't even know what the word "tip" meant. You just paid it. You didn't even know what the word "tip" meant. Now I go—I have a cousin who runs—in fact Maybell's—her uncle's daughter has a very nice shop and if I go I go just for the basics too.
P.K.:	How much are you paying now?
Natalie Vaughn:	Only about \$20.00, 'cause my daughter
P.K.:	Only \$20.00.
Natalie Vaughn:	She pays \$40, more than I do. Anything special I think it is up to \$40.00. But normally, I don't pay but \$20.00 to get my hair shampooed and set and that's it.
Transportation, S	tores, and Houses in Alexandria
P.K.:	When you were living in downtown Alexandria, you said that there weren't any buses or anything that went out Fort Ward way. Were there city buses or could you go into the District?
Natalie Vaughn:	They had trolley cars. Has anybody told you about the trolley cars?
P.K.:	A little bit but not much.
Natalie Vaughn:	Well, the trolley cars came right by our house on Royal Street. I'm trying to think whether they turned on King or Cameron—but I remember going to see my Aunt Mary who lived up on North Henry Street and it seemed liked the trolley car would turn at Cameron and we would get off there at the corner of Cameron and Henry and walk a half a block to her place.
P.K.:	How much did that cost?
Natalie Vaughn:	I have no idea. I mean when I say that—we were
P.K.:	Where you given a lot of freedom to travel in the city? I mean, your parents said it was okay for you to take the trolley?
Natalie Vaughn:	Oh no, no. We couldn't do anything, we were really sheltered. My mother was—in her day, she would be considered an old maid—she didn't get married until she was 27, and I was born when she was 28. My grandmother always would tell me, my father's mother, "Your mother was really an old maid," she said. Because she was over 25 and my grandmother let me know she got married when she was 24. But you see, I have a daughter now who is going to get married next year and she's going to be 33. So you see, all that is gone by the way. I'm glad it has too. No, we did not go anywhere by ourselves. I never used a can opener until I was about thirteen or fourteen. My mother—you had home economics and they would tell you to open a can or something—we were just too sheltered and I don't think that was good, and so I made up my mind
P.K.:	I don't know. You turned out pretty good.
Natalie Vaughn:	Well, we had enough to have a little bit of adventure in me. My mother was a very timid woman. She

P.K.:	Your mother wasn't telling you, "Go do this" and "Go do that"
Natalie Vaughn:	Oh no. The biggest thing that we could do would be go to the store at the corner to get a loaf of bread or something
P.K.:	What store was that?
Natalie Vaughn:	Well the store was at the corner of—Rosenberg was at the corner of—it was Layman's first, and it was at the corner of Royal and Wolfe Street. We used to get bread and stuff. But they would go to—years ago, they had the A&P store and there was something up on King Street called the Piggy Wiggly store and I'll never forget that. Now they make fun of the name Piggly Wiggly
Dr. Mitchell:	Yeah, I remember the Piggly Wiggly.
Natalie Vaughn:	Well, I don't remember too many of the stores and we had the A&P around the corner on Wolfe and Fairfax Street. They would never last over there today. They have that one store down on Royal Street—500 block of South Royal—they have a Safeway but they were not allowed to put a sign out. The sign is hanging on a little thing because you don't have any ads or anything in the windows in Old Town. Of course, Alexandria has those strict codes.
P.K.:	The house that you lived in when you were a child, it's still there now? That's the one that Margarette
Natalie Vaughn:	Margarette lives in the one that we moved inmust have been during the spring of [19]24. My brother was going to that office
P.K.:	The one that you were born in? Do you remember it?
Natalie Vaughn:	Oh yes. Very much so.
P.K.:	Is it still there?
Natalie Vaughn:	No. They built a wholeif you've ever been on Franklin Street between Gibbons and Franklin, where the Greene Funeral home isyou see all those brick houses across the street on Columbus Street? Well we were 638—now they call it 688. They've got 10 units
P.K.:	What was it like, the house? I don't have a picture of it.
Natalie Vaughn:	I don't have pictures of much of anything, either. People didn't take pictures. They took formal pictures. It's justit just looks false. When you take pictures when you're looking intelligenthave you ever seen those pictures?
Dr. Mitchell	Tintype.
P.K.:	Yeah, they have to stand real still for a long time.
Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah, it's really something. I can remember the house. We had no electricity. But, would you believe me? I always tell everybody that I was born in a house that had a bathroom
P.K.:	Good for you.
Natalie Vaughn:	We did not have everything. We hadlet's seewe had a toilet and a bathtub up there, but no sink. That was unusual, and when somebody said—they came up and said that they didn't have a bath. Fortunately,

