City of Alexandria

Office of Historic Alexandria

Alexandria Legacies

Oral History Program

Project Name: *Alexandria Legacies*

Title: *Interview with Charlotte Ann Spittle Smith*

Date of Interview: *October 29, 2005*

Location of Interview: *Home of Charlotte Smith, Alexandria, Va.*

Interviewer: *Jennifer Hembree*

Transcriber: *Jennifer Hembree*

Abstract: Charlotte Ann Spittle Smith was born in Alexandria in 1921. Her parents were also born in Alexandria, as was her grandmother. Charlotte lived in several neighborhoods as a child, including Seminary Hill, Rosemont, and Old Town. The Great Depression had an impact on her family and where they lived. She talks about growing up in Alexandria and about the city during World War II, how she met her husband, and the changes in Alexandria over the years. She was a graduate of George Washington High School and worked for the government during the War. She recalls the trolley that ran through Alexandria to Mount Vernon, and she tells of being taken to view the damage caused in Old Town by a tornado.

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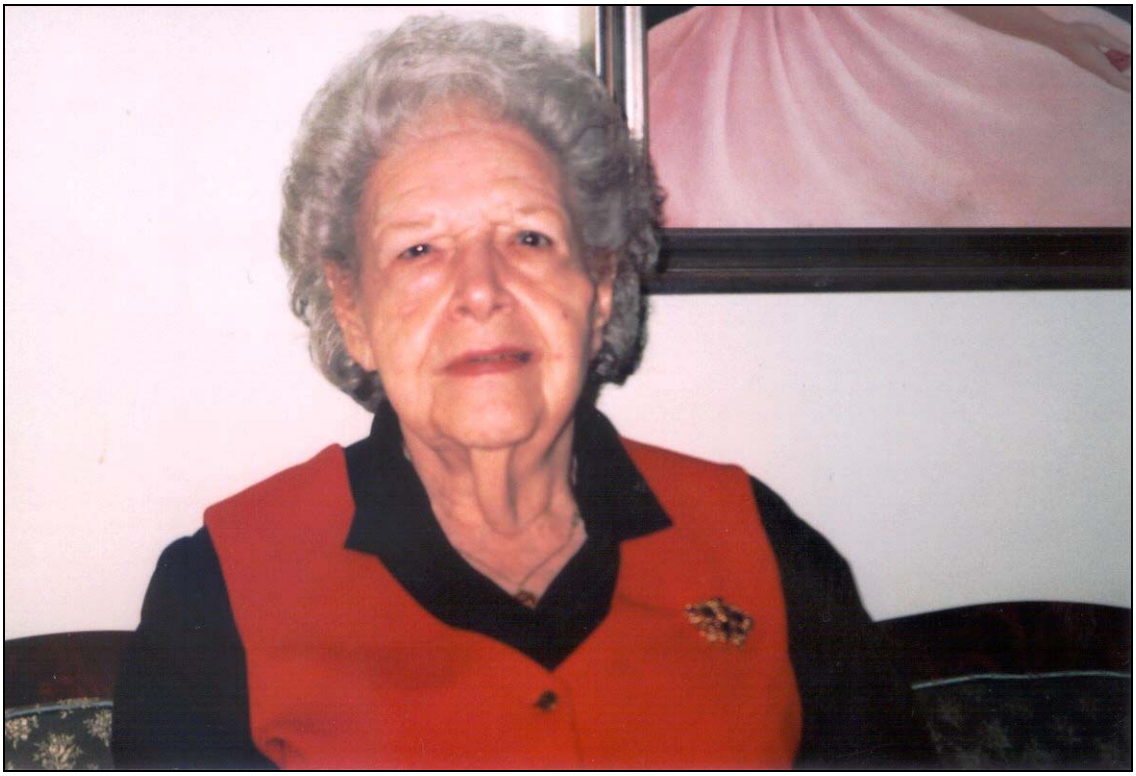

Charlotte Smith, 2005

Introductions	
Jennifer Hembree:	I am a volunteer with the Alexandria Legacies Oral History Project at the Archaeology Museum. I am here with Mrs. Charlotte Ann Smith at her house on Darton Drive in Alexandria and we're here to talk about her memories of growing in Alexandria. Charlotte, would you mind stating your name for the record?
Charlotte Smith:	I am Charlotte Ann Smith.
J.H.:	Can you tell when me you were born?
Charlotte Smith:	I was born September 21, [19]29.
J.H.:	'29. Thank you. Great. Do I have permission to record this interview?
Charlotte Smith:	Yes.
J.H.:	Great. [Tape stops and starts.] You were born September 21, 1929.
Charlotte Smith:	No. September 29, 1921.
Seminary Hill	
J.H.:	Okay. September 29, 1921. Were you born in Alexandria?
Charlotte Smith:	Yes, I was.
J.H.:	Whereabouts?
Charlotte Smith:	The Old Alexandria Hospital that was on Duke Street. Corner of Duke and Washington.

J.H.:	Were your parents also from here at that time, or had …
Charlotte Smith:	Yes, they were.
J.H.:	How far back does your family go then, for being Alexandrians?
Charlotte Smith:	My grandmother, Rosa Columbus Jackson, was born here. And her date of birth was…July 14, 1858. She lived in Alexandria all of her life, except for that trip to Richmond…we don't count that. [laughs]
J.H.:	Did she live with your family when you were younger?
Charlotte Smith:	She came to live with my mother a month before I was born.
J.H.:	So you grew up with your grandmother in the house?
Charlotte Smith:	Always. You didn't cross her either!
J.H.:	Who was living in your house when you grew up? Your parents…
Charlotte Smith:	My parents and my sister.
J.H.:	Your sister. Your sister, Catherine?
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-um.
J.H.:	Did you tell me she was ten years older than you?
Charlotte Smith:	Eleven.
J.H.:	Eleven.
Charlotte Smith:	She died two years ago at the age of 92.
J.H.:	So it was just you two girls and your parents?
Charlotte Smith:	Yes. We lived various places. I was actually born in a house out on Quaker Lane and at that time cars were a little more narrow than they are today, but there was just room enough for two cars to pass and it was a dirt road.
J.H.:	Quaker Lane was.
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-huh. And it was a dividing line between Alexandria and Fairfax County. …My father had that house built.
Effects of the Great Depression	
J.H.:	Do you remember the street address or is it still there today?
Charlotte Smith:	It is still there, but I don't know the street address because I don't the numbers on Quaker Lane anymore that I might have known at one time. But it was very rural then. The closest house was maybe a half-mile away. And then the whole area that reached from the Episcopal Seminary—it reached from the Seminary gate up to Braddock Road. And to the right on Quaker Lane if you were heading towards that. That was all black [families] and they were freed slaves that had settled there. Very good, honest, responsible people. Periodically we had a lot of people—different ones that worked for us and Mother always said she had a "piece of a maid" cos they came and worked for her, but not many hours. Well, when we would need to go and do some washing, things like that, you know. My grandmother and my mother really kept house. And then in [19]29 everything went—the house, the business.
J.H.:	Which business was this?
Charlotte Smith:	My father was a druggist in Alexandria and he had a drug store on the corner of Alfred and King.
J.H.:	Was this Gibson Pharmacy?
Charlotte Smith:	Gibson's. Uh-huh. He owned the business and he built the house. But he lost it all. I would say he never really recovered from it because he worked at various

