Ridge Street Oral History Project

A Supplement to the Survey of the Ridge Street Historic District and Proposal for Local Designation
Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our appreciation to all present and former residents of the Ridge Street neighborhood, especially C. H. Keene, Alice Foote, and H. W. Wood. We would also like to thank the staff of the City of Charlottesville and the Board of Architectural Review, especially C. H. Keene. In addition, we recognize the contributions of the following:

[Names of contributors]

Preservation Piedmont

For the City of Charlottesville
Department of Community Planning

December 1995
Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our appreciation to all present and former residents of the Ridge Street neighborhood who shared with us their thoughts and memories and who are acknowledged individually by their interviews.

We also would like to thank the staff of the City of Charlottesville Department of Community Development, in particular Planning Director Satyendra Huja, Ronald Higgins, Fred Boger, James Herndon, and Alice Poole. Additional thanks go to the Board of Architectural Review, especially Chairman Kurt Wassenaar whose idea it was to conduct an oral history of the Ridge Street neighborhood.

In addition, we recognize the contribution of the following:

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In 1981, the Ridge Street Historic District was placed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places because of its role as one of Charlottesville’s architecturally significant late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century residential areas. While listing on these registers acknowledged the neighborhood’s importance, it established no effective mechanism for identifying and allaying potential threats to the area and its resources. The City of Charlottesville, therefore, undertook a study of the district that eventually led to the Charlottesville Department of Community Development’s recommendation that the district be designated a local Design Control District under the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

The department also urged the city to conduct additional research and further explore the area’s social development. In particular, the Board of Architectural Review requested that a study of neighborhood families be conducted to gain greater insight into the area’s recent demographic and physical transformation from a single-family, owner-occupied community to a predominantly multi-family, rental-unit neighborhood.

Preservation Piedmont, a local group designed to encourage participation in the preservation, restoration, and ownership of historic and archeological sites, agreed to accomplish this goal through an oral history project. Volunteers conducted approximately one-hour interviews, focusing their conversations on neighborhood dynamics since the beginning of the twentieth century and recording the conversations on audio tape. A summary of each conversation was also written. As a result, each interview contains a unique style characteristic of both the interviewer and the individual interviewed. When recollections of the interviewers did not match facts as they were known by consultants to Preservation Piedmont, appropriate corrections were made in footnotes.

Old photographs were also requested for reproduction, adding visual references to most summaries. Looking through old photo albums also increased the memories of young and old. Most of the memories were of everyday events, but stories of World War II and its effect on individual lives in the Ridge Street neighborhood was an equally persistent theme, as was the integration of local schools in the sixties.

This document represents only an initial effort to record the history of the Ridge Street neighborhood, with its main purpose to augment the historical information found in the Survey of the Ridge Street Historic District and Proposal for Local Designation. Materials gathered during this study have been stored at the Albemarle County Historical Society for preservation and use by the public. Undoubtedly, exploration of the neighborhood’s rich history will continue and a renewed sense of community pride will continue to develop, with local historic designation and the newly formed Ridge Street Neighborhood Association providing a solid foundation for such efforts.
A Brief History of the Ridge Street Neighborhood

In the early eighteenth century, the area today known as the Ridge Street neighborhood was part of Alexander Garrett’s Oak Hill estate in Albemarle County. Along the estate’s western boundary were the "road to William Henning’s old still house," today Fifth Street SW, and "the Ridge Road leading to Meriwether’s Mill," today Ridge Street. Garrett, an associate of Thomas Jefferson who played an important role in the founding of the University of Virginia, began selling parcels in the vicinity of these roads in the late 1820s. According to James Alexander, editor of The Jeffersonian Republican, no houses existed on Ridge Street prior to 1835.

Ridge Street’s unrivaled views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and other parts of the surrounding region probably encouraged construction of houses in the area. The first residences were built around 1840, and construction continued into the twentieth century, eventually subsiding toward the end of World War I. White families occupied the street’s northern blocks while African-American families owned homes toward the road’s southern and unpaved end.

The Ridge Street neighborhood developed into a solid community, with residents ranging from local businessmen to domestic workers living in apparent harmony. There were pleasant interactions among all residents—children of both races sometimes played together and people cordially greeted one another as they passed on the street. The street’s two diverse communities associated regularly, as African-Americans traveled through the northern end of Ridge Street to go to church, to school, and to stores. Some even worked in the homes of Ridge Street merchants. Yet a closer look revealed a great disparity between their everyday lives. As one traveled south toward the end of the neighborhood, the houses became smaller, the paved road became gravel, and the children attended another school.

This scenario changed dramatically in the mid-twentieth century. Proliferation of the automobile in the 1930s and 1940s led a number of white families to purchase more modern residences in the suburbs and sell or rent their city houses. This migration continued for several decades and enabled African-Americans to purchase or rent some of the larger and more architecturally significant houses on Ridge Street. According to several long-time neighborhood residents, however, the decreased number of whites also led the city to ignore its responsibility to the area and services began to decline.

Following World War II, the "white flight" intensified as older property owners died or moved to smaller houses. Many of the larger buildings were purchased by absentee owners who subdivided them into apartments. By 1990, the Ridge Street neighborhood, historically an owner-occupied area, had over 50 percent rental property. Perhaps the greatest injuries occurred in the 1950s and 1970s, when the extension of Cherry Avenue and the realignment of Ridge and Fifth streets took place. Between 1959 and 1960, two houses on Ridge Street were demolished and Apple Street was removed when Cherry Avenue was extended to join Elliott Street, connecting the Ridge Street and Belmont neighborhoods. In 1973, during the realignment of Ridge and Fifth Streets, eleven houses were destroyed on Ridge, along with several others on...
Fifth, Barksdale, Lafayette, and Berring. The loss of these old and architecturally significant dwellings, accompanied by the new traffic pattern, fundamentally altered the Ridge Street neighborhood’s residential character.

In 1974, the Charlottesville House Improvement Program (CHIP) was founded. CHIP volunteers worked to improve the substandard conditions of owner-occupied homes, and several in the Ridge Street neighborhood qualified. By 1980 interest had grown from simply improving substandard living conditions to renovating and preserving the historic fabric and character of Ridge Street homes. The city was encouraged to complete a survey begun in 1973 and use it for the 1981 nomination of the Ridge Street District to the National Register of Historic Places. Efforts to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood and to protect its historic structures have continued. Today Ridge Street property owners, with help from the City’s Design Control Ordinance, will be able to save this valuable place in the architectural and social history of Charlottesville.
Ridge Street is on what is informally called the Ridge Street Quartzite Formation which is part of the Charlottesville Formation located between the University of Virginia and Monticello. It is a thin band of quartz which is a rock highly resistant to erosion and is estimated to be between 550 and 600 million years old.

Configuration by Maurice Cox
Early 1929  
Ridge Street Residences  
Past and Present  

- Existing Houses  
- Demolished Houses

1994  
Configuration by Maurice Cox
### Key: Names of Interviewees and Addresses
of their Ridge Street Neighborhood Homes,
Past and Present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>John F. Harlan Jr.</td>
<td>203 Ridge Street (demolished)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>G. Benton Patterson</td>
<td>211 Ridge Street (demolished)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Albert S. Yancey III</td>
<td>301 Ridge Street (demolished)</td>
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<td>Charlotte Yancey Humphris</td>
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<td>Frank C. Hartman</td>
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<td>Mabel Walls Jones</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Virginia Carter</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Lucille Woodfolk Jones</td>
<td>922 Raymond Road</td>
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*Note: Some addresses are marked as demolished.*
Legend

- Marks Home Site
- Name of Resident Who Was Interviewed
  (See Key Opposite Page)
John Frederick Harlan Jr.

John Harlan’s grandfather, James Fulton Harlan, moved to Charlottesville from Rockbridge County, Virginia, in 1842. He survived five years of service in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, where he fought in Stonewall Jackson’s brigade. During this time he was imprisoned, broke his leg when a horse fell on him, came home for a year, and returned to duty. In 1888, he built the house at 203 Ridge Street where his grandson, John Harlan, lived from the time of his birth until after World War II.

James Fulton Harlan was married to Emma Allen. He opened and managed a general store downtown on Main Street. Although neither his son nor grandson worked in the store, the property was owned by the Harlan family until November 1994 when it was sold by John Harlan and his brother and sister to Lee Danielson. In 1937 it had been rebuilt and leased to Sears and twenty years later to Leggett.

John Harlan’s father, John Frederick Harlan, for whom he is named, was born in the house on Ridge Street in 1889. He worked in the Charlottesville post office and eventually became postmaster. In World War I he served in the 29th Infantry Division. In January 1925, the year after his father died at the age of eighty-two or eighty-three, he married Myrtle Mildred Clarke, a nurse. The Harlans had three children, John F. Jr., who was born at the University of Virginia Hospital on December 18, 1925; James Clarke, born in 1928; and Emma Allen, now McMath, born in 1931. Mr. Harlan’s sister, Emma Allen, also a nurse, lived with the family.

The house at 203 Ridge Street was the first on the right after the bridge. It was made of wood and painted white. From the concrete sidewalk and walk, the house was entered by way of the porch which originally extended across the front of the house and around the side. The entry hall led to the stairs. On the right was the parlor, used for company, and beyond this the living room for the family. Mr. Harlan remembers a big coat rack in the hall, a telephone on the wall, antique furniture, and a large radio. Beyond the living room was the dining room. Upstairs were four bedrooms and one bathroom.

In the kitchen was a coal stove next to a hot water tank. The water in the tank, as in the radiators, was heated by a coal furnace in the cellar. There was also a gas stove, and if the gas ran low in the evening, you could get more by putting quarters in a slot which were collected by the gas company. Early in Mr. Harlan’s life, the family had an icebox, and he can
remember the cards put up for the iceman indicating what was needed—twenty-five pounds, fifty pounds, and so forth. In the mid-1930s the Harlans put in their first electric refrigerator.

The house had a screened porch in back and an attic where the children played. There was originally a sleeping porch which was taken down when Mr. Harlan was a child.

In the yard of 203 Ridge Street were big oaks, cherry and pear trees, raspberry bushes, a strawberry patch, and a large grape arbor. Mr. Harlan remembers a lot of grass to be cut. There was a big vegetable garden of which neighbors leased sections. The property covered one acre. In 1953 or 1954, it was sold to the City of Charlottesville and the house was torn down to make way for the new fire station.

Another member of the household was the Harlan’s maid, Sinie Hill Payne, who lived in a rent-free house at the back of the lot. Every morning she started the fire in the stove and made biscuits for breakfast. Mrs. Harlan made jelly with the fruit from their yard and also peach pickle. John Harlan says he never ate "bought" jelly until he was in the army. Wine was made from the grapes on the arbor. He remembers Sinie’s cracklin’ bread. Judge Michael’s aunt brought the family two-and-a-half gallons of buttermilk a week from her farm. Regular milk came in glass bottles, with the cream on top, from the Monticello Dairy. A memorable treat came from a bakery across from Midway High School—round pastries covered with whipped cream called "cream cones."

Mr. Harlan remembers Ridge Street as a "nice place to grow up." He went to McGuffey Elementary School, within walking distance. In eleven years it was closed on only one snow day. The little children rode their tricycles on the sidewalks. There was no Little League and the boys organized their own baseball teams by street. Mr. Harlan organized a Ridge Street team which played other street teams such as Locust Avenue and Belmont. The boys all knew each other at school. No adults were involved and the boys provided the leadership themselves. Touch football was popular. John Harlan recalls building a soap box derby racer out of a big board, old wheels attached to two-by-fours, and a steering wheel that he found at the junk yard. He learned to ride a bike in second or third grade in the days before training wheels. Roller skates were very popular. John Harlan says, "We lived on roller skates!" He and his friends often skated on the grounds of UVA and on Rugby Road. He remembers racing through the neighborhood with the hedges as hurdles.

On Saturday mornings in the 1930s, the boys went to cowboy movies at the Lafayette Theater. It cost ten cents. Little cups of ice cream cost five cents. There was no popcorn. The boys all wore guns in their holsters and engaged in a great deal of fighting and shooting inspired by
the Saturday morning movies. Mr. Harlan observed that in Germany during the 1930s boys were taught to shoot in the Hitler Youth, while future American soldiers got amateur training at least as effective through the cowboy shows. Mr. Harlan later had a Red Rider BB gun, and at age thirteen got a twenty-two single-shot rifle. It cost five dollars and he used it for squirrel hunting in the country.

Many of the boys delivered newspapers. Mr. Harlan delivered The News Leader and The Daily Progress. The Daily Progress cost fifteen cents a week. He worked six days a week and was paid five cents a paper. Mr. Harlan traveled by bike and his route was Rugby Road. In the 1930s, this had street car tracks which were a menace for bike riders, and Mr. Harlan had at least one accident. The tracks were later torn up, probably for metal during the war.

Life at home included cutting the grass with the old, push-style lawn mower, trimming the hedges, and raking leaves. During the 1930s, a cousin from Rockbridge County lived with the family for four years while attending the UVA Engineering School. The Harlans were members of the First Methodist Church and went regularly to Sunday School and services there. During the Depression, homeless men lived in freight cars, traveling all around the country. Because Ridge Street crossed the railroad tracks, these men, known as "hobos," got off the freight trains when they stopped and went from house to house asking for food. The Harlans lived very near the tracks and John Harlan remembers his mother and Sinie giving the men breakfast. One day he counted at least sixty of the men walking up and down Ridge Street.

Polio was a dreaded disease throughout Mr. Harlan’s childhood. During an epidemic in the 1930s, five or six of his classmates were stricken. Schools opened later in the fall and many children were confined to playing in their own yards.

Sports was a major interest. Mr. Harlan went to his first UVA football game in the late 1930s with his uncle. Boxing was a big winter sport and he and his brother went to matches at the university. In 1936 a national tournament was held in the Memorial Gymnasium. In the fall of 1940 the two boys took a week off from school.
and went on a trip north with their Aunt Emrna. They went to New Haven to see UVA play Yale in football, saw the sites in New York, and visited the World’s Fair. On their way home they stopped off in College Park to see UVA play Maryland. John Harlan loved to watch as well as play baseball. He had no trouble with learning percentage in arithmetic, having mastered this skill through reading box scores and batting averages in the sports pages of the New York Times and the Richmond and Charlottesville papers. When possible, he listened to the Brooklyn Dodgers games on the big radio, as well as the Washington Redskins during football season.

Among the neighbors Mr. Harlan remembers are the Baileys, the Norrises, and the Fowlers across the street. Jack Fowler was the Commissioner of Revenue. The Browns lived next door. Mr. Brown ran a store in Belmont. Mr. E.O. Hawkins owned a store downtown, and he and his wife and sister-in-law lived nearby.

