

Snake Hill

to

Spring Bank

Volume III

Virginia Room  
Fairfax City Regional Library  
3915 Chain Bridge Road  
Fairfax, VA 22030

Copyright, 1979, Groveton High School  
6500 Quander Road, Alexandria, Va. 22307

# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
CHAPTER 1 CHILDREN	
Eddie Clem . . . . .	2
Kim Hisel . . . . .	5
Carl Rush . . . . .	6
Christen Keegan . . . . .	8
Tom Ryan . . . . .	10
CHAPTER 2 SIXTIES	
Marvin Hupart . . . . .	13
Richard Edelman . . . . .	18
Mike Williams . . . . .	19
Charles Price . . . . .	24
CHAPTER 3 REAL ESTATE	
Edward Merkli . . . . .	28
Mark Shepherd . . . . .	30
Dawn Fones . . . . .	32
Sheila Gibbin . . . . .	34
Huntley Photo Essay . . . . .	38
CHAPTER 4 GENERATIONS	
Karen Miller . . . . .	41
Cline Proffit . . . . .	42
Sarah Entwisle . . . . .	45
Bruce Saunders . . . . .	48
William Parker . . . . .	50
CHAPTER 5 NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORIANS	
John and Maria Linda Haynes . . . . .	52
Roy Miles . . . . .	58
Harry Vaughan . . . . .	61
Phyllis Buschman . . . . .	63
Corrine Starry . . . . .	65
CREDITS . . . . .	69

# Introduction

Our English class of students from Groveton High School have interviewed long-time residents of the Groveton area to preserve, in detail, the historical aspects of the Groveton community.

We conducted tape recorded interviews with our narrators who were very cooperative, contributing valuable information. The interviews were transcribed and edited. During the editing process we attempted to retain the character of the narrators by utilizing the material to its fullest extent. We have tried to reproduce accurately the spoken language of the narrators.

Our title, Snake Hill to Spring Bank, originated from our first volume printed in 1975. Mr. Shepherd, one of our narrators, explains where the names originated and we include a part of his interview in this introduction:

"Snake Hill it was called. The road was tremendously crooked. That's the reason it was called Snake Hill, I suppose. It went from Saint Louis Church down Richmond Highway. There was an airport down there. Old Number 1 Highway went in back of McDonalds up by Lockheed Boulevard.

On Snake Hill there was a tremendous big tree, an oak tree. It was sitting right at the edge of the road. A lot of people were injured, killed, in a bus accident there. Somebody carved a great big heart on the tree where the bus hit. It stayed there for years and years. Of course it's gone now. The road is much different now than it was then.

Spring Bank's down a little further. There's a trailer court there now. There was a big home there and a lot of farm land. I think a family named Hardbower owned that. It was a lovely place, a beautiful place.

At one time I knew everybody that lived from here to Alexandria or that was in the sight of Number 1 Highway. That wasn't too hard to do. There weren't that many people. I was born here."

# CHILDREN

1979 is International Year of the Child, and to honor this celebration, Snake Hill to Spring Bank has interviewed several children. Through these interviews we attempt to contrast the past with the present, and perhaps, in the process, take a quick look into the future.

## Clem

*Eddie. Clem is eight years old and has lived in the area all his life. He is a third grader and attends Hybla Valley Elementary. When not caring for his younger sister, he is an avid T-Ball player who values his friends.*

Question: What's the most exciting thing that's ever happened to you?

Uhhhh...

Question: Do you want to come back to that question?

Yeah.

Question: What kind of games do you play?

The game "Sorry," hide-n-seek, TV Tag, and T-Ball. And also play with clay. I either make a house or I make jails. I go inside and change my clothes and then I go outside and ride my bike.

Question: How do you play T-Ball?

The coach sets a tee up and then you put a ball on it. Then you hit the ball off the tee and you run to the bases.

Question: What position do you play?

Centerfield.

Question: Do you like playing that position?

No, because you don't get the ball very much.

Question: What position would you want to play if you didn't play centerfield?

First. 'Cause...there's a runner running over to first and if you catch the ball...you get the ball a lot.

Question: Do you remember any certain game?

Against the Mets, when I was up hittin' homeruns. When the Mets were up, they kept throwin' the bats, and when we were up we kept on hittin' homeruns. Their coach didn't tell them not to throw the bats.

Question: What happens when you throw the bat?

You're automatically out.

Question: How do you play TV Tag?

There's somebody it and before they tag you, you gotta get down on the ground real fast and say a TV show.

Question: What if you don't say a TV show?

Then you're automatically it.

Question: What's your favorite TV show?

Spiderman. There's this Green Goblin and he tries and steals the Book of Magic. Then he gets the sword of some mummy. Then Spiderman comes and the Green Goblin shuts the mummy case door on him. He breaks out and Spiderman goes after him. After he gets through hittin' him he spins a web on 'em. He (Spiderman) just has to spin a web 'n then he swings by it.

Question: Are there any other TV shows you like?

Batman and Robin. 'Cause they fight...they challenge bad guys and all that.

Question: What do you want to be when you grow up?

A fireman...they get paid a lot. My dad was a fireman. They help people when they're in trouble...like in a fire. And they put fires out. I just think it's something nice to do.

Question: What if you're not allowed to be a fireman?

Then I would be a policeman. A policeman can cruise around on different streets, and they stop people who rob you.

Question: Do you have a best friend?

Yes. Timmy Lukes. We ride bikes, and share, and play catch and T-Ball.

Question: Do your parents ever talk about the olden days when they were kids?

Yeah, they say whenever they were bad their mother or father makes 'em go to bed or something. And if they don't eat all their dinner they don't get to go out and play.

Question: What kind of changes have you seen?

New schools bein' built. Apartments bein' built. People moving.

Question: If you didn't live in this country, where would you like to live?

Alabama, 'cause my aunt lives in Alabama. If we lived there then we'll be able to visit 'em a lot.

Question: How about a far away place?

I'd like to visit Israel. I guess because it's a nice state. Sometime last March there were some people from Israel in our school. I just know that Israel might be nice.

Question: Well...that's about it.

I think we have one more question to go back to.

Question: Oh, I'm sorry Ed. What's the most exciting thing that's ever happened to you?

Ummm...people buying new cars. When we bought a new car and truck, my dad let me help him wash it and all that.

# Hisel

*Kim Hisel is in the fourth grade at Groveton Elementary. She has lived in the Vantage - Kingsbrooke area for two and one half years. Kim someday hopes to become a professional ice skater.*

Question: Where do you go to school?

Groveton Elementary.

Question: What do you not like and like about it?

Well, it copies off of Groveton High, but you can meet a lot of friendly people.

Question: Who's your favorite teacher and why do you like her?

Well, she was here for about three years, and now she's working at another school, but I still like - Miss Starr. She's pretty nice and when you do something wrong she won't yell at you or anything. She just tells you to stand in the corner. After you learn your lesson she'll let you sit down.

My teacher now yells at you and puts you back in your seat and stuff.

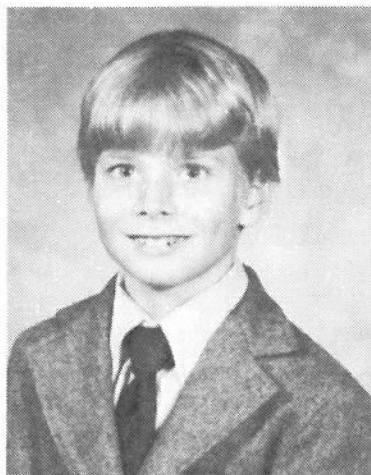
Question: Who do you play with and what do you play?

