



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



**Project Name:** *Alexandria Legacies*

**Title:** *Interview with Sgt. Lee Thomas Young*

**Date of Interview:** *November 19, 1996*

**Location of Interview:** *Fort Ward Neighborhood of Alexandria, Virginia*

**Interviewer:** *Patricia Knock*

**Transcriber:** *Jo-Ann LaFon*

**Abstract:** Sgt. Lee Thomas Young lived in the Fort Ward neighborhood before the fort was established as an historic Civil War and recreational park. He reflects what it was like living in the neighborhood and describes some of the houses and recalls his neighbors. His Fort Ward home, originally a church, was adjacent to one of the family graveyards that are still there. He was one of the last people moved from the Fort Ward area to new housing to make way for the park. This interview was videotaped; Sgt. Young and interviewer, Patricia Knock walked through the areas as they talked about them.

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*Sgt. Lee Thomas Young, 2009*

<b>Introductions and Description of Building</b>	
Pat Knock:	[Side A ] [Tape beings in middle of conversation.] Do you want me to hold this?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	[Drawing on paper.] We're going to draw the porch part.
PK:	We're looking at the front of it now?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	This is the front. This is the porch and this is the roof part. All right, this is the porch. We have an entrance here; an entrance here and another entrance back here. This would be an entrance back here.
PK:	Was that on the side or still on the front?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, this is all [on] the front.
PK:	All on the front.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Then we had a steeple here and this was a washroom—laundry room—right here.
PK:	Was that separate?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That was separate, but it was tied onto the house. You had to go out of the back door here to go into the laundry room. Then a big well here.
PK:	So to the side of it a well?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	To the side of it was a well.
PK:	Which way is this facing?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	This is facing the front.
PK:	But I mean, is it facing West Braddock [Road] or is it facing toward the museum?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	...It's facing Braddock Road.

PK:	Is it like looking straight onto Braddock Road or looking catty-corner onto Braddock?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, looking straight out—straight to the road—had a driveway that come in from Braddock straight into my front yard.
PK:	So it wasn't a road that cut off that road that comes in off of Braddock—it just came straight up to you?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Straight up to me.
PK:	Good; we'll be able to see where that is when we go there, right?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	We can probably spot that today.
PK:	That's great.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's poor drawing, but—
PK:	No, I can see it.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	You get the idea.
PK:	Yeah, I got it. One thing I wanted to ask you to do today is sign what they call a "deed of gift," and that's a paper from the City and what it says—I'll let you read it—is that after we do this interview that you give permission for your words to be used for teaching history in the City and also (could you hold this for me?)...so that I could use your words to help write the history of Fort Ward.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I'll help in any way.
PK:	I appreciate that. Since you don't have your glasses, let me read this. "The undersigned consented to be interviewed, audiotaped, photographed, and videotaped by a representative of Alexandria Archaeology. Archaeology intends to use the interview to assist in studying Alexandria's history. The City will maintain a collection of the audio- and videotapes and you agree to the following: to have the interview and that you grant us unconditionally grants to Alexandria Archaeology on behalf of the City of Alexandria all right, title, and interest in such interviews, photographs, and interviewer's notes and transcripts. The undersigned understands and consents that the interviews will be used in ways that serve educational and historical objectives as determined by Alexandria Archaeology." If you want, I can bring you a copy of the oral history and let you read it before you sign this or you can sign it now. It's up to you.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	All right.
PK:	Do you want to wait or would you like to—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	We can wait and let my daughter work with me.
PK:	Let's do it that way then. Then we'll get the transcription up and let you read it. That way if there are some parts of it that you would rather not share with everybody, we can take those parts out—after we've talked.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	All right.
PK:	When Mrs. Bradby introduced me across the fence here, you were chopping wood.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's right.
PK:	And you came over to the fence and shook my hand—I felt like I was in the country. I felt like I was in my Dad's house in Ohio where he chops all the wood in the back yard. Goes up to the Amish