The Hawkinses had no children, but a number of their nieces and nephews lived with them while attending the University. The large Gleason family lived across the street. Nancy and David were friends and Emmett used to take the children out to their farm in the country. Mr. Harlan remembers the large sleeping porch on the back of their house where the whole family slept in hot weather. Beverly Hartman and Marjorie Ix were among the neighborhood girls. There were black families in the neighborhood, and they lived mostly on the side streets. Mr. Harlan remembers growing up with Eugene Williams. But no black boys played on the street baseball teams.

In September 1939, the Nazis invaded Poland, and World War II began. John Harlan remembers the EXTRA! editions of the newspapers. The same month he started at the old Midway High School. In 1940 he transferred to the new Lane High School, which replaced Midway. He graduated in 1943.

In part because of his great interest in sports, Mr. Harlan never considered any college but UVA where he had been going to athletic events since his
childhood. He entered an accelerated wartime program in July 1943. The students wore coats and ties and hats if they were freshmen. He rode his bike to class, leaving it unlocked outside Alderman Library.

Having completed one year due to the accelerated schedule, Mr. Harlan left college to join the army in March 1944. He served in Europe with the 65th Infantry Division of General George C. Patton’s Third Army. Discharged in May 1946, he returned to UVA and graduated in 1950. He received his graduate degree in hospital administration at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond. Starting with an administration residency at the University of Virginia Hospital in July 1951, he moved up through the levels of this field until he was made director in 1964.

In addition to his career at the hospital, John Harlan served on the Charlottesville School Board, as both his father and grandfather had done. He was the president of the Charlottesville chapter of the Junior League of Commerce and a member of the Thomas Jefferson Lion’s Club. Thirty-seven years ago Mr. Harlan was asked to take on the responsibility of running the clock and the scoreboard for all home games of the UVA basketball team. He continues to run the scoreboard to this day, an activity which gives him great pleasure.

John. F. Harlan Sr. died in 1951, and his wife died in 1983 at the age of ninety-three. John Harlan and his first wife, Dorothy, were married in 1951 and had five children. They were divorced in 1974, and Mr. Harlan married Doris Driscoll, who had two small daughters. All seven children are college graduates, and some have advanced degrees. All are professionals or own their own businesses.

Mr. Harlan’s oldest child, Patricia Harlan McGuire, graduated from the University of Virginia. She and her husband own a jewelry store, Harlan & McGuire, on Main Street in downtown Charlottesville.

John F. Harlan III lives in Clayton, Missouri, and is a computer expert. He graduated from UVA and received his Master’s and Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis.
Dorothy Karol Harlan Cerra is a teacher in Marietta, Georgia. She and her twin sister, Ellen, graduated from Radford University.

Ellen Harlan Peattie is an officer of the First City Bank in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Douglas Harlan graduated from UVA. He owns a small store in Keswick, Virginia.

Mr. Harlan's two stepdaughters are Tracy Sullivan and Bethany Robertson. Mrs. Sullivan is a pharmacist. She is a graduate of Virginia Tech and received her graduate degree in pharmacology from the Medical University of South Carolina. Mrs. Robertson got her undergraduate degree in nursing at UVA and a Master's Degree in Nursing at Emory University in Atlanta. She is a nurse-midwife in Hagerstown, Maryland.

John Harlan retired from his job as director of the University of Virginia Hospital in 1991 but he continues to be very active in organizations related to his field. He is the treasurer and a board member of the Medical Society of Virginia Review Organization which oversees Medicare. He is on the board and this summer will become president of the Health Systems Agency which covers the area from Lexington to Winchester to Charlottesville to Warrenton, including Fredericksburg. He will soon go off the advisory board of the Piedmont Virginia Community College. He is on the 2001 Committee of the University of Virginia Hospital, commemorating its opening in 1901. The School of Nursing will observe its hundredth anniversary later in the same year.

Mr. Harlan and his wife continue to live in Charlottesville where, with the exception of the time he served in World War II, he has spent his entire life.
I grew up on Ridge Street where I was born in 1917. Our address was 211 Ridge Street, located where the Salvation Army is now. It was the fourth house on the right after you crossed the bridge. Our neighbors were the Harlans, the Browns who ran a grocery store in Belmont, and Oscar Hawkins, the dry goods merchant. Next to us was Mr. Albert Yancey and Mr. Shumate, whose houses were torn down and replaced by the Noland Company. The Harlan and Brown houses stood where the firehouse is today. The whole block was cleaned out.

My mother, Nellie Marshall, was the youngest of ten children. Her mother was Mary Elizabeth Gooch and she was the granddaughter of a soldier who fought in the American Revolution. My mother's father was a Confederate soldier belonging to company K who served with the Light Horse Cavalry from Albemarle. They were Scotch like all my grandparents. My grandmother's father owned a farm, where my grandparents were married and lived until they moved to Charlottesville. After my grandfather returned from the Civil War, he started a contracting business that laid rails for the railroads. He had a lot of mules and hired a lot of help. My father came from Statesville, North Carolina, and he was a building contractor when he met my mother and they were married. I was five years old and an only child when my parents divorced. Mother and I went to live with my uncle George B. Marshall and my grandparents on Ridge Street.

When my grandparents moved into Charlottesville from the country, my grandfather built their small house himself—he was a skilled workman. It was one of the first houses on Ridge Street, then only a dirt road. Later additions were made to expand the house as the family grew to ten children; other relatives also lived there.

I lived in the big house on Ridge Street with my mother, my uncle, two aunts, and my grandparents. My grandfather died when I was five years old. He left the home to my uncle.
who owned the George B. Marshall Machine Shop on Fifth Street SE where the old Trailways
Bus Station was. He helped raise me and taught me how to work. With all those people
around, I had a lot of love.

It was a great life on Ridge Street. There were probably more boys than any other
neighborhood in town and very few cars. I played a lot of sandlot baseball and football. There
was a lot of interest in different neighborhoods' football teams playing against each other. We
played street hockey and used a telephone pole as a goal. When the horse-drawn cart brought
ice to deliver, we jumped on the back and scraped up the ice chips. We went barefoot. Frank
Hartman was my best friend then. His father was Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds at
the University of Virginia. He is still a good friend. We were close to downtown where we
went to the Lafayette Theatre on Saturday for ten cents. During the Great Depression we didn’t
have much money. But my family always had a garden and a plum tree. In the summertime,
they canned the fruits and vegetables. The dairy delivered our milk in horse-drawn carts. There
were special events like the Veterans’ Day parade on Main Street.

My grandfather used to attend the reunions of Confederate soldiers. Grandmother was just about
perfect. I had lots of cousins and friends. Nobody used the parlor, but we spent lots of time
in the living room or on the front porch and lawn. The kitchen was big with a wood-burning
stove. In the warm weather we ate on the back porch. Upstairs there were four big bedrooms,
plus a sleeping porch my uncle built for me that looked out over the back yard.

I went to a private school called the Charlottesville School for Boys. Its nickname was "Fives",
and it was located on the Fry’s Spring road. I finished high school at Lane, and in 1941 I got
my Bachelor’s of Science in Commerce from the University of Virginia after working my way
through. It was hard to find a job then, so I worked for Charles King and Sons for twelve
dollars a week. Then I went overseas in the U.S. Coast Guard. In those years I served in Italy
and Sicily. When I was home on leave in Washington, D.C., I met and married my wife and
then went to the South Pacific. While I was away, my first daughter was born.

After I came back from the service, my uncle died and my mother, who was very ill, was
moved into a nursing home, because we couldn’t get anyone to take care of her in that big old
house. She died in the 1950s. By that time my wife and I were living in a house on Hazel
Street. We sold the house on Ridge Street to the Salvation Army. They were very anxious to
buy it--more anxious than we were to sell. The whole neighborhood was changing.

Chip Lewis took me into his insurance business on the G.I. Bill, which provided on-the-job
training. A few years later I started the Benton Patterson Insurance Agency located on Fifth
Street and later on East Jefferson Street. I worked there until I retired. My firm sold insurance
and loaned money. I represented the mortgage department of the Prudential Insurance
Company.

There were lots of blacks in our neighborhood. Many of them lived in homes located behind
or around Ridge Street. When I was young, sometimes black boys would come and play with
us. There were no problems.

I don’t ever remember getting involved in politics. Mother was a hostess at Monticello for a while. Later she opened an antique store across from the old Southern Railroad Station on Main Street. Most white men on Ridge Street were merchants and independent businessmen. It was a good, middle-class life—not a lot of money or a lot to do except visit friends and go to church. I’ve heard Dr. Walter Reed once lived on Ridge Street. Money was short, so people exchanged other things when they wanted to pay for something. People helped each other, like feeding the hobos who lived along the railroad tracks. Everyone shopped at Gleason’s where they had home delivery and charge accounts. There were horses and buggies then, not many motor cars and trucks. We had a Durant car. The Greek community owned a lot of good restaurants. A Greek family at the end of Ridge Street sold two hot dogs with homemade chili and onions and a coke for ten cents. They also sold frozen bananas coated in chocolate. Those were very popular with the students from Lane High School. People worked hard and they had a place to play on the commons on Ridge Street beyond where Cherry Avenue is today. Winters were always very cold—there was snow all winter and lots of sleigh riding and ice skating. Families all knew each other and looked after themselves and others. There was a real sense of community. There weren’t any women when I went to the University, which felt unusual because I had girls in my classes in high school. Blacks and whites were friendly, but there was no mixing.

After World War II, Ridge Street went down. The original owners of the old homes died. Young people often had to sell and many moved away. Jobs weren’t plentiful. More people moved into Charlottesville, and the University grew. I regret some of those changes, although I’m not against growth.

"We just had a lot of fun ... there was always room for whoever came, there was always room at the table, and, as I look back on it, everything seemed to center around food and fun. It was as if serious work wasn’t really the center of anyone’s life at all, and although my grandfather had a business, he seemed to just love entertaining people." Charlotte Yancey Humphris and her brother Albert S. Yancey III fondly remember visiting their grandparents on Ridge Street where everything centered on food, fun, and entertaining. "Charlotte and I used to go down there in the summer and we’d spend quite a bit of time there," remembers Al. Their grandparents, Albert S. Yancey Sr. and Bertie Belle Ship Yancey, lived at 301 Ridge Street. The house has been torn down and was located where Noland Company is located now. The Yanceys moved to Ridge street from Barboursville by train in 1909. It was there that they raised a large and very social family. Albert Jr. was the middle child of five children (two boys and three girls) and was the father of Charlotte and Al III.

Al Sr. ran the ice company with his brother Price. Ice was big business, as people had an "icebox" in those times. Ice was cut from the frozen rivers. People would buy ice and put it in the icebox to keep other foods cold. When Al Sr. heard that there was a new invention called the "refrigerator," he wisely sold the business and went into the pulp wood business.

Bertie was well known as a pianist and was also known for racing her horse down Vinegar Hill. Once she was pulled over by the police for riding too fast and splashing mud all over people. Bertie opened the Victoria Theater, where she played the piano, and Al Sr. ran the projector. "She was such a free spirit," remembers Charlotte. "When she played the piano it just rolled and roared. I mean, it was always heavy on the pedal and she just loved to play."

But, as Charlotte remembers, Bertie didn’t lift a finger around the house. "She just calmly had everything done." The housekeeping was left to Nancy Shifflett, of whom little is known. "According to the stories," remembers Charlotte, "[Nancy] was a descendant of the Hessian
prisoners of war at the barracks and was a person who was lovingly known as a mountaineer." She remembered the surrender at Appomattox and lived a long life. Nancy was the Yanceys' housekeeper from the time the Yanceys got married until they died. Nancy slept upstairs in one of the rooms. "She had breakfast in the morning for six or eight or ten people. At lunch people would walk in from all over town, and they had ten and twelve people at the big table for lunch," remembers Al. She raised the five Yancey children, kept a huge garden from which she canned and preserved "everything you could think of," kept the farm animals, and made butter and apple pies. Charlotte remembers one time when "... I was horrified, I went downstairs into the English basement to watch them fix a pig that had been slaughtered ... and I'll never forget going in that summer kitchen and there was this huge hog stretched out stiff as a board, and yet Nancy was presiding over whatever they did to preserve this animal for food." Al says that the meals were "all the good food that people don't eat today." The table was full of fried chicken and beef and potatoes and apple butter and apple sauce. Al Sr. loved his apple pie.

After meals, Al remembers pitching horseshoes with his grandfather. "He and I would go out in the side yard and pitch horseshoes, and then we’d get the kids from all over the neighborhood. Dick Nunley lived across the street. And then on other times, he would always give us a dime. Dick Nunley and I would go to the Lafayette Theater and watch westerns." Like other houses on Ridge Street, the Yancey house had a big porch, full of rocking chairs and with a glider swing. The family would sit out on the porch in the evening and talk. "We would sit there until after dark," remembers Charlotte, "and talk and rock, and we kids would sit on the steps and listen." On the top level of the house was a secret room. One had to go out on the roof of the front porch to get into the room, and there were stories that people would hide in there when the Indians attacked. One time Al went in there and found a knife. Charlotte went in there only once and was disappointed because it was clean and empty. "Of course," says Al, "I don’t think that house was built when the Indians were making attacks, but it was a good story for little kids." The big yard had many old boxwoods, a great place to hide eggs for the big Easter celebration. There were boxwood alleys on either side of the house and leading up to the front porch. In the back was a garden and behind it a back street, where many
African-Americans lived.

Charlotte remembers when their grandfather switched the furnace over to a stoker mechanism. "This was as if he had come out of the dark ages into modern times, because this was a device that you filled up with coal and it fed it in there." "I used to shovel coal all the time so I know," adds Al. "My granddaddy loved to get me down there and shovel coal."

There were many children on Ridge Street, and Charlotte and Al played with many of them. There were many, "wonderful families"--the Gleasons, the Lintons, the Michtoms, the Pattersons, the Nimmos, the Harlans, the Shumates, and the Fowlers. Charlotte played with the Harlan children and, as she remembers, was always the youngest. On the corner was an open field where Al would play football with other boys, including the Gleason boys. Along with the great families, Al remembers that "there were some mean boys on that street that would beat you up."

It was a very long street. "It ran for quite a long time," remembers Al, "and there were a lot of people we didn't even know."

For the time," says Charlotte, "it was such a wide street, with such wide sidewalks, and it really did encourage walking and seeing your neighbors and everything." Al Sr. and his next door neighbor were very good friends.