I play with Crystal. Then we go outside and play boys chase the girls and then we switch around.

I have a dog and a cat. Their names are Susie and Candy. Candy's the cat; Susie's the dog. Susie's four and Candy is gonna turn one pretty soon, so she's still a little kitten.

Question: Have you noticed any changes around Vantage and around Groveton?

There's a new section over by South King's and it's called Deer Crossing Run or something like that. There's a couple of deer over there. They're going to build some...little portable houses. There really isn't much else except the new teachers.



## Rush

*Carl Rush is a third grader at Ascension Academy, a private school. He is the leader and founder of the neighborhood "Fonzie Club."*

Question: Do you have a lot of friends?

Yeah.

Question: What school do you go to?

Ascension Academy. There's a lower school and an upper school. The lower school goes 1st through 6th and the upper school goes 7th through 12th.

Question: How many people are in your class?

Twenty-two.

Question: Is that fewer people than a class in Hollin Meadows?

No. It's about the same, but it would be a lot compared to Hollin Meadows 'cause it's a private school.

Question: Do you want to go back to Hollin Meadows?

Very!

Question: How come?

I like it better. The teachers are much nicer.

Question: Do you like your friends at Hollin Meadows better than the ones at school?

Yeah, much.

Question: Do you think going to a private school has made you lose friends or gain friends?

It makes you gain friends but...It's just that you don't like...I don't like private schools at least.

Question: How about the other kids in your class?

Most of them don't like it. Only one or two people like it out of 22.

Question: Are the teachers strict?

They're strict but not very strict. The lower school's strictest teacher is the 4th grade. That's where I'm going next year, so definitely I don't want to. But my mom wants me to.

Question: Do you like wearing a uniform?

No. But I think a week from now, next Wednesday we get to wear our regular clothes.

Question: What kind of games do you play around here?

British Bulldog, soccer, and basketball.

Question: Do you play soccer for a league?

Yeah. We played on the Privateers.

Question: What league is that?

That's Alexandria.



Question: Did you ever go to any championships?

Yeah! We were the champs for two years.

Question: What other sports do you play?

Basketball. We almost got in the championships but we lost by one point.

Question: Where is the hang-out for kids?

I have a little fort in my house. You know those little storage places? My dad cleaned out all the boxes.

Question: Do all the kids in the neighborhood go there?

Just a couple that are in the club.

Question: What's the name of the club?

It's just something I got out of the Fonzie coloring book. It's called the Fonz Club.

Question: How many people are in it?

Five, it's small.

Question: Do you remember when they were building the townhouses?

Yes. I didn't like it. Now there's all the noise coming from the apartments and now they're gonna build 37 houses on Popkins right behind our house and I don't like that. The horses stay in the back. They don't come up to us anymore. We used to feed 'em carrots.

## Keegan

*Christen Keegan is a third grader at Groveton Elementary. She has lived in the Groveton area one and one half years and was brought up in Brazil. Christen enjoys going to school, reading books and listening to records during her free time.*

Question: Do you like school?

I like school, and my teacher's nice. We have good food and stuff. But sometimes when we have substitute teachers, we don't get recess or anything. She's so strict, she won't let us do anything.

Question: Why does she keep you in?

I dunno. (laughs) I guess because the people in our class are so noisy.

Question: Who's your favorite teacher?

Miss Rater. She's nice. One time when we were making rules, she put up on the rules thing that no one can yell in class. So not even the teacher can yell in class. Every Friday we have to write this letter that Miss Rater copied down from this paper. She puts the letter up on the board, and sometimes on cards that she gives us. She also lets us have a free library pass or quiet game pass.

Question: What kind of games do you play?

Sometimes when I'm very bored and there's nothing on T.V., I play a game of Star Wars with my mother or father. I also listen to records and invite Chrystal Simpkins and Jenny Scholl over. I usually ask them to come over and play in my backyard on my treehouse.

Question: Is that all?

No, we go inside and dance and stuff.

Question: What are some changes you've seen around Groveton?

In Vantage, up by the new road that they just finished, you see these rocks and stuff. They're building houses. The fence on the other side of our fence on the right side, there's going to be new houses along there. There might be some houses around by our backyard. It's called Deer Run Crossing. They have a park up there too. People live there. They have this park and they have a cage with deers in them.



# Ryan

*Tom Ryan is twelve years old and in the sixth grade at St. Louis Catholic School. Tom has lived in the area all his life and talks about being a small kid in today's society.*

I live on Clayborne Avenue. It connects to Richmond Highway. It is a good area because there is not that many bad kids. Most of the kids have left the area already. Everybody grows up and then they don't need the area. They can go to different places. The kids around here are pretty good.

Question: Where do you play the most?

Groveton Park. It has a baseball field, a very large field where you can fly your kites. I like to fly kites because of the way you try to keep the kites up there. They start falling and you have to make sure they don't get in the trees. I like playing baseball. I also play on the swings and stuff.

Question: Do you play anywhere else?

I like going down by the Amlong house that is about 100 years old. It is the one right across Harrison Lane. Once you get out of the woods on the other side of Harrison Lane you're in the Amlong Woods. Me and my sister were going through there, and we found a spring that was open. On it, it said, "If anybody opens this spring up they will be prosecuted," and it had Amlong's writing on it.

I like when we're going to build a fort. We have to go tromping through the woods, trying to find wood and stuff to make our forts.

Question: Do you enjoy playing games with your friends?

Yes, I think it's fun because it is a lot better than sitting around and doing nothing.

Question: What do you do when you are not playing with your friends?

I clean my room and watch T.V.

Question: Do you watch a lot of T.V.?

No, because my Mom and Dad won't let me.

Question: Have you joined any sports at all?

I joined baseball for the Saint Louis School Cardinals. I was supposed to be on the higher league the second year. They said that the people who are just going to the higher league could go back down to the lower league. I ended up going into the Cardinals again for the second year. We ended up coming in second place.

Question: What school do you go to?

Saint Louis School. I'm in the sixth grade.

Question: What is your teacher's name?

Mrs. Milburn. I like her because she is very talkative. I go in there in the morning at 7:30 and we always carry on a conversation from 7:30 to 8:00 almost.

Question: What is your favorite subject?

Math, because I just like adding and subtracting numbers and all that kind of stuff. My worst subject is gym, because we're supposed to have it every week on Fridays. It's supposed to be our last subject, but the band plays in the cafeteria where we usually play for gym and they take up the cafeteria. It is usually raining outside so we end up having health in the classroom. Nobody in our class likes health because all you do is sit around and the teacher asks us all these gross things.

Question: What is your favorite place to eat?

Wendy's.

Question: What do you like about Wendy's?

Their Hamburgers and their Frosty's. I love their Frosty's.

Question: Do you have any expensive restaurants you like?

Probably my favorite would be Emersons. It is South on Richmond Highway, past Hybla Valley down by Mount Vernon. The reason I liked it was because they had salad and everything like that. You could go up for salad and you would sit back down. The service was perfect and the food was very good.

# SIXTIES

The Sixties in the Groveton Community was a time of changes and new ideas. It was a time of war, civil rights protests, and changing music.