	places from then on. But he never wanted to be…
J.H.:	A business owner again?
Charlotte Smith:	No. Of course, he never made the money that would have been had he owned the company…However, in the [19]30s when he was working for other people—of course he was considered a professional, and when other people were really hurting for a job, anyplace—my father made a $125 a week, which was big money. Then we lived in the Rosemont area, two different places and then we moved to 415 Prince Street.
J.H.:	How old were you when you moved to 415 Prince?
Charlotte Smith:	I must have been 13, 14—something like that. And the interesting thing about the houses—most of the houses on the 400 block of Prince Street are big houses—three stories. Had my father had the money, which he didn't have, he could have bought anything on that block for $10,000 or less. The house right across the street from us was … It's a great big, three-story house, with lots of rooms in it, because there was—like most of the old houses, it was square in the front, went straight up, and then it had a wing in the back that was only two stories high.
J.H.:	Was your house the same way at 415—a two-story wing?
Charlotte Smith:	Yes, but we had an apartment. That had been turned into apartments and we were on the second floor. In a six-room apartment with twelve-foot ceilings that my mother and father paid $50 a month for. Can you believe it?! If anything in the apartment broke, like plumbing or anything like that, the man who owned it would pay for it. But if wanted any painting or anything like that, we had to pay for it.
J.H.:	Did you know your neighbors—the other families in the apartment?
Charlotte Smith:	Yes. The apartment was owned by a Judge McCure that had his offices on Royal Street and his daughter and her husband and their family moved in one of the—it was a six-room apartment, but it was the back wing. The house next door—right next door—on each side, was rental property. Great big houses, but they…
J.H.:	Were cut into apartments.
Dancing School in Old Town	
Charlotte Smith:	I know that on the block with us was a family named Callahan. They had multiple children and I didn't know the children as much as I just knew the family. My mother was very protective as [to] who I knew and who I played with. Of course, they were the days when I went to dancing class.
J.H.:	Which kind of dancing were you learning?
Charlotte Smith:	Ballroom dancing. When I was little I took all the other—acrobatic … I am the most uncoordinated person in the world! The only thing I really can do is dance and I love to dance—just regular dancing.
J.H.:	Was there a club in town that you joined or was this through school that you took the classes?
Charlotte Smith:	The woman who taught everybody—her name was Mary Calloway. She had a Junior Assembly that if you were interested, when you finished the basics, then she invited you to be a member of the ballroom dancing group. And she

	taught that.
J.H.:	What did you wear for your outfits when you gave recitals?
Charlotte Smith:	I don't remember what I wore for recitals. …[tape paused]
J.H.:	I wanted to ask you where did the dances take place?
Charlotte Smith:	She rented a studio in the building that is now called Bank of Alexandria… on the corner of Cameron and Fairfax. Next to—what's the house?
J.H.:	Lee House. Carlyle House?
Charlotte Smith:	Carlyle House. At the time there was a hotel and apartment house built completely around the bank and the Carlyle House.
J.H.:	Surrounding it?
Charlotte Smith:	Yea, just surrounding it.
J.H.:	Do you remember the name of it—the hotel?
Charlotte Smith:	No, I don't have any idea what it was called. I knew there were apartments in there and then some of it was hotel-like, small. I'll never forget, I had the pleasure I should say, of going with a friend of mine to the Washington Club that's in Washington and they had wonderful speakers. You had lunch and then they had wonderful speakers. And one of the speakers that they had, and this has been maybe ten years ago, was the man who had been in on the restoration when they tore all the old apartment and hotel away from and restored the Carlyle House to the way it is now—and the bank. And it was in the bank building where we had the dance classes. We didn't realize it—cos it seemed like a high ceiling to us—but when they tore out the false ceiling they found all this beautiful hand-carved…what do they call that?
J.H.:	Crown molding?
Charlotte Smith:	Yes, thank you. I remember things, but the words escape me all the time! They found it hand-carved. They tore the false ceiling down…She taught there for a long time. Then she moved to the George Mason Hotel.
J.H.:	Where was that?
Charlotte Smith:	On the corner of Washington and Prince.
J.H.:	Did you follow her to the new studio?
Charlotte Smith:	Oh yes.
J.H.:	How many years in all did you dance?
Charlotte Smith:	I started out when I was about 5. I kept going till... I guess I was about 15 or 16. I don't remember—I know I went to her until friends of mine started having dances at home if they had a house that was big enough. My husband said to me one time, "You can clutter your mind with more unimportant details than anybody I've ever known!" I'll remember what I was served the first time I was invited to dinner at somebody's house. I remember the first party that I went to at someone's house and the girl weighed about 250 [pounds] and she had on a red taffeta dress!
J.H.:	Was it one of the dancing parties?
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-huh. She had on a red taffeta dress! And I said, "Sandy you've got on that red taffeta dress!" And she said, "I love red and I thought to 'hell' with it, I'm going to wear it!" [laughter] She lived her whole life that way. Which is wonderful.

World War II and Marriage	
J.H.:	Did you have a favorite song that you liked to dance to?
Charlotte Smith:	No. I don't remember. My husband and I danced so much that I remember lots of good songs. …I met my husband in [19]41 and we were married in [19]45 and '41 to '45 we did nothing but dance. He was stationed at [Fort] Belvoir and they had dances every Saturday night. And then I was in a group—the Gadsby's Tavern was owned and still is owned by the American Legion—and during the War they paid for an orchestra one night a week to come to Gadsby's Tavern and they had a dance and there were a certain number of girls from Alexandria—[from] more or less prominent, well-known families—and they invited single officers …so… And we weren't supposed to date! But funnily I met my husband and didn't like him. I went home to tell my mother I met the great Joseph today and I don't think he's anything…
J.H.:	What did she say?
Charlotte Smith:	She said, "I'm sorry. Your friends certainly did build him up as a great person." I said, "I'm sure he is a great person." But at the time I met him I was engaged to an Air Force officer who was 6'2" with blonde, wavy hair. And meeting a man that was 5'10½" with such black hair that he looked like Rudolph Vaselino I called him, it didn't make very much of an impression and it wasn't very long before the Air Force officer was no more. We'd been engaged about six months and of course [in] wartime everyone was getting married. Everybody. We were going to weddings all the time. Friends of mine, you know…that had met different people. Finally, one night I said to him, "You know, I think maybe it's time we should set a date." He said, "I don't think I'm ready to set a date." And guess what I said? "Goodbye!"
J.H.:	[!]
Charlotte Smith:	And a week later, …course the word went 'round. Everybody knew about it. And just a week later, Joe Smith called me on the phone and said, "I understand you are free." I said, "Yeah, I guess I am…," something like that. And he said, "Well, there's a good movie showing down at the Belvoir." At that time you had to have a pass to get into Belvoir. And so he said, "Would you mind coming down on the bus and I'll meet you at the gate with a pass and we'll go to the movies and of course, I'll bring you home." And I said, "Okay." That did not set well with my mother! I was leading a man on a street corner…oh, my goodness!
J.H.:	So you took the bus down there.
Charlotte Smith:	I took the bus down and we went to the movies and I had a date with him every single night for one whole year. A year later we were married.
J.H.:	Do you remember which movie it was?
Charlotte Smith:	No… I remember it was a war movie that I really wasn't very interested in! But he thought it was a good movie. I do remember that. Weren't any hearts and flowers! But that just shows you, you never [know]. The night that I had the date with him to go to the movie, he said, "You know I like everything about you." And I said, "You do?" And he said, "Yes, and I'll bet you a quarter in one year we'll be married." And I said, "I will take that bet." And he