All of the Yancey children were very active in athletics at Midway High School. Al Jr. was quite a baseball player. He was offered a professional contract. But, remembers Al, he didn't go. "In those days baseball was a very rough sport and he was only eighteen years old." His parents went to Washington and brought him home because "nice young men don't play for the Washington Senators ... Daddy used to tell me that they used to close all of the businesses in Charlottesville, and everybody would go up to Lambeth field and that's where all the big games were. They would play the United States Marine Corps team. Everybody would go to the baseball games." Al Jr. played for the semi-pro Pepsi-Cola team that was sponsored by Mr. Jessup. Along with the athletic Yanceys was Aunt Julia, who opened a school on Ridge Street called Ridgelawn.

Midway School was a gathering spot and their uncle, Price Yancey, played on the basketball team that won the state championships. This was the first state championship that Midway ever won. According to Al, "All of Charlottesville went wild when they won the state
Al Jr. married Charlotte and Al's mother who was from Oklahoma. Their mother flew across Italy in an open cockpit plane. She was a swimmer, and Johnny Weismuller was her swim coach. The family took up residence on Rugby Place. They became good friends with the Scouras family who Al Jr. met at the train station. Both Scouras brothers had restaurants on Main Street, where Charlotte and Al would go eat and read comic books.

During World War II, Charlotte and Al would help get metal for the scrap metal drives. They'd pull their wagon along, going door to door, collecting metal. "We were really serious about that, and that was a good source down there because people had a lot of metal in their garages and barns and they would go back and clean them out," remembers Charlotte. During the war, the minister at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where Charlotte and Al had been going, left to join the hospital unit in Italy. There was a shortage of ministers. Charlotte and Al started going to Christ Church, where they were confirmed. As Charlotte remembers, "In those days teenagers didn't have cars ... so Mother and Daddy would have to take us there and pick us up. Well, Christmas Eve, it was important for us to be in church for the midnight service. One time it was snowing like crazy, but we were determined that we would be at the midnight service, so Daddy was good enough to take us, but then he had to come back to pick us up. In those days it went on until one o'clock in the morning, and my father always told this joke, and he'd say 'and I went back to pick up the children, and there was twelve inches of snow on the ground, and I got up to the top of the hill, and I go into the church, and there was Reverend Donovan up in the front praying, and there was this whole church full of people sound asleep.' And it was just about 90 percent true, I believe."

The house was sold after Charlotte and Al's grandparents had died. Al Jr. sold it to the Nolands because "he couldn't find anybody that wanted the home for a home anymore ... it would have cost a huge amount of money to restore it, and finally, we just had to sell it. But," says Al, "we left it well guarded because my son, Hunter, still works there."

Today, Al is "just enjoying myself." Al attended Lane High School, Hill School, and the University of Virginia. He served as a Marine in Korea and then worked for People's Bank where he met his wife, Barbara, from Illinois. She came to Charlottesville to help open State Farm's regional office, which was originally located in People's Bank (which is now Nations Bank). He was a State Farm agent for thirty-seven years. They have two
children. Hunter, who lives in Charlottesville, is married and has two children, Catherine and Elizabeth. Their other son, Kip, lives in Nags Head, North Carolina.

Charlotte attended Venable School, Lane High School, and Randolph-Macon Woman's College. She met her husband, Bob, in 1951 while he was an engineering student at the University. They were married in June 1952. After living in Albuquerque, New Mexico, they returned to Charlottesville for Bob to get his Master's and Ph.D. Their son Rob was born in 1955 and daughter Patsy in 1957. The Humphris decided to stay in Charlottesville. "We decided that the roots that we had here were really important for the children, so Bob decided to take a job in engineering research at the University." Rob is married and lives ten minutes away and works as an engineer for Micro Air. Patsy lives in Richmond and is an assistant vice president for the James River Company. Now that Bob has retired from the UVA faculty he's busier than ever. One of the joys of Charlotte's life was working as a substitute teacher at Lane High School, "working with some legendary teachers." Five years ago, Charlotte was elected to the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors, and last year she was re-elected to a second term.

Elizabeth Snyder Carter was born in 1912 on 7 1/2 Street, daughter of William H. Snyder and Mattie Trice Snyder. At the age of three, Elizabeth moved with her parents to 405 Ridge Street, where she lived for the next thirty years. Her parents lived there until the mid-1940s. William Snyder came from Augusta County and Mattie Trice from Albemarle.

Mr. Snyder was in the grocery business—he was what they call a drummer. He went to all the little stores and sold groceries. When Elizabeth was young, he was working at a grocery for Mr. Goodman Carter, in the building where The Young Men's Shop is now. He bought a half interest in the store, called it Carter and Snyder, and he bought the Ridge Street house as well, around 1914. He then bought Mr. Carter out and renamed it Snyder's Groceries, "the cleanest store in town."

Elizabeth's maternal grandfather, Thomas Alonzo Trice, fought in the Civil War. He was barely old enough to go; his family sent along his "body servant", a black man they called Uncle John.

After the war, there was nothing left to live on; the family house in Louisa County was burned down, and the land was exhausted after decades of cotton and tobacco cultivation. So Thomas came to Albemarle and worked as a farm manager near Covesville; Uncle John and his sister, Agnes Winn, followed. Uncle John went to work at Alberene Stone Co.

Agnes's mother was Elizabeth Carter's great-grandmother's cook. Agnes took over that job,
cooked for Elizabeth's grandparents, and helped with their children, and "then she took us over and raised us up."

Elizabeth's father's parents were from Augusta County. Her grandfather, Martin Luther Snyder, worked on the C&O. He married Nancy, and they raised eleven children. "We were proper Victorians. We went to church, we wore starched petticoats and high buttoned shoes and lived in the Victorian manner."

Most of Elizabeth's early memories are centered around Agnes. She "was the prop that held the family up." Her father was working long hours in the grocery store (sometimes 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.) and her mother went to business school and did the books for her husband's store. Her grandmother tended their very large garden.

Agnes did the cooking. Lilly did the washing and ironing, and her husband, James, did the floors on Saturday. Agnes minded Elizabeth and her younger sister Virginia and "taught us how to be little ladies. She never spanked us; all she'd do would be to look at us straight in the eye and say, 'Little ladies don't do that.'"

In the afternoons, after bathing, taking a nap, and putting on clean clothes, they went calling on Agnes's friends or took a stroll in the Oakwood Cemetery. Sometimes Agnes would take them to the natural science building at the University, or they'd go to Mr. Matthew's confectionery down on Main Street. Mr. Matthews, who owned a home just up the street from the Snyders, was "broad-minded" according to Elizabeth and let Agnes sit with the two girls. When they rode on the streetcar, Elizabeth thought the
driver was "broad-broad-minded" for the time, as he let the two little Snyder girls sit on either side of Agnes on the back seat of the bus.

Mrs. Carter concluded, "I loved Agnes. Agnes was a member of the family. I lived in a bi-racial family." Years later when Agnes was dying of diabetes, Mrs. Snyder insisted on having Agnes remain in the house. Agnes died in their home in 1934, and Hill and Irving, now Hill and Wood, arranged the funeral.

Elizabeth describes her house at 405 Ridge Street as a typical late Victorian with four halls--upstairs and down, front and back; a porch across the front; two sets of stairs; and a kitchen in the back. There was a swing in her front yard, a hammock on the porch, and a barrel stave hammock in the back.

Percy and Frank Nicholer and Lucien Jones were African-Americans who worked at Snyder's Grocery Store and drove the delivery trucks. They would come up to Ridge Street twice a day to make deliveries. Elizabeth remembers waiting for the truck with a friend and then holding on to the sides of the truck and catching a ride. At Christmas time, these men would come out to the house to exchange gifts and have a glass of wine around the tree. When Mr. Snyder died, the Nicholers and Mr. Jones attended his funeral, and when Percy died, the Snyders all went to his funeral.

She remembers liking most things about Ridge Street. The streets were nice and wide, the trees were large and shady, and the houses were big. Ridge Street was a small community; people were interested in each other. "We used to sit out on the front porch; you knew all your neighbors, black and white." In some ways, it was "a golden age."

In the summer, people went picnicking, swimming, and strolling. They'd enjoy ice cream sodas down at Timberlake's Drugstore after the movies or at Pence and Sterling's, one door down from the Jefferson Theater. People felt safe. After supper Elizabeth would think nothing of walking down to the library by herself, even when it was pitch dark. As older children, they would go visiting friends all over Charlottesville after school, even way out to Fry's Spring. On her street, everyone played
croquet on Hugh Morris Hawkins's front lawn. His father and two uncles all had homes on Ridge Street and owned a dry goods store on Main Street. In the winter Elizabeth would go coasting with the grandson of Mr. Brechin who owned Brechin's Bookstore on Second and Main. They'd coast on the hill that goes down to the cemetery.

Elizabeth didn't start school until fourth grade. Her grandmother, Elizabeth Trice, who lived with the Snyder family, had been a teacher and wanted to teach her grandchildren at home. Virginia started attending school at a younger age, because her playmate who lived in the district Methodist parsonage next door had started to attend McGuffey School. Everyone walked to McGuffey School; before that all the white children attended Midway School at the intersection of Ridge Street and Main.

Elizabeth's father and his friend, Mr. Frank Calhoun, bought and repaired cars. Mr. Snyder bought and sold thirteen Model T Fords and made enough money to purchase a 1922 Chevrolet touring car. William was one of the first Ridge Street residents to drive to and from Main Street to go to work.

William Snyder tired of the grocery business, and so he and Mr. Hamm, who had some experience in the furniture business, bought into the Gilmore Furniture Store on Main Street. This became the Gilmore, Hamm, and Snyder Furniture Store. Elizabeth remembers that "my father was a salesman. Don't make no difference what he was selling. He could sell it." Mr. Hamm and Mr. Gilmore were in business together for a number of years. Eventually Mr. Hamm bought Mr. Snyder out. William had a number of other businesses before retiring. Elizabeth said "he never did bother with education. He went through fifth grade."

However, the Snyders did send their two daughters to college. Elizabeth attended
Randolph-Macon Woman's College where she met her future husband, John Wood Carter. John actually had moved to Charlottesville from Page County at the age of three, but his family was Baptist and "we were Methodist and never the twain shall meet." John Carter became an electrician and a mechanic. He sold farm lighting plants (Delco and Coler). Custus Lee Carter, John's father, was the general manager of the C&A Railway (Charlottesville and Albemarle trolley system). Elizabeth's sister, Virginia, married Fred Early who managed Midway Electric on High Street.

William and Mattie Snyder had acquired some land out on Harris Street for the newlyweds, but just when they were about to start building a new house, Pearl Harbor was attacked and all construction stopped to prepare for the war effort. Eventually, in 1941 or 1942, Elizabeth and John took out a mortgage and bought a house after having lived with her parents for the first seven years of their marriage. They raised two sons, John Wood Carter Jr. of Salem, Virginia, and William Custus Carter of Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Seventh grade girls at Midway School. Mid-1920s.

Seventh grade boys at Midway School. Mid-1920s.

Elizabeth’s father and his friend, Mr. Frank Calkins, bought and operated a three-room store on Main Street. He sold hardware and groceries, and made enough money to buy a 1922 Ford Model T. William was the youngest of the four children and attended the same school as Elizabeth.

Mr. Calkins had a daughter, Elizabeth, who was seven years younger than William. He was a schoolteacher and wanted his daughter to attend school. William’s parents, Mr. and Mrs. Calkins, who had some experience in the furniture business, bought into the Gilmore Furniture Store on Main Street. This became the Gilmore, Hamm, and Snyder Furniture Store. William worked in the furniture business for a number of years. Eventually Mr. Hamm bought Mr. Snyder out. William had a number of other businesses before retiring. Elizabeth said “he never did bother with education. He went through fifth grade.”

However, the Snyders did send their two daughters to college. Elizabeth attended
Elizabeth's father and mother, William H. Snyder and Mattie Viola Trice Snyder. The Snyder family moved to 405 Ridge Street in 1915 and moved away in the 1940s.
Frank C. Hartman

Frank Hartman lives in a two-level, frame house on a country road that branches off Route 20 South beyond the Tandem School entrance and at the base of Monticello. He has lived in the same house since 1948, when he settled there with his first wife. Lyman Hill Road is unpaved and the setting is rural.

Mr. Hartman's dog greeted us, with his owner following closely behind him. Mr. Hartman invited us into his small house where he and his second wife live. He provided comfortable seats and we began our conversation.

Mr. Hartman is a small lean man with white hair, clear skin, and well-defined features. He speaks readily and clearly and is in good shape for a man of seventy-eight years. He was born in Wilmington, Delaware, on May 20, 1917. With his family, he left his birthplace and lived in other places including Woodberry, New Jersey, and Flint, Michigan, before coming to Charlottesville.

Mr. Hartman's father was a "traveling" contractor who originally came from Charlottesville. His mother was from Wilmington. While his father was on the road, Mr. Hartman and his mother lived with his mother's parents. Later they moved to Charlottesville. He recalled that his father had built the first dam at the Sugar Hollow Reservoir, Charlottesville's sole water supply at the time. There was no chemical purification system then, and Mr. Hartman's father devised a treatment system whereby the water was sprayed into the air to be aerated. The result was potable drinking water that visiting railroad men said had the "best taste" of any in this area. When the railroad men came here, they "dumped" the water supply they'd taken on elsewhere and filled their tanks with Charlottesville water.
Mr. Hartman’s grandfather, a German immigrant, had built a mill on a street running off of Ridge Street in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The street is still called Hartman’s Mill Road. Mr. Hartman’s grandfather was known as "Peg Leg" Jacob Hartman because he had only one leg. Mr. Hartman’s father was Frank E. Hartman. Hartman’s Mill was finished before 1923-1924 but was no longer operating when Mr. Hartman and his family came here. Mr. Hartman’s family, when first in Charlottesville, lived in the Fry’s Spring neighborhood. They moved to 407 Ridge Street in 1924-1925.

Mr. Hartman’s grandparents also lived on Ridge Street in a house they had built. It has since been torn down. It was located on the land now occupied by Cherry Avenue. Mr. Hartman possesses a single brick from his grandparents’ big brick house as a souvenir of the Hartman home. The grandson has only faint memories of his grandparents. He remembers his grandfather not at all and that his grandmother was sober, unsmiling, and stolid. His grandmother died when Mr. Hartman was young. Among their neighbors on the 600 block were the Michtoms and Bobby Jarman. In those years, Ridge Street was only half paved. He remembers Mr. Pace who started the Standard Produce Company. Jim Garrison ran a store. Beyond the white neighbors were the "coloreds." The one black adult Mr. Hartman knew well was Artie Ward. He had a little horse and buggy and he took care of other people’s dogs. Mr. Hartman remembers seeing him bathe a little white dog. He lived near the end of Ridge Street on the east side.