## Hupart

*Marvin Hupart is a historian and a teacher at Groveton High School. Being a resident and a teacher at Groveton for many years, he has noticed the changes in behavior and the people that resulted from the sixties.*

In the sixties? At Groveton High School?

You're probably interested in the bizarre part of the 1960's. I would say the early part of the 1960's was very much a reflection of the 1950's; which was certainly more orderly than the type of situation that appeared from 1965 to about 1972 or 1973.

The situation was very similar to what was occurring in the nation at that moment. Groveton High School was like a microcosm of the nation. It has an interesting admixture of peoples, and the schools, more or less, reflect certain trends and conditions in the nation. If I'm trying to seek out adjectives for describing that period, I would say bizarre, unusual, and peculiar. A lot of people were attracted to extraordinary things. Many things had their origins in California and seemed to move toward the eastern part of the country. For instance, witchcraft, the occult, psychedelic music, which, of course, attempts to get into your subconscious, was very big in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The consumption of pot was regarded as a hideous sin in the sixties. It is not accepted, but certainly tolerated today. In certain places, like Madison, Wisconsin, nobody even bothers with that subject anymore.

I think we're far less materialistic than we were in the early sixties and fifties. My parents went through the depression. I was born during the depression. I never really felt the ill effect of the depression, but I went through a certain amount of indoctrination that I should get a good education, I should work hard, I should be frugal, I should be economically successful, I should have a job with all sorts of security in it, because you never know, the depression



might hit again. Now those values are transmitted by my generation to the younger generation, but it's like water off a duck's back. It has absolutely no meaning what so ever, because you don't identify with that 1929 depression or what occurred in the 1930's. It was close to me in the sense that my father and grandfather remembered it. I went through that process of indoctrination, and from their experiences, I embraced the same values.

Those values become meaningless to people that are really born into a pretty prosperous environment. So the same values don't really have that much meaning. Self-sacrifices now for a better future don't really hold too much weight if you've got it made right now. What's the sense of making sacrifices now if there's nothing better in the future, if the good times are coming as soon as the bell strikes two o'clock? It's a different ball game.

The general prosperity that came from the Kennedy-Johnson years, the great society that we're going to make things better for all people, was largely responsible. There was a good deal of disruptiveness in the 1960's. I think the rhetoric that came from the Lyndon Johnson years was partially responsible for it. That we're going to bring the great society down to all people that have not been exposed to American prosperity. I think that type of rhetoric, the type of promises that were made, and also that some of the promises were delivered, was largely responsible for the disruptiveness that occurred. I would say that objectively, just about every group in our society benefitted from certain important historical changes that affected people in the 1960's; but subjectively, in their own minds, things weren't getting better, they were getting far worse.

There was a lot of rioting that occurred in American cities. The rioting had a strong racial significance to it. I don't see the rioting occurring because things were getting worse for black Americans. If anything, I think the rioting occurred because things were getting better for black Americans. Don't get me wrong. Racial discrimination, these impediments, the road blocks, were still placed in the way of black Americans. It was a far cry from the type of situation that occurred in the early part of the twentieth century, and for that matter, even as early as the 1930's, the 1940's, and the 1950's. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's gave many black Americans the right to vote and eliminated many discriminatory areas which hindered black progress for a very long period of time. There were some very strong concrete gains that were made. Federal programs benefitted Appalachians in so many ways. They were not a part of the main stream of America. If you read the book Night Comes to the

Cumberlands you might know what I'm talking about. There were very beneficial programs. The American blue collar worker never had it better than he had it in the 1960's. Perhaps the prosperity still caused certain amounts of frustration. There might have been a tendency on the part of those people over 30 to have the extra automobile or the extra television set. If an unskilled black laborer who left South Boston, Virginia and is now working in Washington, D.C. is making \$150 a week, more than likely his frustrations will grow tenfold, because he cannot move into the Fairfax County suburbs because of the racial barriers that are still placed in his way. Although the disruptiveness was there, I don't see America going to hell in the 1960's. I think there are many fine good things that came out of the 1960's and they are very much a part of our daily experiences in the 1970's.

I would say the big thing was the frustration of rising expectations. There was considerable progress that was made in the 1960's. Many many people were benefitting from it. Women's rights was coming into its own, there was no doubt about it. More women were entering certain professions and occupations that were formerly barred to them. More black people were making it into mainstream America, but the impediments that were placed in the way of women like those that were placed in the way of black folk were still there. Objectively, things were getting better, but I think subjectively, as I said earlier, in the minds of large numbers of people in this country things were not getting better, they were getting worse.

Jimmy Lewis was a basketball player. He's an interesting person by the way. His father chauffeured around John L. Lewis, who was a very important union man, for many many years. Jimmy Lewis was a black basketball player who transferred from either Alexandria or Washington to Groveton High School.

The team was very fortunate to have him for half a season. If we'd had him for a full season, no doubt about it, we would have taken everything that year, regionals and state as well. There were very few black students attending Groveton High School at that time. Jimmy Lewis won the hearts of a good part of the student body. Most certainly he won the hearts of his team mates.

After one of their very frequent victories they went to the Dixie Pig, and they were denied service because they insisted on having a meal with Jimmy. The whole team walked out of the Dixie Pig. The whole team was very irate over the whole incident. We learn tolerance and brotherhood not from abstract principles, but from experiences. In other words, they didn't read about brotherhood

in a book. They experienced brotherhood from working with Jimmy Lewis on a day-in, day-out basis. There are many basketball players who apparently did not accept him at first. Un-acceptance leads to tolerance. Then from tolerance there is full fledged acceptance.

They liked the guy. They had a tremendous admiration not only for his skills as a basketball player, but for him as a personality, for him as a human being. It was a wonderful sight indeed. He made a valuable contribution to this school. There's no doubt about it. I haven't seen Jimmy in I don't know how many years. I'd like to see him and say a few things about that little incident. Now, of course, we take integration for granted.

I think one of the things that characterized the 1960's was a revolution, and people don't really appreciate or understand what happened. You have integrated schools coming into its own. Everybody expected a real blow up. There wasn't. There were some difficulties, there's no doubt about it, but it certainly wasn't a blow up. You see some budding black-white relationships and black-white friendships coming out of it. The very fact that a black person can go to the Dixie Pig and have a cup of coffee and nobody stares at him, is obviously a sign that we're moving in the right direction. That really did not start happening until the 1960's.

I have a tremendous amount of respect for Mr. Hiller. Mr. Hiller was interested in integrating the Fairfax Education Association which is equivalent to a union. There was a big to do about it. Most teachers were very adamant about it and said, "No, we don't want to integrate with black teachers." Hiller was a very strong proponent of integrating this organization. There was a special meeting held in the auditorium. He was booed and there were cat calls. I was scared and I wanted a job. I didn't say anything. I wanted a job at this school in the worst way. I didn't say anything at all. I was not a very courageous person at that moment. Certainly, he showed a hell of a lot of courage and he's really a hell of a human being. He doesn't make mention of it, but I remember it very well. There's all sorts of ironies involved and it's interesting how flexible people can be. Some of the people who spoke against integrating the F.E.A. end up as human relations directors at the Fairfax County level. I won't make mention of any names, but you'll have to take my word for it. All of a sudden they discover human rights and civil rights and civil liberties, but where were they when it was very unpopular to do so? That was in the early sixties. By the mid sixties, the battle was already won.