	I was born in a house that had a bath. When they put it in now, my cousins claimed that my father told them that he wasn't used to living in a house—he came from Baltimore—that he did live in a house with a bathroom. But the woman had this bathroom put in there
P.K.:	Was it a two-story house?
Natalie Vaughn:	Two-story frame house. It was a good-size house. It must have been at least three bedrooms in it. It was a good-size house. It was row housing. They have loads of people, the people who still live up there are very friendly. One of the ladies who lived up there just died Sunday and, in fact, when I go to church Thursday night or Friday during the day, I will see all of those people who used to live up there years ago.
Dr. Mitchell:	And which church do you go to?
Natalie Vaughn:	I go to Alfred Street—no, my grandmother went to Alfred Street—I go to Roberts Memorial Methodist Church I remember when we got our first electric refrigerator, I remember when we got electric lights down on Royal Street when we first moved in—and all thatthe houses were very nice. As far as we were concerned, we didn't realize that they were substandard, but to us they were good. A woman lived on South Washington Street, named Mrs. Hill, Doris Hill. She lived right there at the corner. They have a lot of shops there now, antique shops, at the corner of Franklin and Washington.
P.K.:	On the eastwest side.
Natalie Vaughn:	On the west side. The suburban cleaners is across and then diagonal from it is Sutton Place, and Mrs. Hill lived there and she had a large lawn and everything. It was a nice home. Some of those people worked for her apparently. She owned all those houses on the back of her and
P.K.:	So, was the neighborhood mixed white and black then?
Integrated Neighb	orhoods in Alexandria
Natalie Vaughn:	You know, that's the strangest thing—Alexandria is a strange city—we lived on South Royal Street ever since October [19]23 or [19]24, and we had white neighbors at the end of the block and across the lottwo white families plus the Jewish man who ran the store. That's why we couldn't understand why people were carrying on about the housing, because all lived right together.
P.K.:	Everyone got along well?
Natalie Vaughn:	Oh sure. Everybody knew everybody, and then Fannon had built some apartments—down by the Safeway—there used to be tunnel there and you've probably seen it.
Dr. Mitchell:	I saw that tunnel down under
Natalie Vaughn:	That's right. Well, right on that side which would be the 400 block, those apartments were built by Fannon, and whites used to live there and all up on the track. There was the same—people got along. Alexandria is a paradoxical area: you could live side by side with the

Natalie Vaughn:

Court...

	whites and have no trouble. Everybody knew each other and there was no problem. That's why when they opened up on Princess Street, the 1500 block right after you cross West Street, the people got worried because the blacks were moving in. I said to someone, "I don't know why they would do that, because we have always lived side by side." Down on the lower part of Columbus Street, where—half of that block Mrs. Hill owned from, I don't know, we were 638, and she owned all those houses, about six houses. She really owned—like this is Washington Street and here is Franklin—her place ran all over there—she owned all those houses and she rented them. My grandmother and her brother rented a house before he went to the service, and they brought their mother from Seminary into Alexandria to live with them. The brother went into World War I and was given a typhoid shot and he developed typhoid fever and died. And so she, of course, got the pension. She died in 1927—my sister was about a year old when she died. So, Alexandria had the most beautiful—when they got ready to integrate the schools after the [19]54 decision, none of the Southern states did it right away. For instance, Fairfax County never even had a black high school until 1954—those children had to go all the way to Manassas—so that's what's really strange. Arlington had a school. Alexandria had Parker-Gray. Warrenton had I can't tell you the name
	of the schoolThen there was Douglas High School up in Williamsburg—and that was it.
Schools, Churches	
P.K.:	You were naming them once before—did you name the school that
	your mom and dad went to?
Natalie Vaughn:	My father went to school up in Baltimore.
P.K.:	And your mom went in Alexandria?
Natalie Vaughn:	My mother went to whatever the girls' school was—I haven't found out yet. I think Hallowell was the women's school and the other one was Snowden I think.
P.K.:	I'm not sure, but I know both of those names.
Natalie Vaughn:	I think one is Hallowell and the other one was Snowden. I think.
P.K.:	So that's where she went to school? Elementary?
Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah. The uncle that took her after her father died didn't have any children and he lived right around the street from the Methodist Church and his wife went to the church and that's how she had become a Methodist.
P.K.:	So that's how you became a Methodist.
Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah, the whole family
P.K.:	Well, it's interesting from these Shorts and Adams, there are Episcopalians, some are Baptists, some are Methodists