There were "a lotta kids" on Ridge Street, and they played ball together. They all went to Lane High School together, except for the blacks. But they all, blacks and whites, boys and girls,
played together. "There was no friction with the blacks," said Mr. Hartman. Children visited freely back and forth in each other's homes. The blacks lived "all around us" on the side streets and "out at the end" of Ridge Street. Mr. Hartman said there is more racial discrimination today than there was on Ridge Street in those years. "Everybody accepted what was." We all went swimming together and picked ticks out of each other's heads. " Didn't know what a bathing suit was until I was eleven years old. No problems. It was a very good childhood. We played football with each other and against teams from other sections of the city."

Among Mr. Hartman's friends there was Jury Yates ("J.Y.") Brown, whose father was mayor. J.Y. is still alive, "but I understand he's in very bad shape. Lost his legs." Benton Patterson was another friend and John Harlan, whose father was postmaster. John was with the University of Virginia Hospital. Amelia Gray Brown played with them. Others Mr. Hartman remembers were Frank Thomasson, Albert Yancey Jr., and his sister Julia. Mr. Yancey later owned a motor company.

Picking persimmons and stealing watermelons were pastimes Mr. Hartman and "Buck" Washington pursued together when they weren't swimming. In "my block" of Ridge Street, there was friend Billy Wright who lived in the Methodist home at 401 Ridge Street and Clinton Carroll whose family lived there after the Wrights moved. Mr. Hartman had four brothers and a sister. All five of the boys went into the service and their mother was a Five Gold Star Mother. He remembers neighbor Bill Snyder who had two daughters. One daughter, Virginia, "was one of the group." Across the street were the Detamores who had no children. Mr. Detamore had a little grocery store up at the top of Vinegar Hill. In the house directly across the street from the Hartmans lived Mr. Hartman's friend Andrew Southworth. He was a year older. He had three sisters—May, Louise, and Virginia—and a younger brother. Herbert Perkins was another neighbor Mr. Hartman remembers.
Across the street from Mr. Hartman on the corner with Garrett Street lived Jack Fowler and "Sis." Next door was Edna Bailey. Next door to her was John Stulting, a well-dressed schoolmate who knitted his own sweaters. John's younger brother Robert was a photographer. Mr. Hartman also enjoyed photography and they sometimes got together.

Four and five houses away were two brick homes where Dick Manley—a bootlegger—and Al Wood lived. Next to them, on the corner of Dice Street, there was a little frame house with an outhouse in the back. An elderly man and woman lived in the house and their outhouse was a temptation to Halloweeners. Mr. Hartman remembers dumping over the outhouse one October 31. Mr. Hartman also remembers that the elderly couple owned a Ford car. When they went out in the car, after the old man climbed in, the old woman would crank up the car before she, too, got in.

Playing two games together on Ridge Street remains vivid in Mr. Hartman's memory. These games were "steal the flag," where two teams confronted each other from opposite sides of the creek to obtain possession of a flag, and "kick the can," played in the street where there were few cars. These games were played after dark.

Mr. Hartman's parents were Frank E. and Mabel Cullen Hartman. They were close friends of philanthropist Paul McIntire. The two families used to visit in each other's homes. McIntire once told Mr. Hartman's father, "Before I die, I'm going to give everything I have away." But as Mr. Hartman recalled, McIntire remarried and subsequently changed his plans. His new wife said "no."

![Image of John Henry and his wagon. John lived on Apple Street which was demolished along with many homes when Cherry Avenue extended.](image-url)
Mr. Hartman and his family attended the Presbyterian Church located on the corner of Second and Market streets, on the site behind the Jefferson National Bank. "It's been torn down now. It was a shame to tear it down. But it was a beautiful building and had a magnificent organ. They transferred the organ."

Frank Hartman Sr. built a large tin shed above the dam on a hill to accommodate his men who were working on the Sugar Hollow Dam and other jobs. It had not only sleeping facilities upstairs, but it also had a dining room and kitchen downstairs where a black cook prepared the meals, including fresh fish. They were caught in the river and kept alive in a nearby spring. When the men wanted fresh fish, someone would explode a dynamite cap in the water and it was easy to catch plenty of fish for supper.

After the elder Hartman completed the dam, he became superintendent of buildings and grounds at the University of Virginia. Mr. Hartman praised his father's great proficiency with figures. He remembered he could total a column of figures faster than an adding machine.

Despite his father's close association with the University of Virginia, Mr. Hartman never
attended college. He entered the Charlottesville School for Boys (hours were 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) at age sixteen. After one year, he transferred to Lane High School. In the summer following his first year at the School for Boys, Mr. Hartman and his pal, Bobby Coleman, decided to go to Texas. With fifteen dollars, the boys began their trip by hitchhiking. Mr. Hartman had told his mother he was going to Norfolk. They caught a ride as far as Marshall, North Carolina. From there to Georgia they hopped freight trains. The trip was full of memorable adventures. On one occasion the boys narrowly escaped being crushed to death. They had settled in to sleep in a gondola car full of granite blocks, but later in the evening, on the advice of a friendly hobo, they moved to an empty car. In the morning the two boys discovered the heavy load of stone had shifted during the night and where they had lain was now filled with boulders. If they hadn't moved to an "empty," they would have been crushed.

Boys playing game in field behind houses on east side of Ridge Street, probably, l. to r., the Hugh Hawkins house and the H.M. Gleason house.

After that experience, the boys got as far as North Florida. Then they decided to return home. From Martinsville, Virginia, they were escorted to Charlottesville by the police. En route, Mr.
Hartman found he had nine cents left in his pocket. He managed to buy ice cream for himself and his friend. Finally, when Mr. Hartman arrived home, just in time for dinner, and walked into the dining room where his family was seated, his father exclaimed, "The hobo's home at last!" His mother screamed with joy at seeing her missing child and embraced him.

The travelers had been gone for thirty days.

Mr. Hartman was twenty years old in 1937 when he finished attending high school. He got a job at the Paramount Theater and still lived at home. He took the civil service exam to qualify for employment at the post office but did not get called for a job. In 1941, Mr. Hartman heard from the U.S. Navy after having taken a course in aeronautical mechanics and getting some flying experience in Waynesboro. He began working in Navy ordnance in Dahlgren in 1941. In 1942, he enlisted in the U.S. Army with W. Hovey Dabney. The same year he was married. He remained in the army until his discharge in 1945.

In 1946, Mr. Hartman and his wife Irene moved from his parents' Ridge Street home into an apartment at Preston Court Apartments which his father had built. Mrs. Hartman had been ill with tuberculosis and had stayed in the Blue Ridge Sanitorium for about one year before their move. Mr. Hartman began thinking about getting a house.

Among other activities, Mr. Hartman joined the veterans' group AMVETS and visited Portsmouth where he saw the homes the government had built during the war for the shipyard workers. There he saw a "demountable" house and decided to buy one from the government for 130 dollars. It cost 400 dollars to move the house from Portsmouth to Charlottesville. Mr. Hartman's father helped him build a first level onto which the house would be placed. He continues to live in this home, although it has been enlarged and renovated.

Mr. Hartman's recollections of Charlottesville include the Jefferson School on Fourth Street and
some of Vinegar Hill before it was demolished in the 1960s. "Vinegar Hill wasn't bad at all. There was a drug store right across from Ridge Street. There was a movie house, shops, restaurants including Christian's Greek Restaurant, and a furniture store belonging to Mr. Witkins. Most were owned by whites. There were two black-owned barbershops which served only whites. Dick Calloway, who was kin to Cab Calloway, was one owner. A haircut cost twenty-five cents. Blacks went over to Fourth Street NE to a barber. Also, there was a Chinese laundry." Helen Reeves, a black woman, worked part-time in the laundry and used to bring the Chinese newspaper to Mr. Hartman when she helped his mother. Mr. Hartman wanted to learn Chinese so he could go to China. Garrett and Bibb's Fish Market was on Vinegar Hill too. On Saturdays the country people came to town from surrounding rural areas. Mr. Hartman remembers that in 1948 he was working with UVA Building and Grounds on the reconstruction of Scott Stadium which had collapsed during the UVA-Tulane game. He met a lot of the country people who worked on the stadium.

Mr. Hartman never observed any untoward incidents between blacks and whites except once in 1949-1950, when he saw something on East Main Street near the National Bank building and the old Candy Kitchen. On that occasion, a white boy walked past a black boy and, for no apparent reason, turned around, approached the black boy, and knocked him down to the sidewalk. The black boy did not appear to be injured.

Ridge Street today, says Mr. Hartman, "has really gone down. So many nice homes have been torn down where the firehouse and the Salvation Army are now." When Cherry Avenue was built, many fine homes were destroyed and he didn't know why. Perhaps they wanted to expedite traffic. Businesses were coming in and so many residents moved out. He thinks the decline of businesses was one reason Vinegar Hill was torn down. "Nowadays we're far more
"Ridge Street can't be restored like it was," says Mr. Hartman. "And no one can bring back the way the kids, both boys and girls, played together."

In his final reminiscences, Mr. Hartman recalled that Kane Furniture was located originally at the base of Vinegar Hill and that John Tonsler, a black man for whom the city park is named, was a plasterer for UVA's Buildings and Grounds.


R. Stuart Gleason, son of H. Cooper Gleason. 1933.
Norman Witkins lived at 517 Ridge Street with his parents, Isadore and Esther Witkins, who owned an antique store on Vinegar Hill. 1935-1936.
Jean Hawkins, daughter of B. Lee Hawkins, lived at 506 Ridge Street. Her father was a well known reporter for The Daily Progress and its sports' editor. 1937.
Mason Taylor and his wife. Mason grew up on Oak Street.
l. to r. Opie Thomas and David Hartman. Opie grew up at the south end of Ridge Street close to the end of the paving.
Beverly Ann Hariman was born on September 30, 1925, at Martha Jefferson Hospital, which was then a two-story building. Her family lived at 407 Ridge Street, and that is where she grew up. She lived with her father and mother and five older brothers. Her grandfather on her father’s side had come to the United States from Germany and had started a mill on what is still Hartman’s Mill Road. Beverly Hartman, now Beverly Gibson, never saw the mill in her lifetime, but one of her brothers had a picture of it.

Mrs. Gibson showed us a picture of her house, a Victorian building that is still standing, made of wood and clapboard, now the second house on the right from Main Street but once the eighth and now divided into apartments. She described the central hallway and the front porch. All the rooms had fireplaces. There was a big back yard with a fish pond. There was a large garage, built of wood, which may have once been a stable. Mrs. Gibson’s father turned a section of the garage into a clubhouse for the children. Mrs. Gibson remembers her father shoveling coal for the furnace. The kitchen had a wood stove and the icebox was in the pantry. Mrs. Gibson remembers the signs in the window—25 pounds or 50 pounds—for the iceman.

Mrs. Gibson remembers the neighborhood as being warm and friendly. "We sat on our front porches and talked to the neighbors walking by." Ridge Street was wide and had beautiful trees. There were nice families, with lots of connections in Charlottesville. Mrs. Gibson showed us an old album, full of photographs of the neighbors, their children, and their houses. Across the street lived the Gleasons and the Hawkins. Mr. Hawkins owned a department store. On one side of the Hartmans were the Browns. Mr. Brown had been the mayor. On the other side were the Snyders. Also nearby was the antebellum house of the Yanceys. Other neighbors she mentioned were the Detamores, the Martins, the Carrolls, and the Southworths. Mr. Edwards owned the Piggly Wiggly. Still standing is the former home for the Presiding Elder of the Methodist Church.
On Vinegar Hill were the Penny Candy Store, Christian’s, which was a little grocery store, and Witkin’s second-hand furniture store. The Witkins and the Benders were Jewish. Mrs. Gibson quoted her father as saying, “We have such fine Jewish families.”

Mrs. Gibson has many memories of life on Ridge Street. As a child she was never aware of the Great Depression, as her family had everything they needed. She did mention the "hobos", as the homeless men who traveled by freight train were called. These men came to her house looking for work. Mrs. Hartman and the other women were generous and gave them sandwiches. No one worried about safety.

The children played at each others’ houses and rode their bikes. The Hartman boys had many pets--snakes, goats, and dogs. One boy in the neighborhood had a black widow spider. The Hartmans kept chickens, and Mrs. Gibson remembers their necks being wrung and their being plucked. She recalls playing dolls with her friend Margie Linton. Her brothers made lead soldiers in molds. She went to the McGuffey School, within walking distance, and attended Miss Lovejoy’s Dancing School where she learned tap dancing and ballet. Treats were homemade ice cream and root beer, which her mother made and bottled. In the summer, the iceman gave the children ice chips. Mr. Haigh, the milkman, brought milk right from the farm. The milk was not pasteurized and sometimes tasted of onions. The cream on top was used for coffee and making ice cream. Mr. Haigh drove a truck, and Mrs. Gibson does not remember any horse and wagons.

Mrs. Gibson has no recollection of black families, and mentioned only Clydie Harris, who worked for her family.
However, her brothers played in the fields and might remember black children. On several occasions she mentioned that she had been very sheltered and that her brothers were more adventurous.

Mrs. Gibson said her parents taught her to "respect and have good feelings for black folks." She described her father as very generous—"he always had his hand in his pocket." They did accept segregation.

Mr. Hartman was an engineer at the University of Virginia. He was a good friend of Paul McIntire, whom he helped design the layout of McIntire Park. Mr. McIntire gave the Hartmans books, prints, and beautiful gifts.

Toward the end of the 1930s, Mrs. Gibson entered the first class at the new Lane High School. Her brothers went to Midway High School. She described her high school years as "simple, happy times." The worst thing she and her friends ever did was sneak out at night and have a beer. All her brothers fought in World War II and one, Richard, was killed. Mrs. Gibson went to college, graduating in 1946.

After the war, the Ridge Street neighborhood changed. The Hartmans sold their house, as did many of their friends. The children had grown up and left, and some of the parents died. Others just wanted finer neighborhoods and more elegant houses.

Mable Walls Jones was born on July 29, 1909, in Gordonsville, Louisa County, Virginia. Her father, Oscar Walls, was a railroad worker, and her mother, Dora Hughes Walls, was a dressmaker. There were three boys and two girls in the family, and Mable was the oldest. In 1916 they moved to Charlottesville, where they lived first on Dice Street and then on Gordon Avenue. During this time they moved back and forth to Gordonsville, where they spent the summers. Mr. Walls died when Mable was ten years old, and from then on his widow supported and raised the five children alone.

Mable attended Jefferson School in Charlottesville. She left school in the eighth grade when she was thirteen, because she wanted to work and help her mother. Her first job was washing dishes, and she moved on to taking care of children. At age twenty, she married James Jones, who was a waiter at the Monticello Hotel. She and her husband had two sons, Thomas and James. Her brothers and sisters all married and moved to other places in Virginia.