There was a dress code; there's no doubt about it. I remember

Mr. Frazee used to go around measuring bangs, which I thought was a little ridiculous. I think eventually we abandoned the dress code all together, and I think on the whole it was probably a good thing. The part that disturbs me about abandoning the dress code is that in some cases the garb worn by one of the students could have a disruptive effect on the class. I'll never forget the person who dyed her hair green. It was rather difficult to discuss the Edict of Nantes in that type of situation with the girl with dyed green hair sitting in front of the class. One day Mr. Hiller and I were walking down the halls of the Groveton High School, and the first three students we saw were dressed as a monk, an Indian, and a cowboy. That's no exaggeration at all. We really thought the school was going bananas during that period of time.

I would say another characteristic of the mid-1960's, late 1960's, or early 1970's was a general informality. Perhaps the Beatles were somewhat responsible for it, but I don't like to think in terms of a single cause. The Beatles certainly had a tremendous impact on this country. They came over in 1963, and there was a tendency for a lot of young people to ape and imitate the Beatles. It was going to expand and eventually affect a good part of the country. Not only the younger people, but the elderly people as well. There was a tendency for the elderly to emulate the youngsters in many respects. It was not unusual to see bald men imitate the youngsters, growing their eyebrows long and then combing their eyebrows over their heads. I'm only kidding about that. (laughs)

There's a general informality (puts feet on table) and a more simplistic type of life style. We've institutionalized it. I used to wear a suit and a tie. I did! Many people did. I would say on the whole we have a more simplistic way of doing things. We have an informal type of clothing. We don't wear the shirt and the tie and the jacket. It's making a comeback, by the way, but it will never really be quite the same because of what took place in the 1960's. I like wearing these shoes, these pants, and this shirt. I avoid wearing the tie.

Perhaps I'm a little old fashioned, but I think the lack of cleanliness is the thing that really got to me in some instances. I don't really mind the garb as much but I find it rather difficult to accept the person who doesn't wash his face or clean his fingernails. We had a little bit of that business in the mid-sixties. Now, in one sense, this was a protest against the war in Viet-Nam, against the older generation which was regarded as crude and materialistic. We've had these protests before in history. Interest-



ingly enough, many of those things of the late sixties which were done in protest have become institutionalized in the seventies. Long hair was a protest against the establishment. I would say wearing the Levi's and the Wrangler's was a protest against the establishment at one time or another, that we're going to put on this working man's garb to shock our parents. Now everybody wears Levi's, but at that time, it was not proper to do so. It's happened before in our history. Quakers would deliberately dress themselves in black against the ostentatious display of the English aristocracy and Quakers still dress in black, but they probably don't know the reason why. That occurred four centuries ago.

## Edelman

*Richard Edelman graduated from Groveton High School in 1971 and has been living in the area ever since. He came to Groveton during the major changes of the sixties and he discusses the music from this time.*

I think the time I went to Groveton was a transition period. When I first was there it was pretty much the way it'd been for the last ten years.

I used to listen to the Grateful Dead, Cream, Crosby, Stills and Nash and a lot of the groups that went with the youth movement. The Beatles were there all along. It was part of a youth cultural expression. It was part of a different way of seeing the world. People really believed that they could create a new society. Not everybody did but at least the leaders and the people earnestly involved did. They thought the music was the expression of it.

The drug music sort of imposed itself on the school. You would take LSD and listen to hard rock or something else. You would experience the music. The music broke down a lot of old mores and established new ways of dealing with things.

The festival period lasted for three or four years, but Woodstock was the big one. That was 1969. I did know a couple of people that went. They really liked it. It was a really exciting period of life for them. I think they were impressed by having said, "Oh we went to Woodstock." It was the symbolic climax of the youth movement.

The Beatles were involved in there too. I think it was about the ninth or tenth grade that they came out with "Sgt. Pepper's

Lonely Hearts Club Band," which was a new thing for them. Before they were into a soft, sweet guitar music. Then they came out with a drug music, so they were sort of leaders. Their music was a real break with the old kind of rock and roll. People really thought they were great. They were on top; they made it.

They made long hair respectable - not really respectable, but before that it was crew cuts or closely cut hair. After them long hair became in. It started out with neatly cut long hair and very rapidly became long hair that no one ever combed. Hair got really long and unstyled. I used to wear my hair long and I was always told to cut it and threatened with suspension.

There were anti-war demonstrations during school and they used to present the faculty with a list of demands or we'll go on strike. We would have sit-ins. The dress code broke down and that was about 1969-70. It was kind of a victory for us. We saw ourselves as rebels or crusaders. We were fortunate to beat the establishment on that one.

## Williams

*Michael Jerome Williams was born on May 30, 1953. He grew up in the Groveton Community through the sixties and graduated from Groveton High School in 1971.*

I graduated from Groveton High School in 1971, and lived in the Groveton Community until the fall of 1975. At Groveton I was in an unusual position in that I was president of the school. I think it was the first time that the president of the student body was black. Before that they had a class president or vice-president named Rayfield Barber who was black.

Groveton is a community that I have often found myself very puzzled by in that it has so much potential for change. There are many people who are trying to do things in terms of racial interactions. It's a community where if you look at it in terms of socioeconomic status and ethnic groupings, there are no particular ethnic groups that have a really outstanding majority. You may say that there are plenty of whites but their income level varies tremendously. I think that the Groveton Community allowed many people

to interact with each other who never interacted before.

The new school is in an area that is predominantly black. I rejoice that when I look in the phone book to look up Groveton High School I find the term Groveton Community School. I think that there are many people within the community who made efforts to make the school into a real community school.

I think racial relations between blacks and whites have stepped backwards. For the most part there are very few people who are taking full advantage of the situation. I don't think there's adequate communications between blacks and whites. One of the disastrous things I've noticed is the presence of the so called recreation center at Groveton; I've never seen any white students there. When I grew up there it was still Bryant but it was still a community recreation center. I never saw any white kids playing there. I found that I don't like the whole idea of the recreation department that gives black kids a recreation center to play in. The only activities that were involved were games. That was a case of not using the fullest potential of the facilities to allow people to advance. There's no cultural exchange or cultural enrichment.

If you didn't have a recreation center the kids would still play basketball. If they really wanted to play pool they could play pool at a friend's house. To me the rec center was an attempt to alleviate some of the tension between black and whites by giving blacks a place to be, particularly black students. I think that what it has done also is closed the door for many of them, that if they didn't have that recreation center there they would be involved in other activities.

I also have to say that peer group pressures are tremendous within the black community as well as most communities. I think that most blacks subject themselves to the fears of peer group pressure, and they won't allow themselves to interact with whites.

One of the things I really rejoiced in when I was in high school is that I was president of a school that had a black population of perhaps eleven percent. I won the election by pretty much a landslide. There were certain things that we achieved that particular school year. It was the first year for the S.G.A. versus the S.C.A. set up. I felt that we had a greater possibility and chance of having people interact as people rather than racial groupings and rather than looking at each with bias and prejudice. I think that I was able to do things at Groveton because I was insane enough not to worry about peer group pressures.

One of the things about Groveton that I appreciate and will never forget is that I saw there were people who were trying to interact. It gave me the strength to decide to live in a way that's

different from many people. As much as possible I'm not race conscious. I try not to live that way. I think that Groveton provided a tremendous energy for change. I'm sorry to see that now they've changed to be more conservative in terms of race relations. It's kinda heartbreaking to see that. There's less interacting of the races now than in the past.