	never let me pay him. As I said to my mother, "I don't know whether I should get married or not." And she said, "Well you've got a week—time to change your mind." She said, "Why do you feel that way, honey?" I said, "He's never let me come up for air! He's there every night!"
J.H.:	That's really sweet, though.
Charlotte Smith:	He was a very good husband. I have no regrets about that. I will tell you the end of the story the Air Force officer. He stayed in Washington, D.C., and never married. Never wanted to set a date. Didn't want a commitment I guess.
J.H.:	Were you working during 1941 to '45? Did you have a job?
Charlotte Smith:	I was working for the American Red Cross. First I worked at the building that was out on Washington Street that's mostly torn down now, [in] back of where Talbot's and Trader Vic…It was a long building that had been part of a brewery that was out there. Then they took it over—the Red Cross. And I went there and got a job and I worked there about two years and finally they said to me one day, "You know, we got a real good job that we think you would like. But it's in Washington." And I said, "Well, where is it—at headquarters?" They said, "No." At that time, of course, the war they had to expand so much, they had taken over a number of buildings on different streets and this was on H Street…the numbers run cross-wise…so it must have been between 10th and 11th [Streets, N.W.] on H. I worked there.
J.H.:	What was your position?
Charlotte Smith:	We had the best time in the world! I worked with a group from the Navy—that was working with [us]. We took care of the letters from these poor soldiers that said they had to have "leave" to come home because the cow was sick or nobody could take care of his pig. [laughing]
J.H.:	So you got to read these all day?
Charlotte Smith:	[laughing] Now sometimes they were legitimate. Their mama was sick or daddy was about to die. —All of them were investigated. The Navy did the investigation on those. We just had to answer the letter. That was a little fun. And then I did type at that time and when the Red Cross had a course, they gave 'em a little certificate—a little square cardboard-like thing and would you believe, we only had three lines to type in on that—the name, the name of the chapter, and the address.
J.H.:	Of the chapter?
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-huh. And we had something that I bet you've never heard of cos not many people have—we had a linotype to work from. And they were the sheets of the people who had taken the course at the chapter. They were type-written lists, and they had this thing that stood up on legs, about this high, clamped at the top, and then there might be 25 or 30 names down there. They had a bar that went across with a lever on it—so you typed the person's name and hit the lever and it went down to the next name. But then we'd have to type in the chapter… We got to the point—I couldn't possibly do it now—I'd hunt and peck now—but we would do 500 a day.
J.H.:	500 of the certificates?
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-huh. We'd do that killin' ourselves. Our arms would ache after we'd do

	that. We'd have contests between us, "I'm going to beat you today!" Just worked with a great bunch of people from all over the country. I don't think that I had anybody that was from Alexandria.
J.H.:	Had you had any previous jobs before you started working for the Red Cross?
Charlotte Smith:	No.
George Washington High School and St. Agnes School	
J.H.:	How many years did you go to school?
Charlotte Smith:	Just through high school—George Washington.
J.H.:	What did you think of George Washington High School?
Charlotte Smith:	When I went there—when it first opened—it was great. Wonderful.
J.H.:	When did it first open? Were you one of the first classes?
Charlotte Smith:	I was supposed to graduate in 1939 and I didn't graduate until 1940. [First graduating class was 1936.] And I wouldn't have graduated then if my brother-in-law hadn't taught me math, God Bless him! I failed it twice! I could not get math—it just didn't make sense to me! Besides, I was having too good a time!
J.H.:	Dancing!
Charlotte Smith:	Yeah. And Joanne, my daughter, said to me one time, "Mother, you know I didn't make—(and she went all the way through St. Agnes. I went to St. Agnes until sixth grade and then my mother had to change me over to the public school.) —She said, "You never did fuss with me very much about my grades." And I said, "No. I didn't have a leg to stand on! I couldn't fuss with you about your grades" … "What do you mean, Mother?" And I said, "As long as I passed, that's all I cared about. I didn't want to make an 'A.' I didn't want to make a 'B.' A 'C'—that's fine with me." And she said, "Well, I was a 'B' student." I said, "Yeah. And one time in your life you got to be an 'A' student. And she said, "That's right!" The prize was high enough. Her father told her that if she'd bring her math up to an 'A,' he'd buy her a canopy bed. And he said, "Now, I'll work with you and help you all I can." And she did.
J.H.:	Do you have any memories of St. Agnes School?
Charlotte Smith:	I don't have any particular memories. [Tape 1, Side A Ends] [Tape 1, Side B Begins] [Tape begins in middle of conversation] …Anyhow, it hit the wire or something down there. We had a head mistress [that] I was terrified of. She wasn't a real large woman, but she wore black dresses to her ankles and she had snow-white hair that she piled up on her head like this. She was very stern and you didn't cross her.
J.H.:	Did you have a uniform that you had to wear?
Charlotte Smith:	We didn't have a uniform, but most all of us wore navy blue pleated skirts and sailor shirts that have the wide collar and a tie that went… but we didn't have to wear the tie. We could if we wanted to, but we didn't have to. But people just did it because it was easy.
J.H.:	Right, you didn't have to think about what to wear.
Charlotte Smith:	I said [this] to Joanne—she said, "Well, I never had to wear a uniform." And I said, "heck you didn't." She said, "What's that matter?" I said, "[incomprehensible] were one thing and you didn't buy anything except those