Mable and James Jones moved to New York City where they were subsequently divorced. Mr. Jones died in the 1960s. Mrs. Jones stayed in New York for fourteen years, where she worked as a children’s nurse in a private home. Although she returned to Charlottesville to live with her mother, for many years she continued to go back to New York when her employer, a writer, needed her help. Sometimes this was for six months or a year at a time. Mrs. Jones’s brother
Dora Hughes Walls, mother of Mable Jones.

told her, "You should own the Pennsylvania Railroad!"

When Mrs. Jones was in Charlottesville, she lived with her mother and her children in a house on Parrott Street. After World War II, her brother, Henry Walls, bought that house for their mother with the money he had saved from his military service. The house was the first the family owned. In 1957, Mrs. Jones's mother sold it and purchased the house at 409 Ridge Street. Mrs. Jones continued to live there with her mother until her mother's death in 1976, at the age of ninety-six.

Mable Jones describes 409 Ridge Street as having fourteen rooms, hardwood floors, and many closets. There were three fireplaces with beautiful mantelpieces in the hall, the parlor, and an upstairs bedroom. Neighbors were Mrs. Ophelia Smith, Mrs. Safronia Jackson, and Mrs. Elizabeth Dawson. Neighborhood shops she remembers in those early days were the Style Shop for ladies' clothes and the M.C. Thomas Furniture Store. Mrs. Jones was an active member of Mount Zion Baptist Church. She belonged to the Industrial Society, which ministered to the sick, the Daughters of Ruth, a group of women who put on musical performances to raise money for the church, and the Missionary Society. She taught Sunday School and sang in the choir. During the Civil Rights Movement she attended meetings and took part in marches.

For thirty-five years during this period Mrs. Jones did domestic work, five days a week, for Mrs. Claude Jessup, who lived in Farmington. The Jessups had one daughter, Claudia Jane, who is now married to John Richards. They have two daughters, Alexandra and India, and live in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Mrs. Jones was very close to Mrs. Jessup and her whole family.
Mrs. Jessup died last year. The previous day would have been her birthday, and Mrs. Jones had gone to put flowers on her grave.

None of Mable Jones's brothers or sisters are still living. Her son James died in 1978, the same year as his grandmother. But her son Thomas now lives with Mrs. Jones, and he joined us part way through the interview. Mr. Jones grew up and went to school in Charlottesville. As an adult, he worked for the University of Virginia, the Cedars Nursing Home, the Greencroft Nursery, the E. C. Ferron Construction Company, and drove a sanitation truck in Washington, D.C. In 1950-1951 he served in the U.S. Army in Korea and was wounded.

Mr. Jones also had an active life as a singer in various quartets. He had started singing at the age of three. While he was in the army, stationed at Camp Pickett, he was a member of The Picketeers. This group sang in New York in a Radio City Music Hall talent contest and won second prize - wrist watches - after a German Opera singer. He also sang with his brother James in The Desirable Four which performed at Madison Hall at the University of Virginia and on radio stations WUVA and WINA. Another quartet, The Southern Harmoneers, included Thomas and James Jones and their uncle Henry Walls.

Monday, August 22, 1994, was a beautiful, windless day on Ridge Street. At about 10:30 Mable Jones left her breakfast warming on the stove and went from the kitchen to her bedroom to read her Bible. She heard a terrible crash. She ran to the hall where she met her niece, Mary Anna Fry. An enormous oak in the back of the house had fallen through the roof, crashing across the kitchen, dining room, and front porch, where Mrs. Jones often sat on nice days. Looking out the windows, she could see nothing but branches and leaves. Doors at the front and the back of the house were blocked, and Mrs. Jones and her niece were trapped. The phone rang. It was the Barrett Day Care Center on the other side of the street calling to find out what was happening. Mrs. Jones told us she responded, "I'm fine. But call somebody!" And in a few moments everyone in Charlottesville was there.

Around the corner on Oak Street men were working on gas lines when the tree fell. They broke through a window and pulled the two women to safety. Mrs. Jones told us she was not
frightened, and was cheerful and interested in what was going on. She realizes she was in shock. The enormity of what had happened did not hit her until later in the day.

Thomas Jones returned home later in the morning, not knowing what had occurred until he saw the house. Mrs. Elizabeth Dawson, close friend and neighbor, was out shopping.

She was informed before she started home, because it was feared she might have a heart attack. No one was allowed to enter the house for some time because of the danger. Most of the Jones’s belongings were destroyed, including many albums of photographs of earlier days among which were pictures taken on Ridge Street.

The tree, which had fallen because it was rotten, had to be removed and the house was demolished. There is now just a small outbuilding, constructed at the same time as the house, standing on the property.

Mable Jones spent two weeks with Mrs. Dawson and two weeks with her daughter-in-law, Helen Miller, before moving into the rented house nearby where she and her son Thomas are now. She misses her old home and her neighbors terribly. She gets out occasionally to go to church, visit her friends, and do the things that have to be done. But, as she told us, she is eighty-five years old, has had a serious illness, and most of the time she just stays put.

Elizabeth F. Dawson

Mrs. Dawson, now in her early eighties, was born and raised in Lynchburg. She met William T. Dawson who was from Staunton and they married in Lynchburg. They came to Charlottesville for a week's visit and never left. The Lewises, with whom they were staying, liked their company, and Mr. Dawson found work here, and they lived with the Lewises, having their own room upstairs for several years. The room was sunny and comfortable, and they had the "run of the house," sharing the kitchen. Mrs. Dawson eventually kept house and cared for Mr. Lewis who was quite old and blind. He was a charter member of Mount Zion Baptist Church, which now is over 125 years old, and a deacon there. The Dawsons took him to church.

The Lewis home, 816 Ridge Street, since torn down, was quite unusual. Mr. Lewis, the eldest child, was born there and told the Dawsons that it was "an ammunition house" during the Civil War. The living room was a square room with stone walls two to three feet thick. The windows had wide stone window seats. There was a wide hall with two rooms on each side of the hall. There was a long walk to the house from the street. At the time it was the third house from the south corner of Hartman's Mill Road. The new houses, 818 and 814, on the east side of Ridge are close together, so 816 must have sat behind those houses. The lots used to be quite deep. Mr. Lewis lived there all his life and was twelve when Union troops passed through the area during the Civil War.

There was a field at the southwest end of Ridge Street, called "the Commons". This was said to have been a battleground. The Dawsons used to pick blackberries in this field. There were no streetlights at the south end of Ridge Street for some time. While the Dawsons lived in the Lewis house, their oldest child was born at home. The second child was born in 1938 in UVA Hospital.

Later the Dawsons rented a house at 828 owned by Mr. Walter Kimbo, a black man who lived in a big house on First Street and owned a lot of rental property. During the period the Dawsons lived there, the house burned and they lost all of their belongings. They weren't insured but the landlord had insurance and the house was fixed up. After about six months of living with friends and neighbors, the Dawsons moved back in. During this same period, Mrs. Dawson had an "incident" which now gives her great pleasure to relate. "Who ever heard of
"a cow goring a pregnant lady?" She was picking greens in the field in back of the neighbor’s house where they were staying when she was knocked down and butted by a cow. She was quite pregnant at the time and pretty badly bruised but lived to tell the tale.

Houses at the south end of Ridge Street had outhouses in those days. All had electricity and running water but not all had indoor plumbing. In 1957 there were still many outhouses. Most of Ridge Street was well paved and lined with lovely shade trees from the statue at Main Street on back towards I-64. The street was well kept and the street sweeper came every week. More recently, Mrs. Dawson had to call the city to remind them of certain issues because they were no longer taking care of Ridge Street.

William Dawson first worked at the Blue Ridge Sanatorium, then at Rouss Physical Laboratories for Dr. Beams. He also worked for Mrs. Gwathmey, who was the Dean of Women. Later he went to work for the railroad.

The Dawsons worked hard. Mrs. Dawson stayed at home with the children until her youngest and fourth child was six or seven. Her first job here was caring for Mrs. Orbin Carter’s children. Even so, the Dawsons managed to send their children to private kindergarten. The Dawsons "married on nothing ... made a home out of nothing ... and had to do without a lot." Mr. Dawson always worked two or three jobs. Mrs. Dawson loved her babies and keeping house, and her lovely home shows this today. She never wanted to leave her children with anyone else. They had an enormous garden, and in the two years her husband was in the service, Mrs. Dawson canned over one thousand jars of homegrown food.

Mr. Dawson got his army notice in December and had to leave on January 1. They had been saving to buy their own home, and this set them back financially. They owned land off of Ridge Street, where they had been raising about two hundred hogs. The hogs had to be sold in a hurry, at the wrong time of the year at a great loss. This was in 1943, and Mr. Dawson was forty years old, with four children including a six-month-old baby. He served in the Pacific, and for two and a half years came home only once--right before he went overseas.

Still they had fun. Mrs. Dawson enjoyed her children. They all loved the movies and went as often as they could to the Jefferson and Lafayette theaters and would load up the whole family and go to the drive-in, which was where the Kroger store is now at Emmet and Hydraulic Road. They always had "some kind of car." Mr. Dawson even had one in high school at Booker T.
in Staunton. He worked
to get it. They would take
picnics many places, even
going up to the Skyline
Drive. They "rode out"
on Sundays, to Staunton
or Esmont or elsewhere
with their picnic baskets.

The black folks went to
club meetings, church on
Sundays, and Sunday
School. They attended
BTU meetings and
enjoyed the company of
friends.

Some other Ridge Street
residents were Mr. George
Lewis and Charles
Hopkins. Mr. Hopkins,
who had driven the dray
team horses for Dr. Alderman, had stables near his big stucco house, which is still standing just
past Lankford Avenue. This was "one of the prettiest houses there." There was Artie Ward
who was living in his mother's house, "in the original house on the original land." He had
kennels and kept horses too. He drove a horse and wagon and was known as a horse trader.
This occupation took him all over, even as far as California. There was Josephine Luck. Mr.
Luck worked for Dr. Halstead Hedges on Park Street. There was the Sellers family at the very
end of Ridge Street, before the extension. This house is still there. Virginia Carter, who just
retired from the public school system, lives with her sister, Pocahontas Sellers, who also was
a teacher but not locally. They lived with their mother, Mary Carter. Booker Reaves also lived
on Ridge Street. Mr. Reaves was the assistant superintendent of schools.

Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Scott—he was the principal of Burley High School—lived in a brick
house on Ridge beyond the new Fifth Street extension. The Cooks, Updikes, and McCauleys,
all whites, lived near him. The north end of Ridge Street was all white until the Dawsons
moved there and white further south to the middle of the block between Lankford and Hartman's
Mill. Waddell Updike's family, a prominent family, lived on the corner of what used to be
called Apple Street. He was called the "Mayor of Ridge Street" because he walked up and down
and greeted and talked to everyone and picked up trash. Robert Harman, who plays piano at
St. Anne's School Chapel and in churches around town, still lives in his old family home
nearby. He is one of the few whites of old still there.

There was one little grocery store at the corner of Hartman's Mill and Ridge Street. It was
there when the Dawsons married. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, white folks, owned this store and sold everything you needed. It was an old-fashioned corner grocery. They were extremely nice to blacks and let them buy "on time." Mr. Lewis had several white women working for him.

Mr. Pace, of Pace’s Taxi, owned a house near Lankford and had a wholesale produce store there, but he let the neighbors buy produce retail and very inexpensively from him. This house was later converted into rental property by Mr. Fleming.

There were no other businesses on Ridge Street until Mr. Fleming put his real estate office there. It has since been rezoned. Mr. Fleming’s mother still lives in their old home place on Lankford Avenue.

Finally, in about 1957, the Dawsons bought the house at 413 Ridge Street. They had always wanted to buy their own home and had saved and saved. Mr. Dawson had inherited a house in Staunton from his aunt, and he sold that and used the money to help with their new home. By this time their oldest daughter was in college.

The Dawsons were the first black family on the block. They bought the house from a Mr. Lynch. Roy Wheeler was the agent, and Mr. Orbin Carter was their attorney. The white families started moving out soon after. One of the female neighbors would not speak to them, but her husband came over to welcome them and said he was glad to have them. Many years later, Mrs. Dawson nursed this same man at UVA Hospital.

Mrs. Dorothy Quarles, next door, sold her home to the Jones and Walls families. The Gleason houses, by then rental houses, were sold. A family named Smith bought one. Mr. Hawkins, the merchant on Main Street, sold his house on the corner.

Number 413 Ridge Street, where Mrs. Dawson now lives, was considered a haunted house. The gentleman who built the house gave it to his daughter when she married. She loved horses and rode up the front walk one day where she fell and broke her neck. The Dawsons have heard some strange noises over the years, but, Mrs. Dawson explained with a smile, the ghost is very
friendly and has done no harm.

The house next door, which had a tree fall on it in the summer of 1994, may have been the oldest on the street. It has a charming brick cottage in back which had lovely hardwood floors, a living room, bedroom, kitchen, and bath. Many of the houses on the street had lovely embossed pavers on the paths to their front doors.

As noted before, all of the Dawson children started out in private kindergarten with black teachers. The oldest Dawson child, a girl, went to Jefferson High and then to the newly constructed Burley High for her senior year. There was at one time a big, three-story, wood elementary school on the site of the Jefferson School parking lot. After her children were mostly grown, at the urging of this daughter who was an registered nurse, Mrs. Dawson studied the theory of nursing at Burley for two years and received her clinical training and practical nursing certificate at UVA Hospital.

Miss Dawson went to Hampton Institute for four years and studied nursing at the Medical College of Virginia. She went to work immediately and worked for Roy Beazley, UVA’s Dean of Nursing at the time. She became the first black assistant supervisor at night in pediatrics at UVA Hospital. She has since married a surgeon from Jamaica. They met when they both worked in Philadelphia. They lived in Jamaica for a while, but the political situation was difficult, so they now live and practice in Baltimore.

The second daughter finished college and later trained to become a missionary in a Mexican orphanage. She loves the children but finds their Mexican Spanish difficult. She has never married.

A third daughter also went to college, married, and has two children.

The first son, who died as a young man, has a daughter who got an undergraduate degree from UVA and is now in graduate school there.

The second son, born in 1955, graduated from Wilberforce and got a business degree from Harvard. He was a stockbroker on Wall Street but now works and teaches elsewhere in New York state. He is married and has a seven-year-old daughter.
Mrs. Dawson says, "We are all a close family. Saturday is 'home day.' We all talk to each other on Saturday. I can't get a minute's rest but in the mornings when they are out on their walks and runs."