Growing up in the Groveton area during the sixties was very interesting. I crave for the sixties again in terms of what it did nationally, keeping people aware of situations in the world and people trying to take action regardless of how depressing life may have been to the people who were trying to take action.

The Groveton area in the sixties was a time of great change socially. I think I actually got to a point I lived with the influence of the entire Groveton Community rather than living with the influence of Quander Road. I think that if I had lived with the influences that were strongly around me, I would probably be out on the streets now being a hoodlum. I was able to gain from some of the ideas that other people had. I gained a certain strength and a certain courage - not a courage that you would use in a fight, which was also a part of my growing up in those days - but civil courage, the courage to take action when there was no one around to see that you took action or to take action when you knew that there will be scores of people who disapprove or to take a stand because it is right rather than going along with the majority of the people.

At the point of the Civil Rights Movement, particularly in 1968, I was only a fifteen year old. I think as far as participation in Civil Rights Movements are concerned, I'm a person who has chosen to live without organizations. I think the Civil Rights Movement achieved a lot. It was a unique time in American History, as well as local history. My overall feeling goes that you can't legislate virtue; you can't legislate laws to make people act correctly. You can't force people to act humanely because you have a law. It's an individual choice.

We find that for instance there are housing laws. We already had these glorious laws in the late sixties. Blacks and members of other minorities, and in some cases whites would go in the neighborhood looking for housing and if the realtor decided he didn't want that person in that neighborhood, he simply didn't show him the house. It wasn't a case of what was legal. If he didn't show him the house, he can't claim discrimination.

As far as participating in Civil Rights Movements are concerned, I think on an individual level I participated in a lot of



Civil Rights Movements. In high school I had friends who were white and had friends who were members of other ethnic groups other than being black. I think my interaction with those people particularly in my Junior year in high school when I was class vice-president, did more for me in terms of civil rights. I was more active in civil rights then, than in any other time of my life.

Our Junior class was the class to start the really cheap proms at Groveton. This sounds like a trite thing but it isn't. In my Junior year we sponsored a prom that cost three dollars a couple, and even though the prices were only three dollars a couple I'll admit that I gave tickets away to some people because they couldn't afford to buy tickets. We participated in setting up tuxedo rentals and things like that. We got more people involved in mainstream conventional ideas and conventional things that society says one must go through. These people wanted to go into the mainstream of society, that's, in a way, standing up for people's civil rights.

We have a tendency in this country, blacks, whites, all people in this country have a tendency to cast dirt upon people. We look for the negative things too often. Martin Luther King to me was a person who as I speak of him I um . . . have to almost fight back tears. He's a person who was a beautiful human being in terms of his own courage, his own strength and knowing what was right. He was good simply because he couldn't do anything else. That's very important. You're not going to act in a good way, you're not going to act strongly because you have a title. If he had been a man without a title, he would have been just as effective.

He could have been just as effective, if he had been in South Africa rather than the United States. He was a man...if he had been anywhere in the world, chances are he would have been destroyed, not necessarily assassinated as he was. He would have been destroyed because he was a man who said the truth and who couldn't do anything but speak that truth. There's a tremendous amount of courage in that, and a tremendous simplicity.

If we don't denigrate people, if we don't cut them down, the next thing we want to do is build them into super heroes. The truth of the matter is that the man to me was a super hero. Super hero, not such that one may put a big "S" on his chest and say, "this is a superman," but the fact that he lived so simply. The truth is not anything very complex. It's a very simple matter. He lived that way because it was the only thing he could do and that too is what he represents.

It was the end of my sophomore year and they were talking about doing away with the dress code. So the beginning of my Junior year, 22 Groveton didn't have a dress code. It was kinda radical because we

were the only school in Fairfax County that didn't have a dress code. Well, we had a dress code but it was something like you could wear anything you wanted as long as you didn't interrupt the educational process, so you could wear anything. I don't think anyone was ever brought before the review board for the type of clothing that they wore. I really enjoyed being in a place that was first to try something. It seemed the county had to change their policy because Groveton after all was doing without a dress code already.

The years I remember the most about high school were 1970 and 1971 and protesting had become very mild. In fact, I think they had better protests after we left. I'm kinda sorry sometimes that they didn't have protests; on the other hand most of us really needed our education.

The thing I liked about Groveton in those days is that Groveton got away from having sockhops and all that teeny-bopper type of stuff and they had rock concerts. One of the groups that played was called Crank. It was quite interesting; the administration didn't like it too much. At the rock concerts you find more people drinking beer and smoking marijuana inside of the school and things like that, but at the same time you didn't find this competitive element of people trying to out dance the other. I enjoyed the rock concerts much better than I liked dances. Probably because I'm not a good dancer.

Now, I'm a teacher's aide in a high school and I see a lot of drugs, much more than I saw at Groveton. I don't know if it's because at Groveton I was so naive when I was there or what. I don't think we had any more or any less drugs than most of the Fairfax schools at that time.

I hung out at Groveton as much as possible. I was involved in student government, involved in football and track and a number of other clubs and organizations. I hung out there for survival of my spirit. Of course high school kids feel there's other places to hang out at - Shakeys was one of them and the drive-in movies on occasion.

The class of '69 I think people thought was the worst class ever. I thought it was the worst class ever and I was only a sophomore. It's very difficult to say what the community thought. The P.T.A. at Groveton hasn't always been supported by the entire community. It's always been certain segments of the community who supported the P.T.A., as well as student government. I'm not certain what the community thought in terms of the academics at Groveton. I thought the class of '71 was a great academic class. As I remember it, it was a four way tie for valedictorian, or something like that. People looked at Groveton as that school on the hill, 23

in those days up on Popkins Hill off Popkins Lane. It was that school on the hill that was mostly a hippie freaky type of school. The beauty of Groveton was that you could take people from a lot of different backgrounds and not force them to have to change. They could just allow people to be what they were, and I think that was the best part of Groveton. I don't know if it's like that any longer.

The things that affected me most about Groveton were not legends, they were realities. In my senior year for instance my best friend got murdered. He was killed on the G.W. Parkway. That was something that affected me for the rest of my life. I think that Groveton was a place where there was a lot of fun and games, but we had a mixture of tragedies at different times that forced us to grow up faster than high school students grow up now, and I don't know which one is better.

The last time that I was in the community, I found that the youth in the Groveton Community are some what smaller than they used to be. That's the first impression that I have. These kids are really small, they're kids, and we were grown people. I think that's true of any teenager. I think you'll always think that way.

The black community must have doubled since I've lived here in the last four years. I'm used to people who grew up on Beacon Hill Road, Quander Road and Emit Drive. Now I'm starting to see black kids coming from all over, and that's kinda interesting. A lot of the kids who are there now are kids who just like the mainstream of the population have moved in from other parts of the United States. I guess Washington has had a lot of input into Groveton now a days, and that's about all I see in the community now.

## Price

*Mr. Price taught high school during the integration of the schools. He is now the assistant principal of Groveton High School and has been working there since the early seventies. He discussed integration and how a lot of changes, particularly in the sixties, have taken place during his teaching career.*

When they integrated schools in the sixties, the Fairfax County school system set up a program where they would teach black teachers how to work with white teachers and as we say, wasted \$57,000. We had had 400 years of knowing how to work with white people, and the thing should've been just the opposite. They should've been taught how to work with us. In fact in these sessions, out of eight or nine different groups, only one black teacher was in charge, the others were white teachers and we were integrated into these groups and they'd end up asking us all the questions, although they got paid for twice as much as we did to run these sessions.