	people and gets the logs and comes back and gets the slab wood—you know, to cut that slab wood off. And when I talked to you on the phone, you told me that you made your own log splitter?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yep, built my own splitter.
PK:	So, we're going to go take a look at that. And that you have a fireplace, but you don't use all the wood yourself. How does that work?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Well, I just collect wood in the summertime when people don't want it and I give it to the people who need it in the winter.
PK:	[all the people] that have a fireplace?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That have a fireplace and can use some wood.
PK:	So you help people out a little bit taking them the fire wood and—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Sort of mission work.
<b>Church and Description of Tools</b>	
PK:	But do you go to Oakland Baptist here or are you—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, I go to Bethlehem. Bethlehem [Baptist Church in] Gum Springs. That's in Alexandria, though. That's on U.S. [Route] 1 between Fort Belvoir and Alexandria...off of Sherwood Hall Lane and Fordson Road. It's a new building right there on the corner.
PK:	I belong to the Gum Springs Historical Society.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Well, you've probably seen the new Bethlehem Church?
PK:	Yeah, it's pretty.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, it is a beautiful church.
PK:	Could we walk over there now? I want them to see the church too. How much time do we spend? I should turn this off—right. We're men on the moon here. I want to show you some of the objects Sgt. Lee Thomas Young has made in his yard. First of all, this very nice shed that will be standing up way past the year 2000 from the way it's built. But I love this church; is that a church that you know of?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, I built this church myself. I didn't give it a name. I guess it's "my church."
PK:	That's your church? Yeah. And in the shed here, you told me that you make a lot of the tools that you work with.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I build a lot of tools. Uh huh.
PK:	Can we walk this way? I want to show you what some of those are.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I've got all kinds of tools here.
PK:	What's this?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	This is my tamper.
PK:	That's your tamper. And what did you make this out of?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's cedar.
PK:	The bottom of this is cedar?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	The bottom is cedar.
PK:	It's REALLY heavy; it's really heavy. How much does it weigh—30 pounds?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I guess that's about 30, 40 pounds.
PK:	It feels like one of my grandkids.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I wanted it heavy. I wanted a little weight to it.
PK:	So that'll put the ground back down. What else you got in here?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Well, I got some good stuff in there. Gotta dig it out.

PK:	What's this?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Let's see—I got several canes in there I built.
PK:	So you give these to people too?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Anyone that needs them. There's some more in there if you want to see some.
PK:	Oh yeah. I can't get them; they're back in the corner.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	My daughter uses them on our program; she works for Western Union and sometimes they have plays and she uses them.
PK:	Over here is the wood splitter.
Cameraman:	Over here; this side if you can.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Want me to take that cover off?
Cameraman:	Yeah, that would be great. [rustling noises]
PK:	So this is the wood splitter that you built?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I built that—yeah.
PK:	Out of?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Scraps. Whatever I could find.
PK:	What kind of engine? Is that a car engine?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's a Briggs & Stratton. Come off an old pump. And I broke it down, remodeled it, and cut me some dowels—made me a wood splitter.
PK:	You put the block here but you put your log in there?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	You put it in there. I got that tight because I saw wood—I got my handsaw up there.
PK:	And how does the splitting process occur?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It's hydraulic—it's a lot of power. I can split the toughest wood here.
PK:	Do you have to let it dry out first before...
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, it'll split it—tear it apart.
PK:	It'll split a green...? Will it? Sounds kind of dangerous?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, it's not too dangerous.
PK:	So, how fast can you split it then?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Well, it's very slow 'cause I use mostly [?] in the wedge 'cause I need the exercise.
PK:	Uh huh. But you can also use this thing.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I can also use that.
PK:	You got a lot of wood split here. I know when we buy it we buy it by the cord. How many cords do you think is here?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I know I have ten cords here. I split all [of] this a couple of weeks ago. This is new wood I split. I got this split for my daughter.
PK:	There's some cedar in there; that's going to smell good. That's going to smell good, isn't it? Well, it looks like you keep busy.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I do; I like to keep busy. Busy keeps me. [laughter]
Cameraman:	Are we ready to go out?
PK:	Yeah, we're ready to go to the Fort now.
Cameraman:	I've got to unhook everybody. [Side B.]
<b>Walking at Fort Ward</b>	
PK:	Do you call it the Fort?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, we just call it the Fort. Up on the hill.