The Dawsons went to the UVA clinic for most medical problems. In the early days of their marriage, they saw a black surgeon and doctor, Dr. Edward Stratton, on 6 1/2 Street. He was not allowed to do surgery at UVA Hospital, so he left town to go where he could practice surgery. Then they went to Dr. Garrett, whose home and office were on Main Street in the house next to the bus station where there is a restaurant now. Dr. Jackson, who was also black, was their dentist.

During the integration unrest, a time when the oldest Dawson daughter was in the thick of it, the Dawsons had many young demonstrators who stayed in their home. They were all lovely young people. Mrs. Frances Brand and Mrs. Sarah Boyle, both white civil rights activists, came to visit the Dawson home and became friends of the Dawsons. There is a lovely carved dressing table in the front hall given to them by Mrs. Boyle. "I never had a problem with black and white. If I had it, I didn't know about it."

During the years after the children grew up and were in college, Mrs. Dawson kept young girls in her home who had come from all over the state to do their practical nursing training here. Their own communities--Culpeper, Covington, Newport News, Orange, Albemarle--did not offer the same program. She enjoyed all these girls, never had any problems and told their families she would not "raise them," but she had house rules. She says they fussed over and waited on her husband. She still hears from many of them, and some want their girls to live with her when they are here at the University.

Mrs. Dawson does not take in girls anymore, but she still takes in neighbors in need. When the tree fell on the house next door, she took in the ladies who lived there. She feels her own family was well taken care of when they needed it after the fire years ago, so she does the same for her neighbors.

The Dawsons put faux brick siding on the house years ago for added insulation and low maintenance. She intended to remove it but never got around to it. The old siding was good quality weatherboarding from Richmond. When approached about putting the house on the Historic Register, Mrs. Dawson refused for fear of restrictions.
The Gothic-style house has three floors including a livable basement with a fireplace. This may well have been a kitchen at one time. The Dawsons used it as a large recreation room in one end and another room as a sort of dorm with four single beds and four dressers. On the second floor are two bedrooms and a bath. On the first floor there is a wide hallway on the right and a large sunny, beautifully furnished, formal living room to the left. Beyond the living room is a comfortable dining/family room and beyond that a large kitchen. There is an additional bedroom and bath on the right at the end of the hall.

This home has been lived in, enjoyed, and loved for many years. As Mrs. Dawson said to her interviewers, "It's quite a memory I have of the old days."

The Dawson vegetable garden goes back to Fourth Street where the cottage in the background is situated. They grew many kinds of vegetables including corn, pole beans, salsify and once even peanuts. 1959.

Julian C. Souder

My father’s family moved to this area from Pennsylvania about 1907 or 1908 so my father could go to the University of Virginia. They lived at Colle, when the old house was still standing. My father used to ride into his classes at the University on his horse. He graduated in 1910.

Mother (nee Carroll) originally came from West Virginia. Her family lived on South Street, and her grandfather owned the old Charlottesville Hardware. She was related to the Paynes. Mother taught in public school. I’m not sure when my parents married, but my older brother was born in 1911.

I was born in my parents’ home at 507 Ridge Street on October 29, 1915. Afterwards we moved to 505 Ridge Street. I also have a younger brother who is a retired Episcopal minister in Richmond. My three sons all live here in Charlottesville. My father and mother lived on Ridge Street from 1915 to about 1947. I left in 1945. I had married when I was in the service, and my wife and I moved into a house on Hazel Street. When my mother and father left Ridge Street they moved to the Miramont Apartments on University Circle. The big, three-story house was too hard to care for when there were only two people. I don’t know who bought our house when my parents left.

After graduating from the University, my father went to work for the Michie Company for several years and then for a building, loan, and insurance firm—Hanckel-Citizens Insurance Corporation—which still has its office at Third and East Jefferson Streets. Mr. Fred Watson was my father’s partner. Mr. Watson was in charge of mortgage loans, and for many years the office was in the basement of the People’s Bank on Main Street. We had a company called Charlottesville Perpetual Building and Loan which mostly loaned to black people. Mr. Watson made his own appraisals and loaned up to 60 percent of appraised value, small sums to people who had jobs and were safe risks. They made weekly or monthly repayments. I worked there for twenty-seven years, and I only remember one foreclosure on a bad loan. I followed in my father’s footsteps in the insurance business. He became president of Hanckel’s and, later, so did I.

Life on Ridge Street was great! It was a real nice neighborhood—everybody knew everybody else, just about. I attended grammar school at McGuffey, a few blocks away. In fifth to seventh grade I went to school in a small building at the back of Midway High School. For high school I went to Midway, which was only two blocks from where I lived. I walked home for lunch every day. Sometimes we used to go to plays at Midway. There were lots of boys and girls in our neighborhood, and I liked to play sports.

Mr. Matthews and his family lived next door. He had owned both 505 and 503 Ridge Street. Across the street lived Andrew Brechin. His father owned a bookstore on Main Street. They lived in two houses on Ridge Street. H. M. Gleason lived down the street at 522 Ridge. There were several Gleasons who lived in different houses on Ridge Street. The Hawkins brothers
lived nearby in separate houses. They ran a dry goods store downtown. The Andrews family lived two or three doors away in a real pretty old brick house. The Browns lived beside the Andrews, and the Quarles, who ran the hardware store, lived nearby. In most families the men were merchants, but I’ve heard that Dr. Walter Reed once lived on Ridge Street in the Methodist Parsonage. In 1869, at the age of seventeen, Dr. Reed became the youngest person to graduate from the University of Virginia. Mayor J.Y. Brown lived two houses from us, and the city treasurer also lived in our neighborhood. Frank Hartman built a lot of houses on Ridge Street before he went to work at the University for Building and Grounds. Everybody bought their groceries at Gleason’s down on Main Street. Sometimes my mother would send me to Inge’s Grocery to buy something, but not regularly.

People were warm and friendly. They would sit on their front porches, especially in the warm weather, and gossip. During the Depression, when hobos came up from the trains and asked for food, our neighbors gave it to them. They saved food especially for the hobos.

My mother was a Methodist and father was an Episcopalian. I went to Sunday School at the Methodist Church. Our holiday events and celebrations were centered in our homes and in the church. There was some neighborhood caroling at Christmas time. We’d have a parade on Memorial Day, and I knew "Colonel Crack", the old black man who lived off Ridge Street. He always marched in the parade. The kids on Ridge Street yelled at him, so he would yell back. I’ve heard Harry George had an oil portrait of him.

There were always blacks who lived near us, but not directly on Ridge Street. They lived in places behind the big houses or on the side streets, like Oak Street. They began building homes at the edge of our neighborhood in the 800 block of Ridge Street and then built further out. It became a solid black neighborhood. I don’t remember white families living out there. I can remember when my father whipped me for called a colored person "black". We never knew them well, because we went to different schools and churches, and they didn’t play with us in the neighborhood. They never caused any trouble that I can remember. The women were mostly maids. We had one who came every day at 7:00 a.m. and left at 7:00 p.m. The men mostly worked as laborers. I remember old "Uncle David" who drove a horse and cart in which he carried loads for people. He transported baggage from the train station up to the University for the students. Every Sunday morning he’d drive by our house on his way to church at Mount Zion. When he saw my mother sitting on our front porch, he’d tip his hat and say "Good morning Miss Stella."

I didn’t pay much attention to politics. I was in the insurance business. Anyhow, there was only one party. I only remember there being one candidate running for mayor, so politics wasn’t a big thing. I can’t remember an election in which there was a contest. I think everyone was a Democrat. Government wasn’t much of a problem.

Ridge Street and our neighborhood really began changing after World War II. I had left in 1937 to go into the service, and I returned in 1945. Homeowners got old, and their houses were too big for them. There weren’t many young people and children. Old-timers died or moved into
apartments. For some reason people wanted to get away from the center of town. The city built the firehouse on Ridge Street, and Midway School closed. The University began taking blacks. People had television. It looked like Ridge Street was going commercial. I didn't particularly want to live there.

I like the downtown mall, but I just don't get downtown since I retired, and I really don't know a whole lot about Charlottesville today. We have lovely neighbors here on Edgewood Lane. We occasionally get together. A good, strong community needs children and good schools that are convenient.

The Linton sisters describe life as children on Ridge Street as the idyllic American childhood before and between wars and during the rise of the mercantile middle class. Theirs was a childhood of picking chinquapins and dandelions, of celebrating Memorial Day, of wandering through book and record stores on Main Street, and of a genial extended family with grandparents living close by. Theirs was a communal world where everyone in the neighborhood looked out for the children who had the free run of all yards, fields, and houses, so long as they behaved themselves according to the unspoken code of the era. Parents were always pleasant, smiling and having fun so far as their children were concerned. Neighbors socialized among themselves, playing bridge on Saturdays and Sundays and celebrating holidays together with all their children.

Their mother was Margaret Andrews, and they grew up on Ridge Street just three doors down from where their mother had grown up. "Mother was Mr. and Mrs. Andrews’ only daughter, and they had twins who died ... Our mother was a beautiful lady," and she married Harry Gold Linton. "Our grandfather was Julian Botts Andrews." He had a feed and seed store where the Omni is now. And he had some groceries too. I remember a big pickle barrel. His wife was Edmonia Osceola Bell, a sixth child, and her siblings were studying Indians and they wanted to name this new baby after the Indians. Lucy Bell Linton was named after Edmonia, whom they called Eddie Bell.

"Our grandparents loved their daughter, our mother. See this little necklace with diamonds on it. They gave that to her. And twenty years later we got ours; it has become a tradition.

"Our parents got married a month ahead of time. Imagine, an only child, with her trousseau and everything ready—even her wedding band. They went to Washington and were married at his oldest brother’s house without her parents. They were trying to beat the war, or were sick of the arrangements.
"She was in the first class at St. Anne's in 1910. She was a musician. She did a sixteen part piano piece, which she had to do for graduation. She was a serious pianist.

"Ridge Street and its environment was an encapsulated world. Everything the inhabitants needed was available—a good way to make a living; stores for clothing, food, incidentals, and for pleasure; a school and a university within walking distance; Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopal Churches down the road. There was the stable behind grandfather's house. Tilman's Department Store, Pence and Sterling's complete drugstore across from the National Bank. Upstairs was a great record store. We loved that. [Glassner's Jewelers was there more recently.] At the top of Vinegar Hill there was a German bakery and Witkin's second hand furniture. Groceries were delivered, and the Gleasons had the biggest feed store. There was Brown's Gift Shop. Brown's Nelson Brown was one of the Brown's Mountain Browns. I think they had Brown's Milling Company.

"The children who grew up on Ridge Street went to school together, and many of us have remained friends throughout our lives—Gleasons, Jarmans, Souders. There was a Scottish family named Brechin. The little father lived right on the corner of Ridge and Oak in a red brick house. The son, daughter, and their family lived next door. They had a bookstore where the Central Fidelity is today. The little Scotchman always had candy in his pockets for the young folks."

Households to the Linton children abounded in good will and good deeds. No one was kinder or more admired than Laura Gleason, Martha Gleason's mother. She was a favorite, a woman with a great deal of presence and a good heart. "Martha's mother and my mother were best friends. They talked on the telephone every single day. She was wild about violets. Her house, her yard, were full of violets. She just loved violets. She used a strong violet perfume. Laura would drive down Main Street with the top down on her car. The merchants would come out onto the street after she had passed by and say 'Laura Gleason passed by fifteen minutes ago.' That was the strength of her perfume. She was a beautiful lady. She died in her sixties and our mother died at sixty-five.

"Then there was Aunt Virgie Gleason. She was the sister or the half sister of H.M. Gleason who lived across the street from Laura and Martha. She lived with H.M. and his wife and family. She didn't cook. She didn't sew. She read cards, chain smoked, and worked the crossword puzzles. Virgie had been married about three weeks once, and that was the end of
that. She was interested in politics and went to Washington from time to time.

"Martha and I were best friends. We rolled our little carriages with our baby dolls in them all around the neighborhood. When we were older we went out to one of the many farms the Gleasons owned. Helen Gleason would chaperon our parties out there. And we had lots of them."

Mrs. Brechin, a member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, arranged for all the little children to pick violets on Memorial Day, and they all trooped to the nearby cemetery to decorate the graves of the Civil War soldiers.

"Grandfather raised and trained hackney horses right on Ridge Street. He showed and sold them in New York at Madison Square Garden. Behind his stable was a big field where we picked chinquapins. I remember as a child there were carriages lined up one behind the other. We played in them and roamed all over. I remember picking chinquapins all over those fields. We'd go down to pick the dandelions, and the maid would make dandelion wine."

The inhabitants of Ridge Street in their day were predominantly Scots-Irish and English or German in background, but they were aware of the Greek community. "They lived at first along Athens Alley and Jarman Wood. A Greek family owned the candy kitchen," they recall, "and they lived upstairs. Most of the Greek families lived above their businesses. They came here in the forties. I guess they found out it was God's country."

Mrs. Watson said, "We went to McGuffey and to Lane High. Fry's Spring to swim. Father sent us to dance lessons because father said we were the clumsiest girls. We fell all over ourselves, so off we went on the streetcar. If we couldn't walk where we were going, there was the streetcar. But everything was nearby."

"When we went shopping, our mother spoke to every single person. She either knew them well, or by sight, enough to acknowledge them."

They think of Ridge Street as a cluster of merchants--Gleason's, Jarman's, Souder's Insurance. Three Charlottesville neighborhoods represented three groups of people--Farmington, the University, and the downtown area. "The best streets in Charlottesville were downtown--Ridge Street, Locust, and Park."

Among the Ridge Street characters, they remember Mrs. Fred Quarles as the most interesting. "She was a multi-talented person. We lived next door to the Quarles. She raised four sons, and
the oldest one was determined to go through law school with the highest grades anyone ever made at UVA, yet she was her own woman. She was a musician. While Mr. Quarles worked at the hardware store, she was surely the first woman in town to fix up houses to rent to poor blacks. She conceived of her projects, and drew the plans for homes in the Dice and Oak Street area, hired the carpenters and workers, and oversaw all the work. "She drove in her big Buick to oversee the work." In addition Mrs. Quarles set up an artist studio in her back yard in an old outbuilding. There she painted a giant copy of Raphael's "The Transfiguration". "You can still see it, installed in the Methodist Church. Her model for this enormous painting was one small post card. She let me come in, and I saw it on its rollers. She showed me the paperwork and math for enlarging the tiny postcard." Mrs. lx added, "Mrs. Quarles was a woman of boundless energy.

"Mrs. Quarles went to see those houses at all hours of the day. You could hear Mrs. Quarles all the time. She never held a screen door. And she went at all hours of the day, and she would hop into the car. Then she would come roaring back in her car and bang that screen door when she came home. The oldest son married a beautiful lady, and Mrs. Quarles fixed an apartment in the side yard with its own entrance, and after they left, she rented it to others as a source of income. One of her drives was economic, I imagine."