All those people who lived up there because Tancil, you hear of Tancil

Da Mitaball	Tought week though of Tought though one Tought died not too long
Dr. Mitchell:	Tancil, yeah. I heard of Tancil. I heard one Tancil died not too long
Natalie Vaughn:	ago. Yeah, Herbert.
Dr. Mitchell:	Yeah. He was a member of Meade Memorial.
Natalie Vaughn:	Well, their mother, her mother's name—what was Mrs. Tancil's
ivatane vaugini.	maiden name—anyway, her name was Bertha—they named both of
	their children—the boy was named for the father and the girl was
	named from the mother and her mother's name was Bertha. Her
	motherher name was Bertha Miller. She was Episcopalian—because
	she used to go—they had the chapel up there in the Seminary and the
	blacks used to go to the chapel up there and the mother used to go to
	Sunday school up there
Dr. Mitchell:	That must be the Millers that you were looking for some time back
P.K.:	Right. I wonder if the mother—that mother—was Lavinia Miller.
Natalie Vaughn:	About how old is she?
P.K.:	This isin 1882—
Natalie Vaughn:	Does she have any children?
P.K.:	No. In 19—, I can't tell you. There was a Lavinia daughter of Bert and
	Harriet Shorts—so that Lavinia would have been Clara's sister.
Natalie Vaughn:	And she was a Miller?
P.K.:	She married a Miller.
Natalie Vaughn:	Mrs. Bert Tancil, Herbert's mother—the one that you remember—she
	was Mrs. Miller and she married Mr. Herbert. They got the fifth Tancil
	as Herbert P. Tancil and the one that died was number 3, wasn't it?
Da Mitaball	And the
Dr. Mitchell:	I just knew him as a member of the church, I didn't know
Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah. Well, Herbert just died—a lot of people say that Herbert is the
	fifth in line and he was the third. He was H.P. Tancil the third, his son is H.P. the fourth, and H.P. the fifth is about 14 years old. Herbert Pike
	Tancil. And he—Herbert the third—married one of the Ponders, so the
	two old families got together and the one you met, the one you saw his
	name down there, because old Mr. Tancil died first. He died first and
	then Mrs. Tancil died after him.
Dr. Mitchell:	I knew them when I was in the Seminary in 1954.
Natalie Vaughn:	Uh huh. Was Mr. Tancil living then?
Dr. Mitchell:	Yeah, I think so.
Natalie Vaughn:	Yes, he was a barber. The son is the one that died here several years
	ago. He was the one that was married to Gladys Quander and they had
	two children. See the people were intermarrying.
More Family Hist	•
Natalie Vaughn:	But now, I really can't say too much because when you come upsee,
	my mother's father was dead and my motherby the time my
	grandmother died—my mother's mother—died when I was about 8 (I

	told you [19]27 but she died in [19]28), we stayed here for a while and
	told you [19]27 but she died in [19]28), we stayed here for a while and then, as I told you, mama was very timid. She didn't like staying by herself and my father had to work in Philadelphia, so finally he decided to move the whole family to Philadelphia. [Before then,] he gave her a police dog, a great big shepherd. She was frightened to death of the darn dog and she put him in the basement, and this policeman asked her one time if she would like to sell the dog and she told him that she couldn't sell because her husband bought it for her and the man turned her in for animal cruelty because she kept the dog in the basement all day. The dog would come out and she'd put him out in the eveningI'll never forget. We went to the court, closed court, and my mother took the baby and the other three of us—there were four of us—and she said, "I don't have any money and I have to write to my husband, I'll send him a telegram." He'd send the money to her in the morning. They told her that she didn't have to worry, that she could mail it to them. We decided we must have been very naughty at that time because they were glad to see us leave. We all went down. In those days children weren't as active—see now, like my daughter, even when she was little I would take her around and we would just see people and not know really who they were. I remember seeing and I remember her telling about Uncle Bob—do you have any
	idea—you said you don't have any idea when he died? Robert Adams.
P.K.:	I don't know. I know it was before Clara, but I don't know how much time passed.
Natalie Vaughn:	See, I can remember—when my mother died I was 32—so I was old enough then to be cognizant of the various relatives, and the only ones that we were very friendly with was Aunt Ada's family. The Caseys. That would be Maybell Belk's grandparents, and we used to go and visit. Next door, the lady that lived right next to us, she was a carpenter
P.K.:	Really.
Natalie Vaughn:	Yes. We would do thatwe had a good time going down there, and they would come to see us. [Telephone is ringing in the background; tape stops and starts]But now, Julia's had them visit her home. They didn't come out, as I told you, a lot of the places—now, although we had the trolley right in front of the door, but you see they had to get to it. I know my mother would know her, and then I would hear Julia talk about Aunt Clara—that is why I asked you when you asked me, did the deed show both their names because all that was said is Clara Adams, Clara Adams, and it was supposed to be both of theirs
P.K.:	I didn't find it right away when I was looking in there, but this is the deed that Robert Adams and Clara Adams when they sell part of their land for the school lot, so, it shows
Natalie Vaughn:	What school lot is that?
P.K.:	That's for the Colored Church or the Colored School at Seminary