	skirts and sweaters that matched… but I used to make a lot of her clothes and I'd buy the sweater and then I'd walk my feet off finding the wool material to make the skirt! Everybody wore the same thing—different colors and everything but they were all made exactly alike. In a way, that was easy.
J.H.:	Did you walk to school when you went to St. Agnes?
Charlotte Smith:	No. When I went to St. Agnes we lived either out on Seminary Hill or in Rosemont.
Cars, Roads, and Shops	
J.H.:	Did you have a car then that you were able to drive?
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-hum. My mother had a car.
J.H.:	Do you remember what kind?
Charlotte Smith:	My mother used to come to the breakfast table with her hat on. She had so much cartin' to do. She took my father to work and he worked over in Clarendon—what was called Clarendon then. It is still called Clarendon, but—Lime Village and Clarendon were the only two little villages in Arlington at that time. Just to tell you how rural it was, we were coming back from taking my father to work on Wilson Boulevard. We were coming back and we had to travel on [Route] 50, which was rural. It was a two-lane road, a hard-surface road…There weren't a whole lot of cars out and it had been snowing. We hit a patch of snow and ice on Route 50. We waited one hour for another car to come by. To dig us out of the ditch or to call somebody to dig us out of the ditch. But that's how few cars were on the road.
J.H.:	Do you remember what the car looked like?
Charlotte Smith:	It was perfectly square. Navy blue Buick. When that wore out my father got another square, navy blue Buick! [laughing]
J.H.:	Did you ever get to drive your parents' car?
Charlotte Smith:	No. My mother, bless her, the year that I was 16, she had a nice little convertible and I was just waiting to learn to drive the car and she sold it. She said, "We don't need it. Your father can get to where he's working now by bus and I can walk anyplace." Mom was a great walker and everything was on King Street.
J.H.:	This was when you lived on Prince?
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-hum. She said, "We don't need it and it's getting expensive. We have to pay for the license and having it good running condition." And, of course, that was long before they had …what is it you have to have every year?
J.H.:	Inspection?
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-huh.
J.H.:	When did you get your license? Did you have to wait then?
Charlotte Smith:	After I was married. I said to my husband, "I really want to learn to drive." He said, "I think you should." So guess where he took me to teach me to drive? On Route 50 on a Sunday afternoon. [sigh]
J.H.:	Did you learn quick?
Charlotte Smith:	I learned quick, but I was driving along, I thought I was doing alright and he yelled at me and he really was a calm person and I pulled off the road and he said, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm stopping." I said, "You are an old

	man. And you've been driving since you were about ten or eleven years old I have to learn...I'm a 27-year-old woman and I've got to learn to drive and I don't know all the old things that you know already." He said, "Honey, you know you're right." And I learned to drive. And he said that after I learned to drive I was fearless. I'd go anyplace and also, he elected me the "chief of the lead foot tribe"! …After my husband got out of the service he sold life insurance. He really knew the roads, 495 and all that. And I'd say, "Honey, where's so-and-so." "And now honey… it's a great big sign over the road, you can't miss it." I'd come home and he'd say, "Well, How'd you make out?" and I'd say, "I missed it." He said, "How'd you miss it? Great big sign across the road." I said, "I was going too fast!" He said, "I should have known!"… What else do you want to know?
J.H.:	When you were living on Prince Street what shops did you used to go to for your groceries or clothing?
Charlotte Smith:	There were all kinds of shops then. There was several men's stores, but there was only one that my father would go to which was around on the 400 block of King Street.
J.H.:	Why did he just like that one?
Charlotte Smith:	They carried the brand of clothes that he liked. My father was of the old school. He wore shirts with no collars that had the stiff collars that had to be buttoned on. And the only place that you could get those washed was at the Chinese laundry. They were the only ones that would do it. So we had Charlie Lee do his shirts all the years that he lived.
J.H.:	Where was the Chinese laundry?
Charlotte Smith:	He was first down on the 100-block of South Royal and then he moved up on Washington Street about the 300-block. There's a restaurant there now where he went in—I think it is Italian. I don't think they have tables out there, but it almost looks like a little garden in front. Was two buildings and the man took both buildings, but the rooms inside are just tiny and they have the built out windows in the front and if you sit at one of those tables you're sitting out on the street. But anyhow that's where they moved. And then we had to go to a special store in Washington [D.C.]. This place that carried the collars. And another place in Washington where they carried the special shoes that he liked. He had regular tie shoes and they had a band that went cross-wise the shoe on the toe at the stitch fan...right across there. That's the only shoe he'd wear.
J.H.:	Did you take the trolley into D.C. or did you drive?
Charlotte Smith:	Those days was when mother was driving all the time…most of the time. I guess when I got to go into Washington, after I learned to drive…I drove. Also, a lot of times we took the bus. There was a bus that went in and for many years, Friday night was family night and my mother and father and myself went by bus into Washington to some restaurant that was one of my father's favorites. Kitty was always invited to go, but she always had a date or something…
Parents and Grandparents	
J.H.:	I don't think I asked what your father's and mother's names were?

Charlotte Smith:	My father's name was Elmer Leonard Spittle. Homeliness name I think I've ever heard. Why my grandmother named … she had two boys and my grandfather's name was William Randolph Spittle which is not … a nice name. If you've got anything nice to go with Spittle—that's not a pretty name…! She had two sons and she named one Elmer Leonard and the other Lord Elliot. Why, I'll never know! And my mother was Edna Mae Jackson Spittle. I'll tell you we had some names in the family. My grandfather Jackson was named Sobiesky? Polasky? Jackson. And he worked for the *Alexandria Gazette*. He was a printer…
J.H.:	Worked for the presses?
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-hum.
J.H.:	Did you ever get to visit him while he was working at the *Gazette*?
Charlotte Smith:	Oh, no. He died in 1900, so I never did that. But I do remember asking my grandmother what in the world did anybody call him! She said, when he first started working they called him "Sob" [pronounced Sobe] and then they dropped the "s" and called him "Ob." Everyone knew Ob Jackson. Made a magnificent salary when he was put in charge of the presses. He made $10 a week. And my grandmother raised three children on $10 a week and bought a house that she paid $3000 for.
J.H.:	Where was the house?
Charlotte Smith:	On the 200-block of Duke…? South. And she paid $3000 for it and it was almost paid for when my grandfather died. He died very suddenly. So she had to get out of that house and she moved to a house on Duke Street and she took in boarders. It was a great big house and she took in boarders, but only men. No women. She wouldn't have any women living in the house because they were always dabbling in water…washing something out.
J.H.:	So back then where did you get the water from? Did she have to bring it from the well?
Charlotte Smith:	Oh, no. When she moved into that, she did say that when they lived in that house, I guess they had real water, but it had been directed into the house. It was well water, but…
J.H.:	It was funneled into the house.
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-huh. But they did have an outhouse. I do remember that. As I said, she paid $3000 for it. The house was on tour—one of the house tours that they have. And the lady happened to be in the house and so I had to go see that cos I wanted to see what it looked like. Well, they had made some improvements cos grandmother did talk about the kitchen being small and it had a brick floor in it. And she was so worried about her children when they were little that they'd get sick in the summertime. She had lost two children to heat…they had a diarrhea that couldn't be checked…so she made all three children lay down on a pallet on the brick floor because the bricks were cooler and she sat and fanned them while they took a nap. She didn't want them to get sick!
J.H.:	This was not the grandmother who came to live with you when you were younger?
Charlotte Smith:	Yes, it is. The same one. I didn't know my other grandmother. She died before