PK:	Do you ever hear it called Fort Hill?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No...we say we're going up on the hill. That was just a word we used...but we call it Fort sometimes—
PK:	Yeah, I mostly hear people call it the Fort.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	The Fort? Uh huh. It is the Fort.
PK:	Yeah. It is the Fort. [Laughter]
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yeah, it's the Fort.
PK:	The first house that I know about, that was here is the one that was over here where the museum is.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	The Ashby.
PK:	Now which house is that?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Oh, that's torn down. That was the one you showed me out there.
PK:	Right—that I showed you the picture of.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's right.
PK:	And, the people that lived there, who was that that lived there?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That was the Ashbys.
PK:	The Ashbys.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yeah, the Ashbys.
PK:	Uh huh. So there was one house there then?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	One house there, and just across the road there was another house.
PK:	Was there a house going that way? Was there any going up that way?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, there was. There was the Turners.
PK:	The Terrells?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	The Turners. He's dead now too.
PK:	Turners?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Uh huh. There wasn't any Terrells here, I don't think. The Terrells was all the way down the hill, we call it. The Terrells.
PK:	Uh huh. Now where you say "down the hill—the Terrells lived down the hill"—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That was where we just left from.
PK:	Okay; they live down there now.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	They live down there now, uh huh.
PK:	Well then, let's walk this way then to the next house.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, we can, uh huh.
PK:	Well, now this had woods around it, didn't it?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It was all woods. They done cleaned up so I can hardly recognize how they have cleaned up and changed things around. I saw my old driveway when we passed back there.
PK:	Did you?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yeah, I remember that because they didn't break the rap coming in. So the trees...are still there that lead back in the yard. My house was back in here.
PK:	[Were] there any houses in front here?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	One house—just be over that ravine—which was the Browns.
PK:	We'll walk over that way too.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	All right.
PK:	We're going to go up along Braddock and then come down the road

	to your house and then go back along the creek and then come up this way again.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	All right. It was houses back in there too—the Randalls.
PK:	You can show us back that way then too. I'm going to turn this off.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	All right.
PK:	I'm just telling this tape that you told me that you recognized the old places out by the trees.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Oh yes.
PK:	So, some of the trees are still here that you—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Some of the trees are still here.
PK:	So that's like a marker for you?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That is a marker. That's a landmark for me.
PK:	Was there a road coming in this way?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It was a road, an old dirt road.
PK:	How far back did it go?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It went all the way to the back of the park.
PK:	So it started up here?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It started right off Braddock Road.
PK:	Did it go back this way like this one goes?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	This is the road here.
PK:	This is the road that was a road?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That was the road, uh huh.
PK:	Did it curve around like that one?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It did wind a little bit.
PK:	And how many houses were along this road?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I can only remember one house back in there and that was the Randalls'.
PK:	Okay.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	And the Browns was right over here. It wasn't a lot of people lived up 'cause it's scattered out—wasn't a whole crowd—just a few.
PK:	So it's still like everybody was kind of in their own separate little place?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's right. That's right—in a separate little place, uh huh.
PK:	Did people have gardens?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Oh yes, I had a big garden. I'll show you where my garden was.
PK:	You want to walk up to where you house was then?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, we would like to—
PK:	Is that the road?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	There's a road down here. [sounds of walking through leaves]
PK:	Now we're going up—where are we going? To the driveway?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Where my driveway were—
PK:	Where your driveway was.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, ma'am.
PK:	I'm sorry; I didn't hear you.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I said, I have a feeling they done took it out. Let me take a look. They done took it out and put a sidewalk in, but I'll know it by the trees.
PK:	By these trees then, you'll know it?



Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yeah, I'll pick it out by the trees 'cause my house was back in here and Aunt Clara [Clara Adams] over here. We'll find it. After I find my driveway.
<b>Water Sources at the Fort</b>	
PK:	Did Clara have a well?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	She had a well. She had a chain and a bucket on hers. I had an electric pump in mine—a jet pump. Mine was a little deeper; I think mine was 70 feet deep. I had the deepest well here; it was a good well.
PK:	Were there any springs on this property or a lake or a pond?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, there was no ponds up here. I never remember a pond...no ponds.
PK:	Somebody was telling me something about a big round—like 30 feet across—with water in it. What was that?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That could have been over on the Rufners' property, though I had a dog get in his pond once.
PK:	So the Rufners had a pond?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That was over...there; they had a pond.
PK:	Was that beyond the fence of the park?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's beyond the fence of the park, I believe. Over where these houses were built here. I know they had a pond 'cause I had a dog to get in there. My old dog got in that pond.
PK:	Was there an open well or a big spring on this fort?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Not as I know of.
PK:	Okay, want to walk?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Let me check my driveway out here.
Cameraman:	Let's see if we can get away from this noise—
PK:	...since you were back to the Fort?
<b>Neighbors</b>	
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It's been a long time; we had a picnic here, but I didn't notice too much, we were so busy with the picnic. That was just this summer; we were right in here. We was looking around.
PK:	Well, we went back today to Clara's grave. Do you want to go back there?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, we can go back and that would give us a good landmark.
PK:	Okay, let's do that then. So right over this way was the Belks' house?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Right in here was the Belks. They was right in front of me, then the McKnights.
PK:	And then the McKnights in front of you?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	In front of them—in front of the Belks.
PK:	And then the house that was over there—who was that?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That was the one I didn't know who owned [it]. But I did know the person who lived in there was Jim McClay—he's dead now.
PK:	Okay and that was in the [19]50s.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Probably in the [19]50s, uh huh; that was in the [19]50s.
<b>Employment</b>	
PK:	So did the people in the neighborhood—was it like a middle income