Natalie Vaughn:	Oh yeah.
P.K.:	That little school—do you know about that?
Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah, I didn't go there, but I know
P.K.:	Up here it gives both of their names.
Natalie Vaughn:	Who is this Shorts?
P.K.:	Harriet and Bert Shorts were the mother and father of Clara. And Harriet was a McKnight before she married Shorts, so Clara is a Shorts but there's others that are McKnights. Up here is the name—where I underlined it. Clara and Robert Adams.
Natalie Vaughn:	Sum of \$35.00?
P.K.:	Yeah. One-quarter acre of land for the school. Who all did you know that went to that school? That's still around?
Natalie Vaughn:	Oh, a lot of people up there. I think Julia went to that school
P.K.:	Yeah, I think she did. And Crozet Woods Johnson
Natalie Vaughn:	Woods—Crozet Woods probably. I don't know. Because almost everybody who lived up there went there. Because when they got through that school, most of them went into Washington to school.
P.K.:	That's what Mrs. Douglas did, right?
Natalie Vaughn:	They didn't go to Parker-Gray because usually when anybody came up through Alexandria they would have gone to Parker-Gray High School.
Historical Research	ch
P.K.:	This is the 1870 census, and remember I was telling you about Minnokin. Well, this is the Cassius F. Lee, that's the guy that had Minnokin—the owner of Minnokin—and then here is Bert Shorts and Harriet Shorts. This is house 163, then there's house 164, 165, and then 166 is Cassius F. Lee. Then also on Cassius F. Lee's property Bernie McKnight, which is one of the children, and Cyril McKnight, are both working as domestic servants and farmhand at their place. We were wondering if, because they lived close, was he maybe like an overseer for Cassius F. Lee's property. Is there—was a connection there before the Civil War?
Natalie Vaughn:	There might be. This was 19—?
P.K.:	This was 1870.
Natalie Vaughn:	Where did this come from? Where did you find all this out?
P.K.:	The Lloyd House.
Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah, I heard all you have to do is go in there and find things.
P.K.:	I can give you copies of everything I have. When I talk to your cousin, I will let her see what all—you're welcome to look and see what I have. I can make you copies.
Natalie Vaughn:	This is Clarathis one became Clara Adams
P.K.:	Right. That's Clara and she was five.
Natalie Vaughn:	She was five years old.

P.K.:	Ill huh I muse the was two years older than Debert
	Uh huh. I guess she was two years older than Robert.
Natalie Vaughn:	Then that would make her born in 1865. So then she was born a free woman. Now Anna Shorts, Anna Lee is his wife I take it?
P.K.:	Yeah. That's his second wife.
Natalie Vaughn:	She was pretty.
P.K.:	That was his country home and then during the Civil War they moved out there and he was a protector of the Seminary and they think helped saved the Seminary from a lot of destruction.
Natalie Vaughn:	I said I was going to check on this some time. What I'm trying so much to do or would like to do is go up to—look back in the Gunston register because that's where my mother's people were supposed to have been there
P.K.:	Gunston Hall?
Natalie Vaughn:	Yes. Mason. George Mason.
P.K.:	You haven't been to Gunston?
Natalie Vaughn:	No, but I was going to Lloyd House
P.K.:	Gunston is real—that's my favorite place. Of all the places around, that's my favorite.
Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah, but I wanted to go to see their records. Because somewhere along the line we should see some Burtons and some Williamsthose are my mother's people. Ted was saying, one time in particular, since my mother's father died when she was only five, that she didn't have as much connection with the
P.K.:	She didn't hear the stories?
Natalie Vaughn:	Not too much of the Adams family. She became friendly because a cousin—the one of Aunt Ada's children— the one who was a Casey, so she became friendly with him, but I don't think—she was closer to her mother's people. In our case, my father's people were disrupted too, I think I told you my grandfatherI told you my middle name is Thompson. I thought that was a horrible name to give somebody for a middle name, so I used to put an F there and if anybody asked, I told them it was Francis. But I found out that it was very significant: my grandfather had been down here at Fairfax Station on a plantation, and this man came through from Baltimore and my father had gone with him, and evidently they had come back or something or he supposedly had been lost or something, because the war really didn't start until 1861, so that would make him, he was born in [18]54, my father said, but there's a chance it was either [18]55 or [18]56, which would make him—that would make him about five years old when the Civil War started. His father didn't come back and his mother remarried and I found that out and I should have had a tape recorder, because they told me her name was Churchill. I talked to the grandfather's niece—the girl whose mother was my grandfather took a whole new identity. His name was Randolph Thompson, and the man who adopted him