	I was born. My mother used to say she did me a real favor—she died before I met your father! And so I didn't have a mother-in-law to do with…
J.H.:	Do you remember going to the market at Market Square? What was that like?
Charlotte Smith:	Oh, yes. We used to go with my grandmother and my grandmother really took over the house. She managed the house. She fed five people, two meals a day, everyday. Some of us were there for lunch, but it was always two meals a day. She fed us on $11 a week. We would go to the country market and there were always little boys, little black boys with wagons that if you had too much to carry, for 10 cents they'd carry the things home for you. She would get enough at the country market that we had to have a wagon to pull the stuff home and we were well fed and we always had some kind of dessert. Simple dessert—she was great on using gelatin with canned berries, mixing them together and letting it form. She always made a cream sauce to go on it. I used to call it "drink custard"—it's a custard, but it never firms. It's thin.
J.H.:	Do you have any recipes that you still use that she used?
Charlotte Smith:	Not a one! There were only my sister and I … she lived in an apartment on Prince Street and right outside the door to her apartment was the chute where they burn everything up.
J.H.:	The trash chute?
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-huh. We had trash cans and we'd go through whatever we thought we wanted and take that trash can out and dump it down that chute and we got down to everything… My mother had a lot of jewelry. She used to say she was part gypsy. It would be good jewelry now, but it wasn't good jewelry then. It was mostly costume jewelry. I don't know how many trash bags we threw down there. And my sister said that she absolutely had nightmares thinking about the jewelry that she threw away and regretting it and I didn't have worry about that, but the one thing that I regretted was I threw my mother's cookbook down the chute and she had written something on every page or she had another page with something written on it stuck in it. And I really regretted that. cos I would have loved to have had that later on… She belonged to St. Paul's Church.
Going to Church	
J.H.:	That was my next question. If you went as a family to church?
Charlotte Smith:	Yes. To St. Paul's.
J.H.:	What street is that on?
Charlotte Smith:	Pitt between…Prince and…Duke. When my mother died, she had been a member there for 40 years. I don't know how long my grandmother had been there. She married Mr. Jackson and Mr. Jackson was a member of the Presbyterian Church, so of course they went to the Presbyterian Church and he was an active member of the Presbyterian Church and sang in the choir and he taught my mother to sing. And my mother went with him to sing in the choir. My mother had a perfectly gorgeous contralto voice. She really did. And my grandfather was a baritone. So I would have loved to have heard them sing but… I mean I heard my mother many times…mother played the piano beautifully. Anything she wanted. In fact, that Mary Calloway I was talking

	about with the dancing, she played the piano for the dancing class. We didn't have records very much then. And mother used to say, "You and your sister both love to dance so much and I never learned to dance." I said, "Mother, how come you never learned to dance?" "She said, "Every time I was invited to a party, they'd invited me so I'd play the piano!" [laughs] They didn't have radios. They didn't have Victrolas. She said, "It was just as well, your father didn't know how to dance either so that made it fine."
J.H.:	Did your family go to church every week?
Charlotte Smith:	Oh, yeah. If my grandmother was living, you went. She was so funny. She did try to take real good care of herself. And she did, of course, live to be 90. She did take good care of herself. One morning I got up and it was just sprinkling snow—just a little bit of snow. I said, "Grandma, you going to church this morning?" She said, "No indeed. I'm not going this morning." I said, "You're not?" She said, "No, it's snowing and I think too much of Rosy." Her name was Rosa! [Laughs] Unless she was ill or something like that she'd [go].
J.H.:	And you would go with her.
Charlotte Smith:	Oh, yeah. She didn't always talk my sister into going with her. She said, "I don't have to because your sister is more religious than you are anyway." [Laughs]
J.H.:	Do you believe that one?
Charlotte Smith:	I don't know if it's true…You wanted to know the stores.
Shopping and Selling	
J.H.:	You mentioned the men's clothing store.
Charlotte Smith:	Well, there was only one department store in Alexandria when I was a little girl. It was Swan's Department Store. It was on the corner of Royal and King [streets]. There were older ladies who worked in that store and they all wore black dresses and black aprons, but white collars and cuffs. They made no change—there wasn't a cash register. They wrote up the ticket and the person gave them the cash (of course, you didn't have credit cards) and they sent it on a little wire thing.
J.H.:	The ticket?
Charlotte Smith:	The ticket and the money went in this little cylinder thing and it went on this wire that went all the way up to the cashier. And she checked the ticket and sent the right change back.
J.H.:	So there was one cashier for the whole [store].
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-huh. They carried just about anything that you would get in a [department store today]. Of course, they didn't have electrical appliances and things like that. They carried dry goods, which means towels and sheets and pillowcases and pillows and things like that. My grandmother wore what they called a "Union Suit"—black—with a split-tail. There was only one store in town that carried them.
J.H.:	Was it Swan's?
Charlotte Smith:	No, it wasn't Swans. It was a place way up on King Street—called McKeowen's. They just had clothing. They also carried black cotton stockings. And that was another thing my grandmother wore. My grandmother

	wore black mourning clothes for 83 years. Can you imagine? The only concession did she ever make to that—was my mother used to make her clothes for her because she didn't ever find things that she thought were long enough. Mother made a shirt-waist dress and sometimes in the summertime she persuaded her to wear something white with a black-thing on it. Like a calico.
J.H.:	So Swan's and McKeowen's…
Charlotte Smith:	My husband was Joseph McKeowen Smith and I often wondered … I never knew how that name was spelled…it was an E-N on the end of it. His name was not spelled that way… I had a very funny experience. One of the girls that I worked with at the Red Cross was a Mormon and she said to me one day, "What's the name of the man you're going to marry?" ... Joseph Smith was the one who founded it [the Mormon Church]… I said, "His name is Joe Smith." She said, "Joe Smith. Joseph Smith?" I said, "Yes, Joseph Smith. Not only that, he did come from the Mohawk Valley of New York," which is where the first Joe Smith came from. She said, "Oh, my goodness. Why, you know he's a direct descendent of Adam." I looked at her and said, "I thought we all were!" She said, "but you don't understand. In our religion we try to trace everything back as far as we possibly can to get it to Adam." I told him when he started bringing home more wives I was going to leave him! … Anyhow, there were various stores, little stores. There was a dress shop, a little bit better clothing. It was up near this McKeowen's. About the 1000 block of King Street. My mother—she was always doing something to earn extra money—so she opened a little knitting shop on the 900-block of King Street and she did fairly well. She taught knitting and did order in enough [yarn] to make it worthwhile to go there for somebody to see if she had the color they wanted. One day this woman walked in and she said, "Miss, do you use that back room at all? [Tape 1, Side B Ends] [Tape 2, Side A begins.] … "Well, I'd like to rent that room from you. I have a friend that is a quite a good dress designer and we want to start a little business with clothing cos there don't seem to be many places in town." Swan's Department Store had clothing—you could get what you really wanted there. Mother said, "Alright. I'll do that." She said, "What is your name?" And she said, "My name is Martha Neil, but the friend that I want to come into business with me—we're going to this together—is named Nancy Fleming." I don't know whether you've heard the name before, but she ended up having the most beautiful dress shop in Alexandria...Built a building for herself further up King Street first and then built a beautiful building where she carried every kind of clothing that you could possibly want, except underclothing—on the corner of Washington and Wolfe Streets.
J.H.:	But she started off in your mom's knit shop.
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-huh. I don't think it was more than about a year later when mother just about decided she was going to give up. It wasn't that profitable and they said, "That's fine, we'll just rent the whole space." They just took it over and mother got out of it. They were nice enough to sell off her wool for her. She said if anybody came in that had been a past customer, they'd sell it rather than mother having to move it out of there and get rid of it, which was very