They were impressed with Mr. George R.B. Michie, president of the bank. They passed him on Jefferson Street nearly every day. "But Albert, the old groom that worked for grandfather, was the greatest gentleman I’ve ever seen in my entire life. He lived on the road that ran behind the wall of the cemetery, off Hartman’s Mill Road." She explained, "When mother went to St. Anne’s, Albert would bring a different horse every day to take mother to school, so that the horses would get exercise. Mr. Michie would raise his cane to
Mama. When Albert and Mama were in a matched pair behind a phaeton, Mr. Michie would take his hat off. Albert and Mama were quite something with their fine horses that belonged to grandfather."

The part of Ridge beyond Hartman’s Mill Road was all black. "And of course the blacks lived at the southwest end of Ridge Street, always had, where the road narrowed and was no longer paved.

"The view beyond Hartman’s Mill Road was beautiful. That was one of the prettiest views there. And there was a stream back there, I remember going back there to play. I remember the Luck sisters from the black community. They were identical twins. And Mr. Bob Harris, the plasterer, has always lived on Hartman’s Mill Road."

Mrs. Ix explained that the Ix family, of German origin, came to Charlottesville in 1928 from Connecticut and New Jersey to expand their silk mill business. "They had made preliminary plans to set up at Clifton Forge, but they decided on Charlottesville." The railroad was an asset for them. Now they have closed the office in New York and Alex Ix is here. They have closed the mill in Ireland, just beyond Shannon. Frank and Allison Ix lived at the corner of Rugby Road when they moved here. There were three plants--Lancaster, Charlottesville, and Lincolnton--and later, one in Lexington, North Carolina.

Mrs. Ix had always known her future husband. The Ixes, Gleasons, Andrews, and all the neighbors partied together. "We always went to the Ix house on the fourth of July. One gentleman who had no children gave the fireworks, and Uncle Steve gave the candy. All the neighbors got together as families for the holidays. "Well when Jerome Ix came home from the service, it was a new situation, and that was it for us."

Mrs. Watson’s father-in-law was head of the Geology Department at the University. "My mother-in-law held court every day at Timberlake’s Drugstore, in full dress, with hat and gloves. Her daughter said that the first thing she put on in the morning was that hat, and it was the last thing she took off. She was a formidable woman, though.

"They demolished our house when they cut Cherry Avenue through, and they took a great swath

1This may be part of Moore’s Creek.
of the yard of grandfather's house. The trees are gone too. They were so big and shady, just beautiful. Then they tore down the most imposing house, the Harlan house for the fire station. They took down important houses for Noland Company and the Lucky Seven, really beautiful homes of old families.

"My parents left the neighborhood about 1944, and moved to Winston Road."

Interviewed by Roulhac Toledano and Mary Gilliam. February 16, 1995.

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2 The house was actually demolished in the Ridge Street/Fifth Street realignment in 1973. Cherry Avenue was widened in the 1950s.
Charlie Gleason was both a resident and a visitor to Ridge Street. The Gleason family lived on Ridge Street, where he was born in 1924. Their home was located where Cherry Avenue is now located. "I can remember playing in the yard. I remember horses in the street. I remember once there was a horse and a wagon coming up the street, and I was sitting on our porch, and our porch had a stucco wall around it, and for some reason I was frightened of this horse and wagon for no real good reason except that it was foreign to me, and so I tried to get into my house, and I couldn't, and my parents were somewhere in the back, and so I crouched down in a corner on the porch."

There were other children his age in the neighborhood including Patsy Edwards, who lived next door, Harry Linton, Ed Michtom, and Ernest Wheeler and Roe Jarman, who was older but was a friend. They flew kites in the big field behind the house. "I was so young that I always had to have someone go with me to put a kite up in the air ... I remember being very impressed by being around the big guys." They also played in the stream below the field.

The Gleasons had a woman who came and washed clothes once a week. She would hang them to dry all over the basement. "One day, my mother was up visiting the Lintons, and my brother and I, and probably Ed Michtom, were down in the basement, and somehow we had gotten a hold of one of these sparklers, and we lit the thing and caught the clothes on fire."

Other families on the street included the Hawkins family with brothers Oscar, Hugh, and Clarence. The Wood family lived next door toward Main Street. Their son Paul was younger than Charlie, but Charlie knew Dick Wood, Paul's brother. Two houses up from the Woods' was Charlie's grandfather's house. At that time, his grandfather was in a wheelchair due to a stroke. The Hartman family lived up the street. They had a large family and they remained close friends all through the children's school years. Beverly Hartman Gibson is still a close friend. The Harlans lived next to where the firehouse is now, and a man named Jack Fowler lived across the street from them. There was one black family who lived nearby. Their son James played with the Gleason children a lot.

Charlie's father was in the farm supply business. "He would trade supplies to a farmer and the farmer would pay him in some other way. One time he was traded about a dozen goats and
these goats came and lived in our back yard." His father also got a pony, which was kept nearby. Charlie would go out and ride the pony and see James. "There was lots of open land there to ride on without having to worry about fences. It's hard now to visualize the scene when you go out and stand at that spot, because Ridge Street is cut off right at Cherry Avenue and the other end comes to a dead end."

Charlie remembers his grandfather's house as "being sort of a grand looking old place." It had a big porch and a large living room and dining room. "In later years, when I was a pediatrician, back in the days when we used to make house calls, my grandfather's house had become divided into apartments, and I got a call one night to go and see a child at that home, and I went. It was actually kind of sad to see it all cut up like that."

His grandfather, Henry Morris Gleason, was cared for by Aunt Effie, who was unmarried. This was expected of the unmarried daughter. There was also a caretaker with him, and other family members were nearby. His grandfather's sisters, Mae and Pru, also took care of him.

Henry Morris Gleason lived in Charlottesville most of his life and ran H.M. Gleason, a farm supply business. He married Lily Phillips, Charlie's grandmother, who was his second wife. Their children were Emmet, Virgie, Pru, Grace, and Hope Woods Gleason, Charlie's father, who was named after a Methodist minister. Lizzie and May, daughters from grandfather Gleason's first marriage, both married Hawkins brothers, Clarence and Hugh respectively, who owned the Hawkins Brothers dry goods business together with their brother O.E. Hawkins. Effie never married. Grace died of tuberculosis. Charlie's father Hope and Uncle Emmet later took over their father's business.

Charlie's mother was a nurse. His parents met while she was training at McKim Hall. She retired from nursing after she had children. The Gleasons had three children—Bootie, Martha, and Charlie. In 1927, the Gleasons moved from Ridge Street to Locust Avenue. A couple of years later Charlie's grandfather died. Emmet Gleason, Charlie's uncle, lived up Ridge Street one block. They had two children, Nancy and David. Charlie would still visit them.

Charlie saw a lot of the children from Ridge Street, because he attended McGuffey School with them. Venable was the other school at the time. He remembers having a crush on his first grade teacher, Mrs. Helen Sadler. Miss Garnett Shufflebarger was one of his favorite teachers, because she was nice and didn't yell at them. "As we went along and got in the higher grades, we probably got to be more difficult to deal with, so the teachers were not as nice because the
pupils weren’t as nice.” Carrie Burnley was the principal. She taught both Charlie’s father and his wife’s father. "Most people walked to school, but my mother learned to drive and she used to take us to school which embarrassed us very, very much because everyone else walked. Then when I got older, we went to school on roller skates. We’d skate to school and then you’d strap the skates together and throw them over your shoulder. It was big stuff to walk into school with your skates over your shoulder." Later on, they would ride bicycles to school. Charlie went to high school at the Midway building, which was the old Lane High School, at the head of Ridge Street. He graduated from the new Lane High School at Preston Avenue and McIntire Road.

Hope Gleason’s business was located on Garrett Street, which was near Ridge Street. Charlie used to play around the store with the children from the Garrett Street neighborhood. He played a lot with the Wells family, who lived on South First Street. Their son was Charlie’s age. They’d play in the old Oakwood Cemetery between First and Ridge Streets. Both of them ended up in the Marine Corps during World War II. "We were both on the same island in the Pacific and it happened that there was a false report out that the war in Europe had ended. So this brought about a huge celebration, and everybody in the whole area, all of the service people on this island, got this word and celebrated with liquor and beer. And, if the Japanese had ever known in advance, they could have wiped us out. I ran into my old playmate, and it was the first time that I realized or had any real feeling about the segregation in the armed forces, because I found out from talking to him that he wasn’t even supposed to be in that part of the island, because he was with a black unit and was on the other side of the island. And I just was flabbergasted because that was really the first awareness that I really had of the fact that we were segregated.” After the war, they both returned to Charlottesville. His children were classmates and close friends of the Gleason children at Lane High School.

There was a man named Slim Pritchett who worked in the store who was good to Charlie. Slim drove the delivery truck for H.M. Gleason, and Charlie fondly remembers riding around with him on the truck. Mr. Wilfred was a Englishman and lived in Ivy. He was the manager of the feed department. He was tough, but everyone liked him a lot. Linwood Tinsley was very close to the Gleasons. He taught Mrs. Gleason how to drive and was Charlie’s grandfather’s chauffeur and companion. "I don’t remember what kind of car it was, but it didn’t have a back seat. It had boxes there and so we sat on a box sometimes when we were riding in it." Charlie’s father would buy farms in the area and make them active farms again. The Gleasons would spend their summers on these farms. "We would come to love this farm very, very much, and then he would sell it … that was the only kind of vacation we ever went on."
One of Charlie's childhood hobbies was raising pigeons. "My brother and I were part of a network of pigeon fanciers." Charles Wolfrey, Thomas Jones, Hovey Dabney, and Archie McCauley would raise and trade pigeons. "We'd race them. We'd take them to different parts of town and turn them loose and they would come back to our place and we would time them... it led to lots of arguments about who got there first... In those days, the professional pigeon racers would bring a carload of pigeons down from New Jersey, and they would stop here at the Southern Station. They would turn them loose early in the morning, and they were racing their pigeons back to New Jersey. So we would take our pigeons down there, and as soon as they turned their pigeons loose, we would turn ours loose. There were always a few pigeons that decided not to go back to New Jersey, and they came home with our pigeons. So, we collected lots of new pigeons that way."

When he was twelve years old, he met his wife, Elizabeth "Betz" Behrendt, at a Halloween party. In 1942 he left for the war. He was anxious to go and volunteered for the draft, much to his mother's dismay. Before he left, he and Betz set their wedding date. He became an aerial gunner in the Marine Corps and, in 1944, went to the Pacific for a year and a half. He married Betz upon his return from the war. He worked at H.M. Gleason for several years, and in 1949, returned to school at the University. He graduated in 1952, by which time he and Betz had five children—Michie, Laurie, Jeffrey, Barrie, and Kelly. After interning at the University of Iowa, he returned to Charlottesville to practice as a pediatrician. He and Betz now live in Charlottesville. Of his wife he says, "well, she has been a good wife."

In early 1943, Fred M. Boger (born December 1942) and his parents moved to 615 Ridge Street where his grandparents lived. He lived there until he was five years old. Later, as a twelve-year-old, Fred delivered newspapers to the residents of Ridge Street.

Fred's grandfather, L.E. Arthur, was an auto body mechanic who liked to paint his old Packard bright colors. He was also a skilled cabinet maker, converting two old chicken coops on the Ridge Street property into a wood working shop. The shop was quite large with a concrete floor and wood siding.

Fred's grandmother, Mrs. Ruth Arthur, was a "very sweet lady." He learned after her death that she was a college graduate, unusual for those times. Fred's grandfather was her second husband; her first husband died. Long was her first married name; Shifflett was her family name.

Mrs. Arthur taught Fred that it doesn't matter what color people are. "We are all the same," she said. Some of Fred's best friends were black. He recalled that black children lived behind his house on Ridge Street. Also, Lottie, a black woman, helped raise him.

"Probably the most memorable thing about Ridge Street was Christmas, and when we would have snow at Christmas."

Fred remembered playing on the front porch with a cap gun his uncle Charles Long had constructed from an erector set. Often, his uncle would make things for him.

Mr. Arthur was "kind of an eccentric" person. He believed that society was polluting and poisoning itself by using preservatives in foods. He believed in organic farming and didn't like spraying crops. "People thought he was kind of a nut," but history seems to have born his
There was a coal chute and garage in the back yard and a big grape arbor under which Fred liked to sit in the summer. A fish pond with huge goldfish was also in the yard. In addition, there were cherry and pear trees on the property from which Mrs. Arthur made pies. (Fred would sometimes get sick from eating so many cherries.) Fred’s grandmother also canned produce from Mr. Arthur’s garden. Fred’s favorite food from this garden was corn.

Fred credits Mrs. Arthur with her ability to listen. He said she was never harsh with him; she would nicely tell him what things he was doing wrong. Mrs. Arthur would also read stories to him in her rocking chair, near the stove. Fred burned his hand on the same stove when he came downstairs early one morning as a child and touched the stove to see if it was hot. He carries the scar to this day.

Fred attended Ridgelawn School on Ridge Street for kindergarten class. One of his teachers was a Mrs. Alderman. Fred remembered frequently being put in the corner or on a stool with a dunce cap, for bad behavior. One of Fred’s most memorable offenses was putting salt, instead of sugar, into a fudge recipe the class was making. The school playground was in the back. For a while, he walked with Mrs. Arthur to school; later, he walked by himself.

On May Day, Fred celebrated with other children by dressing up, dancing around the May pole, and playing games and singing. Toni Rhodes and Peyton Humphrey, two childhood schoolmates and current area residents, took part in these festivities with him.

At Ridgelawn, students would be given a snack during the day. Students had individual desks. Fred recalled that he stuck the long hair of a girl sitting in front of him into the place on his desk where the ink well would have been stored.

615 Ridge Street was rented by Fred’s grandparents. Mrs. Black, who lived two houses north down the street, was the owner.

Fred recalled an adventure as a five-year-old when he went with Mr. Arthur to Spotless Hardware located at the corner of Main and Water Streets, in downtown Charlottesville. Fred
was immediately taken with a small push car that had pedals on it, and he played with it for a long time. All of sudden, he looked around and couldn’t see his grandfather. Fred wandered through the store looking for him and, when he couldn’t find him, started to "cry up a storm." Finally, Mr. Arthur reappeared and took him home. There, waiting for him, was the car he had been playing with at the store.

As a child, Fred used to go down by the Elliot Ice Plant to watch trains go across the intersection. One time, he was "petrified" because he thought the train was going to run over him.