	was John W. Sanks. John W. Sanks gave him his first name—they gave him John and took the Randolph and dropped the Thompson so he became John Randolph Sanks. My father was John Randolph, Jr., and my brother was John Randolph the third. But you see the point is that Randolph Thompson disappeared more or less. He became John Randolph Sanks. They looked for them; somebody from Virginia—his brother—was trying to find him, and he was thirty something years old when they actually found him. And his sister down here in Alexandria—the two of them got married in 1882. And they had children about the same age too. And this just shows you how coincidence works. I know that much about the history of my father, and my mother told me about her father's family. But I knew of the Adams up there—Bob and Clara. I knew them, but I didn't know them that much because, you see, Clara died in [19]52. And he died much earlier, Uncle did. I didn't get to know them. We still have people that we don't know where they are on my grandmother's side. Her name was Taylor. Her father's name was George. He was with Decatur at the War of 1812. And he was with Decatur and they were there when the German soldiers came and put down those cobblestones in the old part of Baltimore I think. So we know a lot of the history but we just know snatches of it.
P.K.:	That's why these oral histories are good because if we talk to enough people we can get a little bit of information from you and a little from other people and put the puzzle pieces together.
Natalie Vaughn:	That's right. It's very interesting because we are people with a lost legacy, so to speak. People didn't keep records, and they said all you had to do was tell my grandmother Williams about the family—if somebody's name was Williams or Burton she used to say, "Oh, you must be kin to me." Because half of our people were shipped South. They took them and moved them like they were not human, but parcels so to speak. They broke up families—I have a book called <i>The Curious Situation</i> and it's about slavery. That is a curious thingI met an Indian woman when I was traveling out West in [19]88 and she said, "Have you done a study of your history?" And I said, "Not really." She said, "Aren't you interested in who you are?" I said, "I have a good idea who I am." That's just what I told her. I used to teach my kids—I taught history and English—in order to teach who, whose, and whom, I had the quotation, "Who is more dead? The man by whose monument you stand, or his descendents of whom you never heard?" So it was who, whose, and whom. I used that. That's true because a lot of times you will hear people talking about their relatives and maybe they had some illustrious relatives but then they don't know anything about their present-day ones.
P.K.:	That's right. Right.
Natalie Vaughn:	Then, of course, the other side of the coin is—as I told the group on Black History (I was up there not too long ago for the anniversary of

	1 ' C 1 ' T
	their foundation; I was the speaker). I told them that I am not much on going back in history although I'm a history buff—but I don't like to live in the past. I like to look forward, and I think if we could just get our present generation to do some things that are worthwhile that
	would be great.
P.K.:	If you could write the history of, say, Colonial America, when tobacco was the economy and they would have never survived if there hadn't been people to help—to do that work?
Natalie Vaughn:	Those big mansions down on the James River—all down in Natchez, Mississippi, Biloxi, Mississippi—I heard the Naval chaplain talk about that. He said, "It's beauty, but underneath it's ugliness."
P.K.:	So that's the story you would tell people?
Natalie Vaughn:	Well he said this. It was the very weekend that President Eisenhower died. He was out of office, of course, and it was Palm Sunday and we were in Baltimore. We went to this First Church of Methodist, a lovely church up on Calvert Street up in Northeast Baltimore, and my husband and I decided to go, and he talked about beauty and ugliness, and he went on to talk about the fact that you hear people going down to see these antebellum homes and all the things and the beautiful boxwood gardens and the lovely shrubbery that's still growing after all those years. They were built on human sweat and tears. It's interesting to see that, you know. The peoplethey learned a lot from it. I had an aunt that could sew—my grandmother's sister—they could sew so fine, that it is like it was done on a machine. They worked in the house. Slaves even had status symbols.
P.K.:	I, I heard
Natalie Vaughn:	You heard that. They were inside the home
P.K.:	So they were like, in higher status.
Natalie Vaughn:	She would have minute stitches—everything: the pleats, shirtwaist dresses they sewed. She could sew beautifully. She finally got a sewing machine, but when she would put those stitches in, she would turn the dress over and where the stitch was, she would just interlock those stitches. She did everything by hand. They just had the talent to do that. People who—they were very proud of themselves—very attractive women too. Beautiful women. I just wonder, because when you see the pictures of Negroes with what they call Negroid features—big lips and broad noses. They had noses just to a point almost. Very keen little lips
P.K.:	Well, I asked you that question for a personal reason. I am doing research now at Woodlawn Plantation, and they know very little about that time period or about African Americans, and I wondered what kind of a focus you would make of that time period.
Natalie Vaughn:	I have a friend who is interested in that. Jean Burton—her great- grandfather was given land when somebody in the Washington family left him an estate down in Gum Springs, and she lives in this