	nice of them. They opened a shop and the clothing was just beautiful. And my sister who was working by then said, " I wish I could afford clothes by Nancy Fleming." Mother said, "I'll get you something from there, if you want." Of course, mother got it at cost. They were kind enough to do that for her. They only did it once or twice and in the meantime Kitty got some nice clothes. Me, I didn't matter! Mother made almost everything I put on, until I was 15 and in those days everybody got Easter clothes. Always got something new for Easter. And mother said, "Darling what do you want this year?" "You know, Mother, I've never had one and I really think I'd like to have a suit." She said, "Ok, I have to see what we can do. I don't know if we can go for a suit or not." We went to Hayman's, which was a dress/clothing store, a very small one run by the elder Haymans. It was kind of junky place. The younger Mrs. Hayman was working. And she said, "Miss Spittle I don't think I have anything in this store that you want. Mother said, "Well, I was hoping so."… "Well, let me look." And she found a navy blue suit for me hidden in the racks. They were racks that were just so full you could hardly get something out… She said, "I think maybe this will do." Mother said, "The very thing. Do you like the navy blue?" I said, "Oh yeah, that's fine. I don't care." We bought the suit. The reason I remember it. I was 15 years old and my mother paid $15 for the suit. I was so thrilled with that suit. I thought it was the most gorgeous thing I'd ever had. Several years later the elder Haymans retired and turned it over to the younger family and they built a great big place faced on Swan's corner. And they were there for 20, 25 years. Even when everybody was going to malls, they were still going strong because the daughter who had then come into the business made a contact with Eastern Airlines for the uniforms. So they supplied all the uniforms.
J.H.:	That's a big client.
Charlotte Smith:	… that was the department store. But Nancy Fleming had beautiful clothes. And just beautiful evening clothes. They were the days when everybody wore evening clothes. I went there a number of times, but never found anything I really wanted. Either too fussy, or not fussy enough. Or they didn't fit. She is still living down in North Carolina. She sold the business and then the business went out of business. Last I heard from somebody that knew her, she's still living. I said, "Tell me about her hair." She said, "Her hair is still just as blonde as it ever was!" But anybody that has been in Alexandria for a number of years would know Nancy Fleming because it was the *really* nice dress shop in Alexandria. There were other stores that came in, but none of them were really as nice.
J.H.:	I was curious how your dad started the Gibson Pharmacy?
Charlotte Smith:	I don't really know. I think he just bought it. The building was there. My father as a little boy of seven years old went to work sweeping out the Apothecary Shop—Leadbetters. You know what my mother said? He never left the drugstore after that. He never worked anyplace else but in a drugstore in some capacity and he finally saved enough that he could go to school and he became a pharmacist. And that's all he really ever wanted to do.
J.H.:	Did you ever help out in the shop when you were little?

Charlotte Smith:	No. Mother had another shop. She had an antique shop. On King Street across from … do you know where the Old Town Theatre is?
J.H.:	Yes.
Charlotte Smith:	Across from that. And she had antiques—not very many, but a few. Somebody came in there and asked if they could rent just a little space. In those days they had lending libraries. They didn't have the libraries like they have today. The libraries were more for research or things like that. The people wanted to read current books, they paid three-cents a day. To rent the [book]. And they wanted to put in this little lending library. And mother said, "yes." The way she talked about it, it just meant somebody else in the building with her. Once in awhile—I mean really rare occasion—I would be there when somebody brought a book back. cos mother was there most of the time. And the woman that had rented the space was there. But just on a very rare occasion, I'd collect the money for the number of days. They had cards that went in [the back of the book] like they do now…they had the date was stamped on it—when they took it out.
J.H.:	So you'd calculate how many days…
Charlotte Smith:	Calculate?!
J.H.:	Oh, that's right, you don't like to calculate! Do you remember the names of the your mother's shops?
Charlotte Smith:	When she had the antique shop, she called it the Silhouette Shop, because my mother knew how to cut silhouettes.
J.H.:	She's so creative with her knitting and her silhouettes. Did she sometimes cut silhouettes for customers, if they wanted?
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-huh. Never cut one for me. Never cut one for my sister either. Which was, I thought, funny… The woman rented the space and she had a pretty good business [the lending library] there. She made pretty good money. So she decided to go into the gift shop business. Now, the hotel that I was telling you about—the George Mason—had a space that was great for the shop. She went around there, she rented it and stocked and named it the Silhouette Shop. I was so mad! I said, "Why did you let her do that?" She said, "I'm not going to be cutting any silhouettes anymore." I said, "Well, she should have paid you for it anyway, because it was your shop." I think in later years she thought about it and wished she hadn't been so placid about it. But the woman stayed and was there at least 25, 30 years. She had a great business. In fact, for a long time she was about the only gift shop, until the Holiday Inn put in that gift shop facing on King Street—I think that was the first one to come in. Although there was one down on the 200 block of King Street.
J.H.:	I think there still is?
Charlotte Smith:	No, they tore all those buildings down. But there may be something like that back in there. The one that was down there that I'm talking about when the old buildings were there was … He's up on the 300 block of King Street and he won't like it that I didn't remember the name…I can't think of it. Anyway, he was down there first… Isn't there a court? …
J.H.:	The City Hall?

Charlotte Smith:	I'm talking about the other side of the street.
J.H.:	Near the CVS?
Charlotte Smith:	Yea. Just below there is the shop that I'm talking about. cos I worked there for a very short time after Ken died.
J.H.:	That's what you were telling me about—standing? You stood for four hours?
Charlotte Smith:	When I worked for Ken I stood three hours. But I didn't stand like that [there]. [Trying to remember the name…]
J.H.:	What was the name of your mom's knitting shop?
Charlotte Smith:	I don't think she called it anything, but maybe the Knitting Shop.
The Bowling Alley and Restaurants	
J.H.:	How do think Alexandria has changed since you were a little girl?
Charlotte Smith:	It's changed an awful lot. Most of the things I will say it has changed for the better. … That block where City Hall is, that was all … the houses were just about falling down…The *Alexandria Gazette* used to be printed on King Street…The buildings across from there [City Hall]—the 300, 400 block were in very bad disrepair… The only bowling alley that I knew that was in town was on the corner of Pitt and King.
J.H.:	Did you ever go there?
Charlotte Smith:	Yes. I went one time. I threw the ball down the alley and I followed it—I went with the ball. That was my first and last time.
J.H.:	Were you with your husband at the time? Or on a date?
Charlotte Smith:	I was on a date. I think that was the end of that! Of course, there were no bars in Alexandria. There were just "dives" as they were called. They sold only beer and wine. They had a blue law—they could not sell any whiskey.
J.H.:	Did you sit in there to drink or did you have to take it out?
Charlotte Smith:	You could sit [in there]. They weren't frequented by very respectable people, whereupon my father said that if he ever heard that I was in [one of those places] … and why he thought about that … in drug stores you hear an awful lot of things that go on… and he may have heard something about it, but it was on the corner of Royal and King and it was called "The Morocco" I think. And it was an East Indian that ran it. And one day he came in and he said, "Honey. Have you ever been in that Morocco?" I said, "No, Daddy." They were perfectly respectable people I'm sure, but they were working-class. I said, "No I've never been in there." He said, "If I ever hear of you being in that place, I'll come in and pull you out by your hair!" Well, that was enough to put the fear of God in me! My father had never raised a hand against me. I thought, well, that must be pretty bad. He was under the impression I think that there were drugs in there. That was long before there were many drugs anywhere around. So I never went in the Morocco.
J.H.:	Then the dives disappeared…?
Charlotte Smith:	Pretty much so. My husband died in [19]72 and I think it was in [19]71 that the blue law was repealed. At the time there were three restaurants in Alexandria—three restaurants! I mean nice, good restaurants. I mean there were restaurants that had bright lights in them and they had porcelain-top tables… it wasn't a diner. They cooked in the back. The heat came on. The