	neighborhood? Or you worked for the military at that time?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I was a soldier at that time.
PK:	And where were you stationed?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Well, I was in France—I didn't move my family; I just stayed in service. But my station here was Belvoir—Fort Belvoir.
PK:	So you were at Fort Belvoir?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Fort Belvoir.
PK:	And the people here, some of them worked for the Seminary, I know.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, most of them worked for the Seminary and the rest worked on the Base.
PK:	At Belvoir?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	At Fort Belvoir and different places.
PK:	So the military employed some...that would be in the [19]50s, that there were quite a few military people here?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Not a lot of military, but a lot of government people—people who worked for the government.
PK:	I see. So we'll walk back to Clara's?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	All right.
PK:	...houses off to this direction?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, I had my garden right down in here—right on the edge of this hill here.
PK:	Did you ever dig up any Civil War buttons?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, I didn't find none. [laughter]
PK:	No?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Didn't find a thing.
PK:	You know, I found a Civil War button along this path one day?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Well, how about that?
PK:	I gave it to the museum. I thought it was a bottle cap and I bent down, picked it up and there it was—an engineer's button. So you never dug up any old good stuff when you were doing your garden?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I could have and didn't pay it no mind, I was so anxious to get the garden dug up. Being military and wasn't thinking about the Fort, you know, at that time, that much.
PK:	Well, that's an interesting question then. By the 1950s, people weren't really thinking about the fact that this had been a fort.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, they wasn't—just trying to make a living.
PK:	Trying to make a living.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Amen. [continuing to walk...]
PK:	Boy, these trees, the wind's scarred them bad. That hurricane or whatever, that tornado thing that came in here—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Came through. That's where I got most of my wood—from people down there. They was glad to give it away because they had to pay to get it hauled. I get it for free.
PK:	Are you doing okay with the walking?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Doing pretty good.
PK:	Tell me if you get tired.
<b>Finding the Graveyard</b>	

Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I don't see Aunt Clara's grave.
PK:	It's out there.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's what I was thinking.
PK:	Yeah, you want to go see it?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's where you was heading, wasn't it?
PK:	Yeah. Where was the school, by Clara's? That's Clara's grave there.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yeah, she was right back of one of my shops. That's why when I see the grave, then I know where my house was.
PK:	So we need to go to Clara's grave first?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, I believe so—if we can get in there.
PK:	Let's do that. I'm glad Clara's there.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Uh, she's still there, right?
PK:	Yeah, she's still there.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	All right.
PK:	She's helping us though [laughter]. I said, she's helping us.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's right.
PK:	We can find your house then.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I can find it if I see that grave 'cause my house was close to it. I had a shop between our house and her grave 'cause they spoke to me to get permission to put her back there and I said, "Sure." Her husband was buried there.
PK:	So he died before her, right?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, he was there a long time. He died before I even moved there. I didn't even know he was there until they told me.
PK:	Did you know Robert? Did you know him?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Robert?
PK:	His name was Robert.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	His name was Robert? I didn't know him. I only knew her.
PK:	Everybody speaks to lovingly of her; I guess she was a nice lady.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Oh, she was taking out her clothes and what not. We had clotheslines and she was real helpful. She was just a sweet old lady, Amen.
PK:	Was she?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, she was.
PK:	I heard she had a good spirit though too.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	She did.
PK:	She could like speak out for what was right.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	She was. She would stand up for what was right, always—we have a nice garden here too.
PK:	They have a new gardener now. It used to be pretty overgrown, but now he has started a new—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yeah, he's cleaned that all out.
PK:	He's planting flowers and all too out here. He's from California.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	California?
PK:	Some guy from California. He's got this big bushy beard. If you ever come up here and see a guy with a big beard, that's him. He's a big man—like you.

Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	How 'bout that...Amen! [still walking] They did a lot of clearing here.
PK:	This is Aunt Clara's.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Whoa—
PK:	Did everybody call her Aunt Clara?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yeah, because she was so old, you know, it was Aunt Clara.
PK:	It was like a respect name.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's right, respect, uh huh.
PK:	Her name's on the other side.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Name's on the other side.
PK:	Do you know which side Robert, her husband is? Let's see if we walk—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, I don't—it was sunk down when I was here.
P. C.	And he didn't have a stone, huh?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	There wasn't a stone here. So I guess it's between the both—uh huh.
PK:	Oh, maybe so.
<b>The Old Work Shed, House, and Garden</b>	
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	So that means—I had a work shed here.
PK:	What?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I just had room to walk between.
PK:	You had a wood shed here?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, that was a work shed.
PK:	What did you do there?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Worked just like I did up there with tools and what not. And that means my house was right in here.
PK:	So, your work shed was here and then the house—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	And then the house and the grapes vines in front.
PK:	Grape vines were in front over there?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	In front of my house.
PK:	In front of your house, you had grape vines.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I had grape vines—three or four—and—
PK:	And where was your garden?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	My garden was over—on his property.
PK:	So, how much property did you have?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I didn't have much property—just had a big house and a yard. And the house took up half the yard.
PK:	Was that your property over there where you put the garden?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, that the Browns' property.
PK:	So the Browns let you use the land for the—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Just to garden, uh huh.
PK:	Then would you give them some of your—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	If they wanted it...they didn't want it. They just wanted it cultivated, Amen
PK:	Oh, that's nice.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Uh huh.
PK:	But what they are planning to do is wherever you see this green - they're going to make a fence.

Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Going to make a fence, uh huh.
PK:	And put it around. So you think that the gravestone might be in the middle of where they are?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	The grave?
PK:	The gravestone that's here?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It could be in the center, it could be.
PK:	You think it might be—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	They usually do that—put it right in the center of the two.
PK:	Okay.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's a big bush on there.
PK:	Yeah, I'll tell the gardener so he would know.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Uh huh.
PK:	So where do you think your house started?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Well, let's see, this was my work shed. And the front of the work shed should have been about here. And from there, it was about eight or ten feet. Then the rest of this was my house and it reached all the way to the driveway. I was looking for an apple tree on that corner.
PK:	I didn't see a tree.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	And the driveway came right into the yard, close to the house. It was a big house.
PK:	...came in front of the house then?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	But the front, the front of the house was facing this way, facing the road.
PK:	Facing Braddock.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Facing Braddock. So that means—my porch should have been somewhere in here. And all this was house back in here.
PK:	So it's on this side of the fence and coming up pretty close to where these stakes are right here.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's right, uh huh.
PK:	Were there graves in back of you there?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, it was a set of graves between this and the cemetery. You saw a cemetery back there, right?
PK:	Yeah, but not in the cemetery—this side of the cemetery.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I was gonna say there was some graves through the woods—that was all woods. All this was woods right back of my house.
PK:	Do you know whose graves it was?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, they was old and no one knew who they were.
PK:	Were there stones at that time?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, there was some stones out there.
PK:	But no names?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, the names was worn off somewhat. But there were several graves out there.
PK:	How many would you say there were?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Oh, there was five or six graves between that and the other cemetery.
PK:	Okay, five or six.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	The kids used to look at them sometimes.
PK:	Yeah, we're interested in that because we don't want them to dig