	neighborhood. She has done a beautiful job on the history of Gum Springs. In fact, they've got a historical plaque out there. She did her doctoral thesis at Vanderbilt on that, and she has spoken at the cultural research center on North Alfred Street. There are a lot of people who stayed; they were coachmen and all. They stayed there and they were drivers. We always looked, though, at people who did those kind of jobs, no matter how much theyNow, there is a Smoot down there on the corner of Saint Asaph and Duke Street. There is a house and I am trying to think of the woman's name—they are very prominent people—one of them, the Arnold and Porter firm in Washington—the woman bought the house. It's the house they call the Lafayette House. The Lafayette House—she bought the house—she had it renovated. In the back the sisters used to live in there and then it was a stable house—carriage house. And up above the carriage house was living quarters, and the man who was there was named Dabney—what Mr. Dabney's name was or if that was his first or last name—all I know is we used to call him Mr. Dabney—he used to play poker with my dad. We knew that much. Dabney was very fair, very sharp-nosed, very thin featured. We always said he must have been kin to somebody in the Smoot family—they gave him this job. They said that he was real striking with his top hat sitting on the coach carrying his master and mistress around, you know. So, you just wonder about that. I think—my grandmother had an idea that Negroes should be black and have good features—and yet you see when you come down, there were terrible things she said about the Virginia blacks—she said they were all "bastards"—pardon the expression, because they were all mixed up. Her fatherwas real darkJoyce Taylor was dark and Eveline Taylor was dark. But they both had real thin lips—both of them had very thin lips. But they were dark people, and I just wonder. You see, on my mother's family they were all colors. As the lady used to say, "You get them all the way f
P.K.:	I think there is another book coming out this year that has research about free blacks in Alexandria.
Dr. Mitchell:	I've got Free Blacks in Virginia. I've got all those books.
Natalie Vaughn:	You have that too? Who wrote that one?
Dr. Mitchell:	I don't really know right now, but I've got—see, my daughter is a
	specialist in that field and she's—she supplies me with the
Notalia Varratara	bibliography of all those books.
Natalie Vaughn:	Now, you see this Mrs. Helen David just died, huh?

Dr. Mitchell:	There's one— <i>Free Blacks in 1850</i> and then there is a book, <i>Free Blacks in Virginia</i> . But sometimes the free blacks fared worse than the slaves
Natalie Vaughn:	They did because they were isolated from the other groups.
P.K.:	I also read that a lot of free blacks would not register because they had to pay a tax, so the number of free blacks that are recorded are only a percentage of the free blacks that were in the neighborhood. That's for the Woodlawn area.
Dr. Mitchell:	Some free blacks had slaves too.
P.K.:	Is that right?
Dr. Mitchell:	Yeah.
Natalie Vaughn:	They sure did.
Dr. Mitchell:	Especially down in Louisiana.
Natalie Vaughn:	Right. You had Indians who had slaves, and it's just really interesting.
P.K.:	Well, I grew up—my Ohio history—all they talked about was the Underground Railroad, and when I had the idea that we were moving to Virginia, I just thought I probably wasn't going to make it, that I would be fighting with a whole lot of people, but it didn't turn out that way.
Natalie Vaughn:	This is a rather conservative state.
P.K.:	I guess Northern Virginia being some different
Natalie Vaughn:	They about ready to put Northern Virginia out of Virginia for years. They would really do it.
P.K.:	That's what our pastor said. Because we're Washington centered and whenever we go to conventions we're down there with the rest of the people from Virginia and they want to get rid of us.
Litigation Over Se	<u> </u>
Natalie Vaughn:	They do. We had teachers who used to go to Richmond for the teacher's convention and said [tape stops, begins again in the middle of a sentence]Now you know Front Royal's children used to come down to Manassas and it was so far—that's Warren County. Luray is in Page County. Those children had to come all the way down to Manassas to school because according to the state they had to give the same things—orphans had to be equal to what was the orphans for senior high school. They had a comprehensive school from one to twelve. But it's sort of hard when you have four children—now Page County had four blacks in high school and they came downa fellow named Harold Lawson, did you know him?
Dr. Mitchell:	Lawson? Yes.
Natalie Vaughn:	You mightyeahyou know Cecil Robinson, don't you. Well, Cecil Robinson's sister Aura married Harold Lawson, and he brought these four kids down and they lived on the campus at Manassas. Now, the Front Royal children lived on the campus too. They would get up and come down on Sunday evenings or early Monday morning and then

	they would go back Friday night or Friday afternoon—after school—and spend the weekends at home, and that's how they did it. So, Front
D M. 1 11	Royal got into the litigation too then.
Dr. Mitchell:	Oh yeah. Yes, I remember when I was a clergyman.
Natalie Vaughn:	Well you know, you were lucky to be a clergyman. In a way, because I think they listened to you more.
Dr. Mitchell:	Well, I don't know. It really didn't have any effect on the case butit was interesting because Judge John Paul, who rendered the decision in our favor, was also an Episcopalian. Then, of course, Virginia still—the governor closed the school, and then the first Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals on Judge John Soberhoft ordered the schools open.
P.K.:	Can I just back you up to ask you what was that case? It wasn't on the beginning of the tape?
Dr. Mitchell:	Oh, it was the case of Charlottesvilletheythe NAACP versus the School Board of Charlottesville, and that was the case whichyou see, there were several cases combined at that time and onethat was a class action suit
P.K.:	That year was?
Dr. Mitchell:	That year was 1958.
Natalie Vaughn:	Yeah. See, that's four years after Brown versus Topeka. See, that's what happened
Dr. Mitchell:	Well that'swell that was 19—I think the City of Charlottesville entered the suit in 1956, I believe, and we moved to Charlottesville in 1958. And so we became a partner in the suit at that time and, golly, it was probably was around 1961, I believe, before they actually had the integration of the schools in Charlottesville. There is a book called <i>The Bus Stops Here</i> by Anna Holden, who wrote the story of the integration of schools in Charlottesville, Virginia; Providence, Rhode Island; and Sacramento, California.
Natalie Vaughn:	And it's nice to see that there are three different sections of the United States, and all of them had the same problem.
Dr. Mitchell:	That's right.
Reaction to the As	sassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
P.K.:	All had the same problems. When I left you were starting to tell me about the news of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King and how that hit the city or how that hit the community.
Natalie Vaughn:	We had riots.
P.K.:	You had riots?
Natalie Vaughn:	We had riots in the high school.
P.K.:	When did you first hear the news? Were you watching TV?
Natalie Vaughn:	What happened was, I had a friend—my daughter's godmother called me and she said, "I'm worried." I said, "What's wrong?" She said, "Did you hear the news tonight? And I said, "Only part of it," and she said that CBS had Martin Luther King talking about how he had been