	windows were always steamy. They were reasonably priced. You could get good food in there. We just didn't go there. But there were three *good* restaurants. There was one I understand now is number one King Street and it's now a Thai restaurant.
J.H.:	Right there at the foot of King Street, near the water?
Charlotte Smith:	Uh-huh.
J.H.:	Yes, there is a Thai restaurant right next to a coffee shop [Starbucks].
Charlotte Smith:	That was called, "The Seaport Inn." You could get most anything in there. They specialized in seafood. It was wonderful. People would fight to get a reservation. Out on First Street and Washington. There was—he was there for years—I think he was of Greek origin. He had almost any kind of food that you wanted, but he had absolutely the best baked ham that I ever put in my mouth. I don't how he baked it, but it really was good. Then I found out after I moved down here from a friend of mine who lived here then—at that time—if you wanted one done for Christmas, he'd do it for you! You had to take it in early and pick it up early… but he'd cook the ham for you. It was too late for me to bother by that time. I'd cooked my own! And of course, now everybody goes out to [get] honey-baked ham. I won't pay the price for honey-baked. I think it's ridiculous, having cooked a lot of hams myself. I got a pretty good recipe for my ham—I stick with that... You know where the house is on Washington Street that is called the Old Club and it was supposed to be George Washington's Old Club? It has been over the years enlarged from this small building that was there originally… The room that was the Old Club that he attended is still intact in that building…It would be Wilkes Street is the one that used to have railroad tracks on it. It would be two blocks on the right-hand side from Wilkes [Street], going toward Mt. Vernon—south.
J.H.:	That was the third restaurant?
Charlotte Smith:	Yes. They served everything. They started out—they made candy. Delicious candy. And people started flocking there to get the candy and then all of a sudden, they said "Well, maybe I'll try for a restaurant." We just loved it. Some nights they had cornbread…Mostly, old fare. They had good fried chicken. They had apple dumplings. Things that you remember from your childhood.
J.H.:	Would you be going with your family or with your husband to these restaurants?
Charlotte Smith:	With my family. But then my husband and I did go to those three. He was very crippled with arthritis, terribly crippled and very bowed over. I'd say to him sometimes, "Honey, let's go so-and-so and have dinner." "Oh fine, what time you want to go?" He rarely ever said no…A neighbor said she thought he was hen-pecked. …I said, "He may be hen-pecked to your way of thinking, but if he don't want to do something, he'd never do it." And so when he came home from work, that day, I said, "Do you really think you're hen-pecked." He said, "No, I never thought I was hen-pecked. cos I'll let you know if I don't want to do it." I said, "That's right. If there's anybody that's hen-pecked in this family, might be me!" He laughed over that. What I was getting back to—when it [the blue law] was repealed, he said, "You mark my words. There are going to be

	so many restaurants in the City of Alexandria, you won't know where to go." And I swear to you, I think to my knowledge, the last I heard there were 80. And I don't know that all 80 are *real* good. There are a lot of good restaurants in Alexandria. Real good. I think Geronimo's—the Greek one. I love Le Gaulois… [discusses Le Gaulois and other current restaurants and going out to dinner with her employer from the gift shop]
Trolley to Mount Vernon	
J.H.:	What else do you want to tell me?
Charlotte Smith:	They had a trolley. I think it came into Alexandria (it went all the way to Mount Vernon) and the way it got across the river was like a causeway or something. There was already a road that went to Mount Vernon so it went beside the road down that way. The first thing I remember asking about—they were trying to put a motel on Fort Hunt Road—and all of us who were indignant on the idea said it was too close to Mount Vernon and we didn't want it. At that time, motels were not attractive.
J.H.:	What era was this?
Charlotte Smith:	It had to be in the [19]40s, or early [19]50s. We were [Tape 2, Side A ends] [Tape 2, Side B begins]… I said, "Why is that?" They said, "Well, they have strict laws about anything commercial being on Fort Hunt Road or close to Fort Hunt Road." I said, "How come they have the 7-11 down there?" [on one of the streets off of Fort Hunt Road] …and they also had across the street from the 7-11, there was a gas station. I said, "How did they [get there]?" You know why they were? They were on the railroad tracks, so it had been zoned commercial for the trolley. It's not right on Fort Hunt Road about a block and half off of Fort Hunt Road. Anyway, that's how they got around it. The trolley—came up—the circle that is at Mount Vernon now is where the turnaround was for the trolley. It came up and came across that causeway and came into Alexandria at Fairfax Street and King and that's when it turned and went up King Street. Then from there it went to—I think it's the 1100 block of King Street. It went between two houses—kind of veered and it went on Commonwealth Avenue and I don't know how it got to Washington from there, but it went on to Washington from there. And that's how the people that made the flour could ship the shipments to Washington, cos I guess there weren't as many passengers.
J.H.:	What did a trolley stop look like? Do you remember where it stopped on King Street?
Charlotte Smith:	No. I think maybe just somebody stood on the curb and then it'd go up King Street. It wasn't a designated stop. They'd wave 'em down, like you'd wave down a taxi.
J.H.:	What color was the trolley?
Charlotte Smith:	I think it was like a blue-green. I don't remember really.
J.H.:	When you worked in Washington, did you take the trolley?
Charlotte Smith:	No. Bus then. I think the trolley was probably gone by then. I just don't remember how long that trolley ran. My sister probably would have known. She used to say, "I've never seen anyone in my life that has the memory that