Let's take the situation of Luther Jackson which was the only black high school in Northern Fairfax County. All the students from the Fort Hunt area, Fort Belvoir area, McLean, all around, went to that one high school. In that school we had the activities that we have here at Groveton and this is something that has been lost. We had class officers, student government, the band, the choir, the football team, basketball team and this type thing. Since the sixties most of the black students have been involved in athletic programs of the different high schools.

With some of the students in the sixties it never worked out, with white getting used to black students and black students getting used to white students, but today in Fairfax County there are very few confrontations between black and white students like they used to have. It's sad that more of the black students aren't involved in the whole process of the school and in the near future this will improve.

I have two children, a son Harold, who at this time is assistant principal of Dogwood Elementary School in Fairfax County. My daughter is a teacher at Groveton Elementary School. It wasn't too bad being a parent in the sixties, because of the location in which we lived; I imagine if I had been in the inner city there might've been some problems. My children were young coming through the sixties, and you needed a car to transport them everywhere they needed to go. So we had pretty good control. When my son reached the age to drive, the instructions we had given him from early childhood up to that time, paid off.

I was born in Alexandria, Virginia, and if you've done any research you know that Alexandria was one of the biggest slave market areas on the whole eastern coast. When I started school...even in elementary school you knew your place. That was the term we used back then. You knew you couldn't go to the movies, you knew you couldn't go to the white schools and I lived in what you would call an integrated neighborhood! Most of Alexandria, except for about two sections, there were whites and blacks in the same neighborhood,



so we got along fine. You played football games and stickball games in the empty lots and that type thing.

The section where I lived was called "the hill," near Franklin and Columbus Streets, right there near Green's Undertaker. The blacks would go towards the "uptown" as we called the school and the whites came across town. Sometimes you'd have rock battles with them and get chased away from school. The white students that lived on the hill went through the same thing right along with us.

As far as jobs and things like that, you were a paper boy or you worked in a corner grocery store. For girls it was mostly domestic work; no jobs in any stores. Teenage boys, at that time, had the jobs. Usually the girls worked in somebody's house or somebody's kitchen, or as somebody's maid. So there has been a lot of changes right in this area since I was a child.

I never would've been able to live in this area. Now you can buy homes anywhere you have the dollar bills. You can go in any store and you can go in any theater. It is now a matter of dollar's and cents. There're some places still, that the atmosphere is a little cool. So you don't go back to those places once you've experienced it.

In this county I don't think there are enough black teachers in each school. I don't think there are enough teachers of any ethnic group where you have students. The county says there is no ratio as far as teachers to students. I think that is a big mistake throughout the state of Virginia. I think there should be more teachers in the school, black and white, so that the students will have somebody to talk to and relate to. When I first came to Groveton, I think there were ten of us. But now through transfers and people quitting and going to other counties we have lost a number of our teachers.

The black schools didn't have dress codes. During those days boys didn't wear hats in the classrooms, not even inside the building. You took your hat off, or some teacher took it off for you, and not too gently at that! I can remember when I was at Langley, some of the girl's dressed very scantily and you had to send them home to change their outfits. Sometimes their parents would back them up in these different costumes and they'd go all the way to the superintendent. We didn't think they were dressed appropriately. I can remember one girl coming to school in a bikini. She walked around school all day in a bikini outfit. At that time we (Langley) had a large courtyard and some people thought it was like a beach. You dressed with your see-through things to go out there and it was supposed to be all right.

As the sixties and the seventies went on the whole set of values changed among the high school students. In the sixties high school

students were copying after the college students and kind of feeling their way and just going to see how much they could get away with and found out it wouldn't be accepted.

Martin Luther King, as far as the black people are concerned, affected the people here like Mahatma Ghandi did the people in India. He was a leader. He made, I would say, 99% of the black people proud of the whole issue of non-violence. T.V. helped a great deal because those of us who couldn't go through Alabama or those places with him could keep up with it on T.V. It gave a total population a sort of togetherness that it never had before.

Then turmoil hit the whole country when he was assassinated. People went up in arms, and burned and looted and this type of thing, a way of showing the fact that they didn't like what had happened to their leader.

During my early childhood up to the sixties as a young adult "colored" and "Negro" were the "in" names. When I grew up if a black student called you "black" or "nigger" you went up side his head. There was a fight. We didn't have too many because white kids in our neighborhood to even think about using those names back then, cause they knew it would be a fight.

In the sixties people of my age and older had to put these names aside and accept the word "black." It wasn't hard to accept because we knew what the movement was about. It was just a matter of erasing the other two names out of our vocabulary, You know, you'd walk in a class and say something to a student about being a Negro, and he'd say, "don't say I'm a Negro; I'm black." You know you didn't mean to offend him.

Now it is no problem. But the first year that this became popular, I had a problem with my boys in physical education, I was teaching physical education then, and everytime I would slip up, somebody would tell me about it. We'd have an argument. Just a matter of, "Coach, you're old fashioned," or something like that.

I have a grandmother that is still living. You better not tell her anything about being "black." She doesn't want to hear it, you know, because of her age that's all she's known.

# REAL ESTATE

## Merkli

*Edward Merkli, president of Merkli, McGuire and Merkli Realty, has been a real estate broker and in business for himself for the past nine years. His companies concentrate heavily on the Mount Vernon area, and he has been in this area for thirteen years.*

I've lived in Kirkside approximately thirteen years because of location. It was the remains of a dairy farm, open fields. The Hollin Meadows School was not built. They had three homes started on Sherwood Hall Lane. The corner house that Dr. Atcheson occupies was the model house and I had that for about three years, selling lots and homes to be built as well as existing homes that were going up. There was nothing up on top of the hill in Kirkside at all, just an open field. Sherwood Hall Lane was widened only in front of Kirkside at the time it was built and the rest of it was one lane in each direction. A bridge out at the little creek near Fort Hunt Road was only a one lane bridge for the first couple of years I lived down here. They widened the bridge and finally, after a lot of fighting, the highway department widened Sherwood Hall Lane. I felt that there wouldn't be a lot of congestion because of Fort Belvoir and also the Potomac River. Because of the river the population would be split so half the people would go into D.C. to work and the other half to Fort Belvoir. It wouldn't be as heavily congested as the western section of Fairfax, where most of the people would go straight into the district.

I had been in strip mining in West Virginia and they converted to oil and we lost sales for coal so I had to find another type of employment. I came to this area, worked in construction and I saw all the real estate signs, realizing that the government and military transferred quite often. I knew that real estate would be a good business to get into. I started out originally as Merkli Realty, started Merkli, McGuire in 1970, and about a year later Howard Maddox joined the firm. We opened an office on Washington Street in Alexandria and Mr. Maddox wanted to buy it out so we sold that office,

and we lost a good location. Then we had the other office at 1302 Lafayette Drive here in the Mount Vernon area.

We formed Merkli, McGuire originally because we wanted to have two brokers so that we would have coverage all the time. If I wanted to go vacation I could without worrying, or if Mr. McGuire wanted to, he could without worrying. Opening an office with him relieved the pressure somewhat. Before I started in business I'd sell, by myself, three houses a month. Now we're selling on the average of one a day. We had six Million Dollar Sales Club agents this year, and one of them has been in the Million Dollar Sales Club for five years.