	to the mountaintop and that he thought that he was very ill. He said, "I'm ready to go," although he'd like to be older, something to that effect. And she said, "I'm afraid that he is going to get hurt down there in Tennessee."So all of a sudden we got this phone call later on that he had been shot. The first thing she told me was to turn the TV on. So I turned it on, and it said that he had been shot but that they didn't know to what extent. So then later it came that he had died. That was in [19]68.
P.K.:	And you were living here?
Natalie Vaughn:	I was living right here. I came here in 1962.
P.K.:	Right here on Rollins?
Natalie Vaughn:	I've been here since 1962. So, we didn't have any problem, but when I went to school the next day, it was a terrible thing because one kid came up—they had a principal (Alexandria does not support—they tell you that "You are our man in the field, handle it the best you can." Well, see, that's shirking your duty because you need somebody to back you up). We never had any problems. But, I forget the young man's name; he got so disgusted that he left the school system—I think somebody said he went to Culpeper. I think he wanted to go someplace where there would be more rules. This woman called me and said, "Mrs. Vaughn, how are the children?" She told me who she was, and I said, "Everything is fine." She said, "I've got to come over. I'm at G.W. and the niggers are running wild." Then she said, "Oh, I'm so sorry." I said, "That's all right. I can see that you are very tense. What's happening over there?" She said, "They have carried on. The kids are standing all in the halls, in the front, on the lawn." It seems they came in that next morning—one group came and asked the principal to lower the flag to half-staff. Well, you aren't supposed to do that until you get official notice, and he told them that nobody had notified him to lower the flags to half-staff. We didn't know anything about what was going on. The elementary school went on just perfectly—no problems at all. This woman came over and I told her that if she was really upset then maybe she'd better come and pick up her child. So she did, and she told me that she was sorry, that she had just been so nervous, and I said, "That's okay." And I said, "You'd better go home and relax and get yourself a good strong cup of coffee and sit down and relax because you are a nervous wreck." And she was, and she was not a bad friend, but she was just upset. But when we got ready to pair the schools we had no trouble. You can ask anybody, we had no trouble at all integrating the school. It was Martin Luther King, and we had to get a fellow named Herman Brown. I don't kno

	Monday. But it was very bad because right after that all the riots started—that night and early the next morning, Friday morning, in Washington, D.C., and a whole lot of other places, where they tore up all of H Street Northeast and all the 14th Street corridor, all the 7th Street corridor. And most of the places they torched were owned by blacks and hired blacks. So what they did was, just like the people in Los Angeles, they were biting the hand that was feeding them. It was really sad. The ministers came to all the schools and they repaired the schools. That was September 17. And we had Reverendhe was at St. Paul. It begins with an Ha very nice fellow
Dr. Mitchell:	St. Paul's, oh uh
Natalie Vaughn:	St. Paul's.
Dr. Mitchell:	No. He waslater he became a bishop. I'm trying to think of who he was. Leon Layla?
Natalie Vaughn:	No. I'm talking about St. Paul's right here in Alexandria. St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Pitt Street
Dr. Mitchell:	Yeah. I know, on Pitt Street. Leon Layla was one
Natalie Vaughn:	He had a boy named Tommy. His wife was a tall, thin woman.
Dr. Mitchell:	Frazier?
Natalie Vaughn:	No. Not Frazier. I remember him too. But this one came in the [19]70s and went from here to Norfolk—someplace in Tidewater. But he was assigned to us and he had a child coming down and he came and we opened up. I think that the <i>Daily News</i> was still publishing, and they sent a reporter—somewhere they picked this little boy—Barclay his name was—and they came over before that kid came to school and watched him get dressed and have breakfast and meet the school bus and the lady came out to the school and followed him and she wrote up that little story and it was very peaceful. I had turned on that real soothing music on WGAY—had it on down low, came up there and met all the children (I had met them the spring before). I can't remember that man's name
Dr. Mitchell:	I'm trying to think of theLeon Layla was at that church for a long time. And so was Frazier.
Natalie Vaughn:	The man's wife name is Toby
Dr. Mitchell:	Oh, Vonhevan.
Natalie Vaughn:	That's who it was. Because he always used to say "This is Toby."
Dr. Mitchell:	Oh yeah. I know her. When you mentioned his wife, I knew who is. He's just outside of Charlottesville—Louisa.
Natalie Vaughn:	But that man came out before school opened and he waited for the buses to come in and then at the end of the year, they were afraid that they might have some repercussions, so he came out and watched the children go and they lived right there off West Taylor Run and, nohe wasn't there. It was another man, John Alexanderand John Alexander said, "Mrs. Vaughn, how did you get out here?" Well, what I did, because I heard that there might be some disturbance, I rode the