	you have." She said, "I don't remember all those things." I said, "The things that I remember is something that made an impression on me." I think my daughter mentioned to you to have me tell you about the tornado that came through Alexandria. [November 17, 1927]
J.H.:	No…
Tornado	
Charlotte Smith:	When I was a little girl and I lived in a house with all adults, I was the worse crybaby in the world. I cried over everything. Just screamed. We had in the house on Seminary Hill an electric stove, but we also had a wood stove, which my grandmother preferred cooking on. One day I went up to the cook stove to see if I could see what was cooking on the stove and put my wrist right against it and the blister I swear was that big … and mother kept saying let me pop the blister. "It's not going to heal until you pop the blister." I was about six years old. [Imitates whining]. Finally, my mother said, "You know they had a tornado in Alexandria two days ago and if you let me pop that blister I'll drive you into town so you can see the damage that the tornado did." That's what it took to pop it. And we drove down King Street and there was some buildings that you could see there was a little damage. It was almost down to—is it Commerce Street—with two streets coming together onto King Street? I think it is. Right on that corner of King Street there was a colored hotel, three stories, and it had hit the colored hotel and took the roof off and it took the side off of it and on the third floor hanging—with nothing under it—was a bathtub, still fastened by the pipes! Just hanging! I'll never forget that! [Laughs] Mother said, "Now you look carefully," cos she was going down the street and I had to turn around and look back. She said, "I don't want you to miss this." So it came right through there and Alexandria High School was on Cameron Street and it [the tornado] went between buildings that way and took the roof off the High School and the roof off of a man who had a house some two blocks behind that—absolutely demolished—I think it had been built like a garage, but he used it as a storage place or something like that. It just leveled that. That was what I got for having my blister popped.
J.H.:	I think that's a good reward.
Memories of School and Restaurants	
Charlotte Smith:	I never got over being a "scarey" cat. When I went to St. Agnes School they had walks that we had to line up on.
J.H.:	A sidewalk?
Charlotte Smith:	It wasn't a sidewalk, but it was a walk. They were covered with cinders from the coal furnaces. So they weren't muddy. Forever and eternity I was fallin' on the cinders. I'd tear up my knee and there'd be cinders embedded. My mother would take me home, sit me in a bathtub, give me a washcloth or some kind of a cloth and say, "You just keep that in the warm water [??] and the cinders will come out." "Oh no! It'll hurt!" She said, "If you don't do it yourself, I'm going to do it for you." So I washed out a lot of bluish looking rocks and I still have some—my knee has some cinders in it that never washed out.
J.H.:	Some mementos from St. Agnes!

Charlotte Smith:	Fortunately, a few years after that they replaced ’em with concrete. That school started in 1924 with nothing. Somebody called my mother and asked her if she wanted to enter Kitty in the school and I had a cousin same age as my sister and she lived with us periodically. A lot of people thought I had two sisters and they were the same size and everything and they shared a bedroom. When my uncle heard about Kitty going to the school, he wanted Virginia to go too, so he entered her and in the very first class at the school, there were six students. One girl that came—I never knew why she came—she was a transfer and had already had two years of high-school and they sent her here. So the first graduating class was one girl. The next graduating class from St. Agnes was five girls and my sister was in that. I never knew why that girl was transferred. I think possibly—which was unheard of in those days—I think she was a child of divorce and the mother entered her in this school and she was beautiful, even as a teenager, just beautiful. And when she graduated from high-school she went to New York hoping to be a model. She met a man named McClellan Barkley and I’m only saying his name because he was a cover artist for some of the magazines at that time and he fell madly in love with this girl and married her and used her as his only model. As I said, my sister only died two years, but I think—she lived in a retirement home for five years before that and before that she lived for 20 years down in a place called Kilmarnock, Virginia—it’s a beautiful little town growing by leaps and bounds as everybody has discovered it’s on water so might as well have a house down there! That whole area—it’s between Fredericksburg and Yorktown. I think one girl of the five died about two or three years later, I don’t know what from. Then another one died ten or fifteen years later. And the three that were left all ended up in Kilmarnock. I think that’s unusual! My sister and brother-in-law had lived in New York for so long. They lived in Cornwall-on-Hudson. He [my brother-in-law] said, “When I had to have my driveway plowed three times in one day, I decided to move south.” They had so much so and as he said, they weren’t getting any younger. For a long, long time he was a professor at West Point. He was retired very early. He lost the sight of one eye and they retired him and World War II came along and they [asked him] to come back and teach at West Point. He was an absolute mathematic wiz. There was a man that was the teacher at the old Alexandria High School and he was the strictest task-master. He was a math teacher and you better get it from him or he wasn’t going to play and he didn’t like women. He was a bachelor and I had a terrible time with him. But he told everybody in town that my brother-in-law was the best student he’d ever had. The best one. So he went back to teach math and physics and when the War was over they retired him again. He came back to Alexandria and he dabbled in this and that and didn’t like this and that and the other thing. He tried real estate. He didn’t like it. He tried life insurance. He didn’t like it. He just couldn’t find it. Selling just wasn’t his thing. Then he heard about a place in Washington that was opening a school that was training for West Point and Annapolis. The Bullis School. B-U-L-L-I-S. The two men who were going to start it approached him and asked him if he would come in as a third partner.

	So he did. He didn't mind that. Then the Korean War came along. And they [West Point] called him back. And when the Korean War was over they had the option of keeping him on permanently as a professor, letting him stay right there. Or retiring him again. They decided to retire him again. And you know what he said as he walked out? "Don't call me back if you have another war." He said, "It's too hard getting adjusted between wars." He got a job—in Cornwall-on-Hudson—it was a New York military academy. He got a job teaching math at the military academy. So they stayed there, bought a house and lived in it for some years. A lovely house. We all enjoyed it. Because after my mother died and she lived here in town after my father died. We spent every holiday—no matter what it was—4th of July, whatever—we went to my sister's. …my sister never would come to me. ...But they did call him back at Vietnam and he said, "No, I told you I wasn't"… But they must have thought highly of him…I know what we used to call those little restaurants that had the steam on the windows. We used to call them "The Greasy Spoon." One of them is in existence in Alexandria now, has remodeled and redone and everything and [is] supposed to be one of the best restaurants in Alexandria.
J.H.:	Which one is it?
Charlotte Smith:	The Royal?—800 block of King Street.
J.H.:	The Majestic!?
Charlotte Smith:	Yes. Well, the Royal and the Majestic were side by side when they were greasy spoons…. They were the kind that would serve meat loaf with mashed potatoes, green-beans. Perfectly decent and very good food…I will tell you this one little thing about the restaurant that's now the Thai restaurant. When I was a teenager, that was my father's favorite place to go and he'd take me with him and the reason was—it was just a crab place. You could get crabs and beer. Long before it was the seafood restaurant. Just bare tables. Cracked the crabs. And I know he took me along cos I'd crack 'em for him. He taught me to crack 'em. He'd get a beer and I'd have a Coca Cola. And my mother would get so angry because [she'd say], "I don't' think you oughtta be taking her down there." "What in the world's wrong with it? There's nobody outta order down there." She said, "Aren't there drunks down there?" "I don't see 'em." My father wouldn't admit to seeing a drunk. …
J.H.:	Did it have a different name at that time?
Charlotte Smith:	It had a man's name…Ketland. Bill Ketland's Crab House. [End]