When I first started in real estate, you could get a home reasonably priced. They've quadrupled in price now, so it makes it very difficult for young people to buy a home. They have to have a combined income, both husband and wife working, in order to qualify to make the payments on the high mortgage rates. Back then people were complaining that six percent was considered high interest rate on the home mortgages. Now we have ten and a quarter up to eleven and it might possibly get higher. People would wait for the rate to drop. Now they see that they can't wait for the interest rate to drop because the prices of the homes are going up so fast they can't see where they can afford to pay the higher interest rate in order to get ahead of the price increase. It isn't like it used to be, buyers sitting around waiting for the interest rate to drop. As they've realized in the past, while they were waiting for the rate to drop, the house price range was getting away from them and it cost them more money in waiting.

Real estate people have been accused of escalating prices and in some instances it's factual, but I've always tried to price homes with a price that's not inflated. A lot of it is also reproduction cost - materials, lumbers, and home construction in general. Everything has escalated, even wages, and land prices have become very expensive. In this area a half acre lot is difficult to find, but when you do, you can't find one under \$35,000. The home that I'm in in Kirkside was \$32,750 and now it's close to \$120,000. So like I said earlier they've quadrupled in price. Our average price range of homes now that we're selling is about \$80,000 and it's very difficult to find a house in the Mount Vernon area for less. I don't think they'll level off because the first five or six years I was in real estate I felt that they had to level off but in this length of time I'm convinced that they will just continue to escalate in price.

They (prices) increased back in the sixties at about 6% growth increase and then about two years ago they took a quick jump, some of



them 12 to 15%. But now they are more like 10% increase. The D.C. area makes them naturally higher because we do have a lot of people with higher incomes who can afford them, and the demand is greater because of the government. You're reasonably close in so you can get higher prices in this general area than you can somewhere like Woodbridge or farther out.

Question: Did you hear any stories about this area when you first moved here?

The builder dug up five graves up on top Lookout Court, right at the end overlooking Sherwood Hall Lane, and the Smithsonian Institute came out and opened some of the graves and found that after checking the bone structure and the skeleton lying in the ground that it was slaves from back in slavery time. The George Mason family owned this particular area. Of course before that, it was part of George Washington's farm. They built homes out over that point where they dug up the wooden caskets or boxes the slaves were buried in. They were pretty well deteriorated, but still had some old rusty nails and skeletons. One other story that I was told was that down near Engleside, Bernice Carter Davis, who was a descendant of the first real estate broker in Virginia, found and uncovered a lot of handmade bricks, and her determination was it was the remains of George Washington's eight sided barn. Of course she died before she really got that as a fact, but that was her idea.

## Shepherd

*Mark Shepherd is the builder and contractor of the Kirkside subdivision and is now building in the District of Columbia. He has lived in the area all his life and has seen many changes that have occurred.*

Question: From whom did you purchase the Kirkside property?

From Kirk Wilkinson.

Question: Who contracted you to build Kirkside?

Nobody, we did it for a speculative venture. We developed it. We built it. We did it to make money. There are a variety of styles. The first of those was, I think, \$32,000. We had one house down there for less than \$29,950.

Question: How many houses did you build there?

Just slightly over 100. I think the highest priced house we built was \$65,000. It was one of them at the top of the hill around Lookout Court. The largest house is the Williamsburg type with the big dormers on top. That sold in the 40's. Some were in the 50's

The price structure didn't vary a whole lot. We built a few houses that were more expensive. As I said, the cheapest house was \$29,950. We built that as an attraction. It was a good subdivision, I think it was a good section. It seems to have held up. We did very well on that.

Money. That's what attracts all the real estate developers - money, profit.

Question: How much are they now?

\$180,000.

Question: What company built Kirkside?

That was Wellington Construction.

Question: When was Kirkside started?

1963.

Question: When was it completed?

1968-69.

It (Kirkside) was a good site for houses. No problems with the land. No development problems. No big flood control things or that type of thing. Sewers and the utilities were there. Utilities are what creates an urban sprawl. Water and electricity you can bring in fairly easy. Sewage disposal was available so that made it desirable

to build houses. I wouldn't say it was the most profitable but it certainly was one of the most.

The land was easily worked. That was a big dairy farm. It was pretty open. There were very few trees.

We found bones that were obviously human. We brought in Margaret Mead, an anthropologist. She is rather well known. She died recently. She came out and we were able to find one of the graves. That particular one was a Negro male. By a little research we found out that the land at one time belonged to Beverly Mason who was a brother or a cousin or something of George Mason. It was a location for the slave graveyard. There were quite a few bones. It was hard to tell how many exactly. When we first found them, we were moving earth. Skulls rolled out of the truck when we dumped the dirt. Miss Mead took all of them. She took them back over to the Smithsonian Institute.

Fairfax County was a very desirable place. The main reason for growth was the exodus from the cities. During Eisenhower's administration the Supreme Court ruled against the separate but equal education. They said it was unconstitutional. The people left the cities. I suppose that had to do with the start of developing in Fairfax County, Fairfax County being the closest to Washington where they could commute.

They came in great numbers. Washington just went to pot. There was nothing left. It got to be a terrible town. It's improving some now, but it was a terrible, dirty, ugly, run down, dilapidated town for a long time.

Question: What kind of people moved into Kirkside?

Many of them were military, being so close to the Pentagon and Fort Belvoir. A lot of them were professional. There were dentists, a couple of doctors, and government workers. A typical middle class suburban community. Fairfax County thought it very desirable to have that type of community then. Now they've got enough of it. They say they don't want anymore.

## Fones

*Dawn C. Fones is a piano teacher who has been living in the Groveton area for twenty seven years. As a hobby, Mrs. Fones has*

*done extensive research on the history of Kings Highway. She reveals many little known facts on the early history of this historic road and its houses.*

I became interested in King's Highway, when I found out that it was one of the oldest highways in this part of Virginia. I found out that before it was known as King's Highway, it was an Indian Path called Potomac Path. It had been in existence for many hundreds of years. Later, when England began to colonize this part of the country, it was called the King's Highway because all of the main highways that were in the British Colonies were called the King's highways.

During the Revolutionary War the colonies did not care so much for the king of England. They discontinued calling it the King's Highway, and called it the Post Road. It was over this road that the mail carriers carried the mail. Since it was a road that connected Alexandria with the little town of Colchester, it was called Colchester Road for a long time. After that, it was called the Gravel Road, and then back again to King's Highway.

I found out that to enter King's Highway, you needed to ford Cameron Run that was located down where the Holiday Inn is today on Telegraph Road.

Coming up the hill, (King's Highway), the first estate you would come to, in the 18th Century, was a beautiful place called Mount Pleasant. It belonged to a French count. It was located just about where Toma Furniture Company was located. I think there is a Thrift Store there now. During the 19th Century when the Civil War was being fought and there was a fort built in Jefferson Manor called Fort Lyons, this home, Mount Pleasant, was used as the officers' quarters. The next place that was of interest was across the highway from Mount Pleasant. Mount Eagle was built by Brian Fairfax, who was a half brother to George Fairfax, who lived at Belvoir. He had a half sister, Annie, who married George Washington's brother, Lawrence. Of course there was a close connection between families. Brian and George Washington were about the same age. They were contemporaries, and they were close friends.

Coming down the King's Highway you would come to Springbank, where the K-Mart is located today. This home was still standing in 1952 when we moved to this area. During the first part of our time here, it was a trailer court.