school bus with the children that day. I went as the principal. And I rode that school bus and everywhere it stopped. One particular place I got off because that was where they were supposed to have a fight. There were some low-rent apartments over there. And the Alexanders lived right at the corner of Taylor Run and right here was Trinity Drive and they were real nice people. He looked up and saw me and said, "What are you doing out here?" I said, "Well, I'm following the school bus." He said, "I just left his school; you beat the bus here." I said, "Yes." I rode the bus, I told him, but the teachers followed me in the car, and when I got off they took me on back to the school. But we didn't have any trouble.

More on the Integration of Alexandria Schools and Neighborhoods

Natalie Vaughn:

We had no trouble in the integration. Now, there were teachers who needed to be—we went to Charlottesville (I didn't go but a lot of the teachers had to go) for sensitivity training because people did not know how—people had said at G.W., "I wish you'd go back across the track, you are upsetting." One boy was talking about how Manhattan sits in the water like an island, and then they have all these bridges connecting to the Bronx, to all the places, and that's true. So, the boy said that there is a place called Hellsgate, and there is—you go up to the northern part of Manhattan and you go across and there is Spuyten Duyvil. It's based on the legend about Peter Stuyvesant and doing something to spite the Devil. Anyway, it is...very rough up there, and the boy told me he had been there, and the woman said, "Oh, you haven't even been out of Alexandria." You see that is sort of degrading to children and makes them lose their—they don't have enough esteem for themselves. And one or two little boys came back to me and told me that they had been told that they wished they would go back across the tracks. I said I didn't like that. When I worked with my teachers, we took in some children who were mentally retarded (...I don't know where they are now; I understand they're trying to mainstream them). And they asked me, "You must have talked to the kids; they don't laugh at those children." I said, "Are you kidding, they haven't laughed at those children since they've been here." I told them up front what I expected and I meant it and they knew I meant it. One parent said, "What in the world are the trainable children? That's all my child talks about." The sixth-grade children used to go down there as little helpers, and they would go and tell their parents about it. I told them all that they should come down and see these children, because these children made you happy that you had a child that was normal. These were kids two and three years old that had not developed minor skills or anything, and some of them were crippled and one little boy was so tiny they had to put him in a wheelchair. They taught them to walk a gait; the teacher would make little footprints and the children would have to try and walk in those prints. It was very interesting. Alexandria is a strange place. As I told you, we always lived black and white

	together with no problems. And then we started having a whole of confusion.
Dr. Mitchell:	Well, you have spots in Virginia like that. I know in Hampton, we find
	white families and black families living side by side.
Natalie Vaughn:	That's right. And they get along real nicely.
P.K.:	The people that we've spoken to doing these oral histories have all
	said the same thing.
Natalie Vaughn:	They've all said the same thing. You know the people, you know their children. I'll never forget when one of those Ford boys finished T.C.
	Williams and he was supposed to be going to some college—you
	remember the younger one, Steve? And he decided after his father
	became President he wasn't going. He said that he had learned more
	from T.C. in one year since they had integrated than he had all of his
	life. I found out later, though, from some of our relatives that live in
	Seminary, that Mrs. Ford was always very outgoing and, see, the
	father was always busy and whenever they had parties, she would
	invite all the children to them or have the parties at the school.
	Everybody was invited. Then when she would have something, our
	cousin told us that she came over there on Woods place, these people
	lived a couple doors from Maybell and they would come down—and
	Steven came to the party and she told him, "What time do you think
	it's going to be over?" and we told her and she said, "Well, I'll come
	back." Well, the children were having so much fun when she came
	back, they were still playing. So, she just came in and sat down. It was
	very interesting. We didn't have the problems. It's sort of strange
	because we never had to close early, like some schools had to close for
	farming. In some parts of North Carolina—I can't think of the name of
	the place now—but they would go to school in July and August
	because they had September and October off because it was harvest.
	During the heat of the summer, no air conditioning or anything—
	nobody even knew about air conditioning—they would go back and
	then they would have all of September and October off. So, we never had thatIt's a strange little town.
P.K.:	I want to thank you very much for giving us your time.
Natalie Vaughn:	I didn't mean to take this much time
Dr. Mitchell and	Oh no, we enjoyed it. [End]
P.K.:	