	where there might be some graves.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Certainly not.
PK:	But it would be hard for you to say exactly—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I was going to say it would be hard to even find now too, the way—
PK:	They're going to have to watch if they dig down; we'll tell them—the archaeologists—or if they build a building there or something, they're going to have to know.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I don't see how they could know 'cause they were old when I was here.
PK:	So you think it's just going to be completely gone?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	They, they are gone; it's just some stones there. We knew someone was there because they had, you know, a little old headpiece, washed out, and the weather wears that down. [pause in recording.]
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I would burn the dry trash and the garbage I'd bury mostly. Didn't have much garbage but what little we had, we'd bury it.
PK:	I'm happy to know where your house was.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Amen! I am too! [laughter] If I hadn't found that stone, I would have probably missed it.
PK:	Well, when the land changes, it's hard.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It is hard; yes, it is.
PK:	The trees that you're used to looking for are gone; your apple tree was gone.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, all the trees are gone, yes, Lord, they're gone. And it was some tombstones between here and the other cemetery. I don't even see the other cemetery now either.
PK:	It's behind that fence.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It's over here behind this. I see it. [walking sounds] I'm still looking for headpieces because you could see them on the way in; they're probably just gone by now too.
PK:	Well, there are some outside of the fence here.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Some outside of here?
PK:	Uh huh.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	[sounds of walking] There's a few there, isn't it?
PK:	No, that's a—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Uh huh. Yeah, I can see a few there.
PK:	I think they're trying to keep the people from coming up here, by making this, because the headstones are getting disturbed, that are outside of the fence. So the gardener that's working here now is talking about putting a fence around this part. Do you think that would be good?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It probably will be.
PK:	Yeah, I think people would respect it if it had a fence.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	They'd respect it; that's right. Uh huh. [sounds of walking] See these little pieces? Well, they was in the ground to a gravesite when I was here. But I notice they're gone now. They laid them beside the tree. And there was no writin' on them that much so you couldn't tell who it was.
PK:	So, you couldn't tell—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, not even when I was up here. And that's the graveyard over

	there, isn't it?
PK:	Right. Should we keep on this? [walking] I guess we might as well keep on this?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes. This is a little cut. And right in here. This is where the Browns' house was.
PK:	Dave, over here is where the Browns' house...
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	The Browns' house was right in here; it was just a little small house—just a small family house.
PK:	I'm going to make you say it again...You're saying it was right over here?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Uh huh. It was in here. I remember it. The drain system somewhat. You would come in here to go to the cemetery. This is why I know it was in front of this.
PK:	So there's another road that went there?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, this same road somewhat; it looked like they just repaired it and fixed it a little better than what it was. It was a trail, more or less; more or less a trail; you could get in...[pause in recording]
PK:	So, up close to the edge of the Fort, was it?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, right. I can see a light—look like a tombstone up there. Can you see it?
PK:	Yeah. I think there's a picnic table—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Picnic table up there. That's where it—
PK:	That's where it was?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's where it was; that was the Randalls'.
PK:	Was there anything down in the creek?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Not as I know of.
PK:	Can we walk up to where the Randalls' was then? You're not too tired?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, I'm all right. [pause in recording]
PK:	We were just talking about tombstones.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's right, certainly right.
PK:	So this is where the Randalls' house was?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	The Randalls was in this area—right in here.
PK:	Was that an older looking house?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That was an older looking house. You might have that on—
PK:	I've got a picture of it. Were you ever inside of it?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I never went inside. I was in and out, being military. I left my family and I had to go overseas and what not.
PK:	Well, what made you say it was older?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Because it looked old. And was close to the ground, you know? They didn't have basements too much back in those days if it was built kind of cheap that way.
PK:	And it looked like maybe it was added on to?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It did have a shed seems like—a shed and like a partial porch.
PK:	Uh huh. The Randalls. Now how big a family was that?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It was a good-size family. And the house was a good size because they had a shed like. You know, house and then you know, an extra little—
PK:	Like a lean-to, a part of it that they've added on?

Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Added on, uh huh.
PK:	And that was connected with the same road that came up from the—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yeah, the same old road. That was the entrance to the property here. Uh huh. That's probably the road there; they just re-did it I think. Yeah, that's the road, uh huh.
PK:	...Now somebody was telling me that back down where that playground is there was some kind of pond or something.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It could have been. My son would know because they played all over the woods. I didn't have time to do that.
PK:	Maybe you could ask him. When I bring that transcription back, you could—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I will. I certainly will ask him was there a pond. They know every hole in here 'cause they played here; they stayed out of my way. Amen! [laughter] They knew every nook and cranny in here. They was happy to come up for the picnic because it was their old tromping grounds. Been a lot of changes. Yeah, they knew more about this place than I did.
PK:	So, your kids used to come back in this way, but you didn't come.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	They was all over—even before they built Shirley Highway out there. They built that I think right at the end of World War II. It wasn't opened when I came back from overseas; they was working on it. But they was all over the place because they had nowhere to go but play.
PK:	Was there a Mr. Craven? Did you know a Craven?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Craven. Yes, he lived over on the other side there. But I don't think he was in the Fort. He had his own place.
PK:	Oh, so that was separate from what you call the Fort?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Separate, yes, a little farm like—uh huh.
PK:	And I heard somebody had a pig farm. Was that Mr. Craven?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That was probably Mr. Craven because he had a little farm up there. Uh huh. That's where the school is—there's an academy school there.
PK:	Right...St. Stephen's.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	St. Stephen's, that's right. Amen! ...that was his farm. Uh huh. I can remember that. Uh huh.
PK:	So how would you describe living at the Fort? Was it country? Was it suburbs? Was it part of the City of Alexandria? You were Fairfax County or how—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Well, we was in Fairfax County and it was country-like. It was more or less country.
PK:	...your neighbors felt that way or did some of them go into the City to work?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yes, because some worked for the government and some were doing day-work—the women.
<b>Children's Schools</b>	
PK:	And your children went to school where?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	They went to St. Joseph's in Alexandria. They didn't have a public school for the blacks then you know.