This was the home of George Mason's grandson, whose name was also George Mason. It was described as being a very gracious and charming house. It had 25 rooms, which sounds roomy enough. The

a close friend of Patrick Henry. They were political friends, and they discussed the situation during the upheaval of our birth of a nation.

Bellville had its ghosts too. The ghost is supposed to be of George Washington sitting in the library, on a sofa reading a book.

Hayfield, of course, is no longer standing. But the community of Hayfield is there. This belonged to Lund Washington, who was a cousin of George Washington. The land there belonged to George Washington originally.

The house had a magnificent boxwood garden. Mrs. Wilson, the widow of the president, bought some of the boxwood, and had it transplanted to the Bishop's Garden in the Washington Cathedral. I've also read that some of the boxwood had been transplanted to the Masonic Temple down in Alexandria.

Now since 1679, when King's Highway was called the Potomac Path, there had been a continuing parade of people and vehicles traveling on this road. First there were the Indians. Then there were the statesmen on their way from Williamsburg to Philadelphia. Then there were the businessmen in a hurry. There were stagecoaches, circuit riders, and men who carried the mail. And Lafayette's troops on their way to Yorktown. Tories on their way to prison in Williamsburg. And of course, George Washington, and Patrick Henry, and many people you read about in history.

As I use King's Highway, I remember those people and places. I would like to think that they know that they are not forgotten, that they play an important part in our memories as well as our history.

## Gibbin

*Mrs. Sheila Gibbin is a housewife who has lived in the Groveton Community for ten years. She knows a lot about the George Mason Estate, Huntley, its history, and its surroundings.*

This is an historic house and it is part of George Mason's estate. The Historic Society accepted that as a trust about five years ago and it must maintain its country look forever. I understand there was supposed to be a ghost here but we have never seen it if there was one or heard it or have any evidence of a ghost.

This property belonged to George Mason and he gave it to his grandson on the occasion of his marriage. His grandson was a noto-

Alexandria Gazette on August the 19th, 1848, describes this home as one of the best and most extensive mansions in this part of Virginia.

There were elegant gardens we are told, that were terraced down in the back to a stream. And of course their stream was fed by a spring, thereby the name Springbank.

During the Civil War, the 63rd Regiment from Pennsylvania camped on the grounds, and did a great deal of damage to both the home and the grounds.

Then coming on down King's Highway, you would come to Mount Comfort. Now this was a lovely home that was built in the 1800's. It had a commanding view of Alexandria and Washington, D.C. You could see for miles around. Then coming further south you came to Huntley which is located now on Harrison Lane. This house was built to be used as a hunting lodge by the Mason family. It was never lived in year around. Until, of course, the twentieth century. There were 1000 acres around Huntley. And there was a magnificent view of the Potomac River from the door of Huntley.

The house across the road from Huntley is just as old itself. This was the caretaker's home. He lived there year round, and took care of Huntley. The slave quarters and the necessary, and the spring house are still standing.

Then of course you know about Mount Erin. Mount Erin is where we find Virginia Hills today. In the 1800's Thomas Tracy came here from Ireland. He built Mount Erin on the highest point of land for miles around. He built it across from Stoneybrook.

Stoneybrook was built and owned by Commander Walter Brook who was in the Virginia Navy during the Revolutionary times. He was a very close friend of George Washington. He lived there for quite some time. He had a little boy who died when he was six years old. He was buried there in the family graveyard at Stoneybrook. George Washington communicated with his friend Lafayette and ordered a marble tombstone to be put above the little boy's grave. His grave was there for one hundred years. Then it was moved to Charlestown, West Virginia.

And of course you know about the ghost that is supposed to be at Stoneybrook. Even today there are supposed to be queer noises in the mansion. Doors will open unexpectedly and close unexpectedly. And from time to time they have trouble keeping a caretaker because of the strange noises.

Bellville was another beautiful home on Telegraph Road. It's still standing. It was built in 1763. It belonged to George Johnson, who was George Washington's attorney. So, of course George Washington went there from time to time. George Johnson was also



rious gambler and he kept it for awhile and then he gambled it away to a local doctor. The doctor had it for seven years and he sold his section of Harrison Lane to another gentleman. There have only been four owners of this house and only three of Huntley since 1779. It has been pretty stable.

This was one tract. This was the overseers house. Huntley was the manor house. When it was originally constructed the Potomac came much closer then it does now. You could see the Potomac from the front porch. It was run like a plantation. This was all fields from here to Route 1 and down to Gum Springs to old #236 about a mile down Route 1. This was plantation land from here to the river.

The next big thing they are going to do is to start tours at Huntley next year. They (the county) are going to start renovating it this spring. It will be like any other historic monument in the area.

Some of the trees on this property are 300 years old. They're oaks mostly and it's perfectly possible that our forefathers tied their horses to these trees because plantation societies were visiting societies. They didn't have any recreation. There weren't any music halls or theaters or anything like that so they visited each other for fun. I like to think that it's possible one of the trees might have had Washington's horse tied to it.

Up on the top of the hill are Civil War redoubts where they planned to defend this area if necessary. There are some musket balls. Before that it belonged to the Indians because there are a lot of Indian remains here. This whole tract in pre-history was a lake bed. We find fossil rocks all the time with animal imprints, fish and fern and things like that in the rocks. It was a lake as late as 2000 years ago, because they're Indian artifacts and they always camp near water.

The pond and the stream are the head waters of Little Hunting Creek. We are on well water. We don't have city water here. It's divine water. It's not chemicalized. It's just natural. It comes from deep deep under the ground. Probably, the lake that was on top is underground.

The only real school in this area was a slave school. George Mason and George Washington's property ran side by side and since there was a heavy concentration of slaves in this general area they decided - Washington being a very forward thinking man, Mason also - they decided that the slave children needed educating, primarily to teach them the language and how to count. Some of them became foremen and they needed to be able to count how much cotton, how much corn and so forth. The slave school is still standing down here.

Washington and Mason split the cost of an instructor between them and all the slaves up to 12 years went to the slave school to learn English and learn to count.

The foundations of this house were built in 1779. Its been in three fires. The interior came from England. It belonged to the ancestral home of a Mrs. St. Jermain, who purchased this house in 1937 or '38 from one of the heirs of the doctor. Twice this house has nearly burnt down to the ground. The foundation is the original. There is only one original room; all the others have been repaired or replaced.

The dining room is an original. We had a fire in there which destroyed one wall since we've lived here and it cost \$30,000 to put it back. The kind of walls and the kind of woodwork you cannot buy anymore. They have to be handmade.

The main house (Huntley) the Historic Society is gonna take over and then they'll furnish it to period. That house is really interesting because it has a seventeenth century ice house. It's entirely underground. What they did in the winter was chop ice off the river or where ever they could find it, the thicker the better. Then they put it underground and if you get enough of it, it's just like a refrigerator. There used to be an earth entrance down below but that's gradually overgrown. They raised the top and put the ice down in and they had great huge iron hooks that they'd pull it out with.

They had a lot of slaves. Those are slave quarters over there originally. Now it's two apartments. Our sons live in the lower one and the upper one we rent to a young man who works in Washington.

This was country area when we moved in. Where Beacon Mall is was a field where circuses and carnivals were held. Hybla Valley had Thieves Market and Atlantic Thrift Store. I think there were only two stores there and that was all open land. Now all of the open land has been closed up and there isn't any open land left.