PK:	They didn't have a public high school for the blacks?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, and later they integrated and then they started going to Blessed Sacrament. But we had to get our own transportation any way we could to get them down there—to Alexandria. Or sometimes we'd walk it—walk down. It was almost three or four miles. Amen.
PK:	Well, then you had enough money to be able to pay for them to go to high school that way.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Oh yes. Well, we got grants and what not. We worked it out. Amen. There's always a way.
PK:	Well, I know some people would go to Manassas—to that regional school?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yeah, they had an old bus running up there.
PK:	When your kids were going to school in the [19]50s, were they still busing kids to Manassas?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I don't know then. My kids never did go to Manassas 'cause they was Catholic. They went to St. Joseph's. I'm Protestant, but they was Catholic.
PK:	Was your wife Catholic?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	No, we just had to find a school for our children and that was the easiest way. They turned Catholic. We didn't mind; we had to get them an education so you did it any way you could. You had to be in that to know. [laughter]
PK:	Yeah and you know, I wasn't and it's real hard for me to get it. I just don't get it.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Well, you do the best you can.
PK:	And so your solution was find a Catholic—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Solution—let them go to school—any way they could get there. Amen.
PK:	And so they went. They finished high school there.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	They finished high school there. Then they came out in public school after that. In public school to finish their college 'cause all of them went to college.
PK:	Is that right?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Uh huh, Amen.
PK:	Well, you'll have to give me their names because the way I'm ending up my history is telling them some of the happy endings.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Happy endings but—
PK:	Happy endings, but not necessarily a happy journey all the way, right?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	[laughter] That's right—not a happy journey...yeah, that was happy because we learned. You learned by doing. And you don't learn the easy way, you learn the hard way. Amen, that's the best teacher. Everything's possible. It may seem hard, but it's good.
<b>Final Words</b>	
PK:	So, if you wanted to tell people...that are coming on in maybe the year 2000 and something, [if] you wanted to tell them about this neighborhood, what would you tell them?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Just be grateful and do the best you can. Amen.
PK:	Be grateful and do the best you can?

Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's right—the best you can. [laughter]
PK:	Thank you very much.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	God bless. [pause in recording]...where we're livin' now. So what they did. The government or something started an urban plan they call it. They buy up the wasteland—you know wherever it was rundown and they would build and—sell back to whoever...you know we had the choice—the people that were being displaced—so they wanted this for the park so I was displaced.
PK:	You were displaced?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	I was displaced.
PK:	They come in and they say, “You have so long to move.” Or how did they do that?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	Yeah, well, they was buildin' and as they were finishing a house, you would move in down there.
PK:	So they'd say, “We've got a place for you to move and now you need to leave here?”
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's right. Uh huh.
PK:	How long a time-span was that?
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	It was a couple of years. I was one of the last to move in because I was livin' here and the people down there, they would move from one house to the other like, you know, 'til they'd complete a house. It was rough. That would save 'em going into town and having to go back and all that, you know.
PK:	So people would move into the new houses and then people that were getting out of their house would move into—
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	—the old house 'til they build another house.
PK:	So like musical chairs—musical houses.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	That's right. Musical houses. And they did like that.
PK:	Well, I know Ms. Dolph [?] was sayin' that her mom was very objectionable to getting moved from here—that she wasn't too happy about that.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	She probably wasn't because they had to move—people don't like to move—don't like changes sometimes.
Cameraman	Especially if you grew up there.
Sgt. Lee Thomas Young:	[laughter] Yeah, I didn't mind movin'—I didn't mind. [Tape Ends]