Fred remembered that there were carnival grounds at the end of Ridge Street and that every time the circus came to town, there would be a parade from Water Street and down Ridge Street. It was "quite colorful," as it went by with its brightly painted wagons, elephants, and clowns. Fred was afraid of the lions and cats. "It was a nice parade in the summer." Fred thinks it was the Barnum & Bailey Circus. The entrance to the carnival grounds was near a two-story, stucco house on Ridge Street close to Raymond Road. The house still survives. Fred said that the later owners of this house used to make cookies and sweets.

As a twelve-year-old, Fred lived in the Fry’s Spring neighborhood. He carried newspapers on his bike to residents of Ridge Street. Among the people on Ridge Street Fred recalled were Mr. Ward who used to sell firewood and vegetables along the streets in the area. Among Fred’s customers on Ridge Street were Mrs. Shifflett who kept her house and yard "very nice." There was also the principal of Jefferson School, who was a "very warm and sincere person." Living on Lankford was Mr. Martin, whose son was one of the first to integrate the high school. "They kind of treated him pretty badly," Fred said. "It was kind of sad."

As a child living at 615 Ridge Street, the people who lived north of them were the Hamiltons and Mrs. Black. Further north was the house that Walter Reed once lived in. There was also a little house on the corner with a porch and a turret on it. Across the street, to the east, lived the Samuels, after they moved from the house next to Fred’s family. In a 1950s’ duplex nearby, the Kennedys lived. Also close by was a run-down house with a big lot.

The tree covering along Ridge Street was great. There were many oak trees. Fred enjoyed sitting on the wall in front of his house in the summertime.
Fred's grandfather was the "terror of the neighborhood. If a kid parked his bicycle in the driveway, he [his grandfather] would not stop," but run it over.

There was a winery down at First and Diggs Streets where Fred's mother worked. One day, Fred, who was wearing a new pair of shoes and sitting on a stool next to the production line, jumped into a glue pot and ruined his shoes.

George, a black child, was Fred's good friend. Fred recalled that they once drank apple cider behind some bushes thinking it was booze. Much of the community at the lower part of Ridge Street was black, and some people were afraid to go there. Yet Fred found "people were very friendly and protective of me." Mr. Fleming's store, where groceries were sold, was located in this area.

615 Ridge Street is no longer standing because of the Fifth Street Extended project in the 1960s and early 1970s. It was a big, three-story house with a kitchen, living room, and dining room in the basement. The bedrooms, a bathroom, and lots of storage space were on the next two floors. His grandmother had a grand piano. Fred recalled that he slept with his parents.

Fred's father, Mr. Boger, was born in Mendota, Virginia, and grew up in Belmont and later became a brick mason. He was a Navy gunner in the Pacific during World War II. Mr. Boger was on the boxing team during high school in Charlottesville. In fact, he lettered in the sport.

Fred's parents met in Charlottesville. His mother was only sixteen years old and his father, eighteen, when they married. Fred has one brother who currently lives in Loudon County.

Fred attended the University of Mankato in Minnesota and the University of Maryland. He obtained his Bachelor's Degree in Social Work with minors in psychology and political science. He later earned his Master's in Community Planning in Social Work from the University of Maryland. Fred has lived in Baltimore; Courtland, New York; Annapolis; and Lynchburg. He has worked for over ten years at the Charlottesville Department of Community Development where he is zoning administrator. He currently lives in Wingina, Nelson County.

"My most important memory," Fred concluded, "is the friendly people on Ridge Street."

THE RIDGELAWN SCHOOL

PRESENTS

Its MAY DAY FESTIVAL OF 1949 featuring "THE WEDDING OF THE PAINTED DOLL" under the direction of MRS. JULIA YANCEY ALDERMAN

ASSISTED BY:
Mrs. Henry Jackson ................ MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS & ACCOMPANIST
Mrs. Kathryn Roberts ............... FIRST GRADE TEACHER
Mrs. Robert Shull ................. KINDERGARTEN ASSISTANT
Mrs. John H. Keller and
Mrs. Robert B. Coleman, Jr..... USHERS IN CHARGE
with the following STUDENTS
James Vass, Peyton Humphreys, Sterling Howsey & Tommy Clarke

Herald:
Hereda Brundage and John Shalestock

Kings Guards:
William Payne and Kenneth Agee

Brothers in Waiting and Escorts:
Harriet Buck with Ricky Martinez
Anne Cabbage with Freddy Boger
Dorothy Frazier with Dick Thompson
Sandy Lou Haney with Michael Barret
Barbara Davis with Gary Clark
Harry Martin, Jr.

CROWN BEARER:

***

MR. JOHN H. KELLY WILL CROWN THE QUEEN

***

MAY QUEEN: SUZANNE WHEELER
KING OF MAY: TOBY BROWN

Train Bearers:
Tommy Bickers and Scotty Robinson

PAINTED DOLL BRIDE: SANDRA LEE JACKSON
with father of bride--BILLY MAYO

Train Bearer: Dickie Southworth  Preacher Man: Eddie Mitchell
Best Man: Carver Van Lear  Groom: Lee Lundy

Attending the WEDDING will be, of course, the mother of the BRIDE,
Barbara Lee Brown and Buddy Edwards, Felix De Falco, Harry De Falco,
Aubrey Gibson and Nicky Cochakos.  BRADLEY VANLEAR

Guest Soloist: STACY ANNE JACKSON, Alumna of Ridgelawn, Class of '48.

After America

Tea Will Be Served: Receiving with Mrs. Albert Yancey, Jr. are
Mrs. A. C. Gannaway of Little Rock, Ark.,
Mrs. I. J. Vass of Waynesboro, Mrs. Theresa
Diament of Newark, Ohio and Mrs. H. W.
Weston.

May Day Festival Program, Ridgelawn School. 1949.
In February 1995, Eugene and Lorraine Williams shared memories, feelings, and cups of tea in the dining room of their gracious home on Ridge Street. Their comments ranged from family reminiscences, to early civil rights speakers in Charlottesville, to school integration, to the beginning of the Dogwood Housing Partnership that Mr. Williams started and now manages.

Eugene and Lorraine Williams bought their house in 1957. At the time it was known as the Michtom House, although the Michtoms were no longer living in the house but were renting it. Mr. Williams was twenty-seven years old and was working for Richmond Beneficial Insurance Company. Mrs. Williams was teaching at Burley High School. They had two small children and were looking for a nice house, but not necessarily "a house of this status."

Mr. Williams had been dealing with a realtor, but the properties the realtor had shown him were
not what the Williamses wanted. Mr. Williams said, "At that period there were places that African-Americans could not buy." Many of the properties the realtor showed the Williams were in poor condition.

One day Mr. Williams drove his wife to work at Burley High School, then went on to the realtor’s office to ask if there were any new listings. The realtor said he had the Michtoms’ house on Ridge Street. He had not been to look at it yet, because he had gotten the listing only the night before. Mr. Williams said, "The Michtoms' house? Let’s go see it now!" He thought that he should include his wife when buying a house, but he put some money down right then to hold the house until she got out of school. "The opportunity came for us to buy this house because of white flight," said Mr. Williams.

The Williamses moved in and lived on the second floor for ten years, renting out the first floor.

During the time the Williamses have lived in their Ridge Street home, decisions have been made there which have affected their family, the Ridge Street neighborhood, and the city.

The Williams children went to Jefferson Elementary School. A white girl who lived across the street went to Johnson. "It took our children six years to get into the desegregated schools," Mr. Williams remembers. The NAACP filed a suit asking for integration of the schools. When the court ruled in favor of the NAACP, the school board appealed. When the court ruled in favor of the school board, the NAACP appealed. The legal maneuvers continued for six years, but the Williams daughters eventually did attend Lane High School.

Mr. Williams remembered another lawsuit which concerned the Charlottesville schools. There was talk about building two junior high schools, and it came out in the newspaper that already there were plans for one of the schools, and the city was looking for a site to build the second. "They were planning to build one junior high on the campus of Burley High and we knew what that was saying. Burley was for blacks only, and if they built a junior high school there, that would be for blacks only." Mr. Williams then filed suit against the city. As a result, Walker was built on one side of the city, and Buford on the other side; the Burley High School site was not used for a junior high school.

Throughout the years, Mr. Williams and his brother had acquired a little rental property and had derived a lot of personal satisfaction from renting out the property. When the estate of E. D. McCreary came up for sale in 1980, Mr. Williams persuaded his wife, his brother, and his sister-in-law to go in with him on the purchase of the twenty-two parcels, consisting of sixty-two rental units which made up the estate. Just a few days before closing, they were informed that the pipes had burst in one of the buildings, and there was water and sewage everywhere. However they went through with the purchase, and Dogwood Housing was formed.

During the first winter, the Williamses were awakened many times by phone calls informing them that pipes were bursting or, as in one case, that a furnace was about to explode. In addition to maintenance problems, the Williams had to contend with interest rates soaring to
Looking back over the years of the Dogwood Housing venture, Mr. Williams says, "we bought it, we rehabilitated it, and we are very, very proud of what we have done." Ridge Street would not be the same without the work of Dogwood Housing Limited Partnership.

Mrs. Williams was born Lorraine Payne in Broadax, a small community approximately thirteen miles west of Charlottesville. Both of her parents had grown up in the same part of the county. Her mother received a sixth grade education, and as a teenager went to work for a Danish woman who lived in Afton. She became very skilled in needlework and also became an excellent cook. Her father had a third-grade education and excellent math skills and was known as one of the best finish carpenters in the area. He built a house for his family, his wife, and his eight children in 1935, measuring and cutting all the boards himself.

Lorraine said that she has many happy childhood memories and some which are not so happy. She remembers most fondly the wonderful meals her mother prepared for the family between the hours she spent working for other families. She described mouth-watering pies and home-canned peaches that were not only delicious to taste but beautiful to look at.
Some of the things that Lorraine did not like about her childhood in the country included the fact that her mother had to walk three miles to get the bus that took her to work each day, and the fact that she herself had to walk three miles to school and three miles home again in all kinds of weather. There was no school bus for her, although there was one for white children.

Eugene Williams was born and grew up in a house which his father owned on Dice Street. He said that he has been bothered since childhood by the fact that he lived on an unpaved street which had no indoor plumbing. He feels that the city had no concern for black people in the late 1920s and 1930s and that the city continues to demonstrate a lack of support for the black owners of the beautiful houses on Ridge Street by neglecting to provide an appropriate level of city services.

Eugene hated segregation and even as a child was interested in civil rights. He remembers going to hear civil rights speakers when he was still a boy, perhaps only ten years old. He heard T.J. Sellers speak, a native of Charlottesvile who now lives in New York, and a man named Coles who was from the Shadwell area. He also remembers a Reverend Vernon John from Farmville, whom he describes as a person ahead of his time. Reverend John once tried to organize a bus boycott, but without success.

Eugene's father died when he was ten, and Eugene worked his way through college. He attended a university in Louisiana, went into the armed services, then to embalming school in Chicago. He returned to Louisiana with his young wife for a short time, but the couple soon came back to Charlottesville to be near their parents.

Interviewed by Ashlin Smith and Helena Devereux. February 16, 1995.
Ethel Crowe's grandfather, Isaac Kobre, emigrated from Russia to the United States in the early 1900s by way of Ellis Island. His wife Freda and their daughter Ida joined him here. In Russia, Mr. Kobre had been a shoemaker and friends already here found him the same work in Pulaski, Virginia. Matilda Hannah, known as Tillie, and Abraham were born there. The family moved to Lynchburg where Mr. Kobre moved up the ladder to a job as a clerk in a shoe store. When Tillie was thirteen, they moved again, to Charlottesville, where in 1922 her father opened the Victory Shoe Store. The name was chosen to commemorate the victory of the United States in World War I, and it was in the same location on East Main Street as it is today. Tillie started working in the store after school as a teenager. She later married Bernard Miller who was from Baltimore. He moved to Charlottesville and joined his new wife working in the store. Her sister Ida moved to New York, and her brother Abraham and his wife Faye stayed in Charlottesville but had their own house.

The rest of the family lived at 712 Ridge Street. Ethel Miller (now Crowe) was born February 5, 1938. This was her home until she was nineteen years old. The house is on the corner of Ridge Street and Lankford Avenue. It is made of stucco and Mrs. Crowe describes it as a very pretty house on a beautiful street. She has wonderful memories of the neighbors, who she says were always so nice to all members of her family. Other families rented the upstairs. The first she remembers were the Theodoses when she was five or six. They teased her by saying they had to move out "because she [Ethel] was so bad!" Three other families lived there as time went on. Mrs. Crowe was often home alone because all of her family were working. She especially loved their neighbors Ross and Cynthia Young who treated her as if she were their own child.
Mrs. Crowe remembers playing with her next-door neighbor, Ross Crebbes, who was her friend through high school, and Peggy Wells. Ridge Street did not have much traffic, and it was safe to play on the street. By the time Mrs. Crowe was nine or ten, she could safely walk downtown to the family store by herself. Little side streets went down the hill to Fifth Street through open farmland. The Harman family lived on Lafayette Street, and Robert Harman still lives there. His father had a large garden and provided the Millers with beautiful vegetables. It was the kind of neighborhood where everyone looked out for everyone else.

"Big John" was an elderly man with a wagon and a mule who came through the neighborhood at precisely the same time every morning and afternoon for many years. "You could set your clock by the time he appeared." Mrs. Crowe thinks he was probably collecting trash. "Big John" was very friendly and all the children waved at him.

Mrs. Crowe knew many black families. She was especially fond of Annie Woodfolk and her daughter Betty Ann, who was just her age. The two girls often played at each other’s houses. She remembers Rosa (but not her last name) who did housework for her family and seemed to be there more than her grandparents. Rosa often took Ethel to the movies at the Lafayette Theater where they sat in the balcony.

A popular form of entertainment took place on Sunday evenings when many of the families got together at each other’s houses to play cards. Mrs. Crowe recalls the Hawkins family, Rachel Michtom, and Isadore and Esther Witkin being among those who took part in these gatherings. She always went with her parents, and either played cards herself or with her dolls. She remembers with great pleasure the cakes and cookies and other delicious treats that were always provided.

The end of World War II was celebrated with lots of noise and horns blowing on Ridge Street. One loud firehorn sounded from the fire station, located not where it is now but on the end of the street on the other side of the bridge.

Mrs. Crowe’s grandparents were devout orthodox Jews. Her grandfather attended services held in an apartment over the Young Men’s Shop. Her grandmother was an excellent cook. She baked challah, cookies, cakes, and other traditional foods every Friday for the Sabbath. All the religious holidays were celebrated. Mrs. Miller was more business-oriented than domestic, and
Mrs. Crowe’s parents were less observant than her grandparents.

Mrs. Crowe’s grandmother died when she was eight years old, and her grandfather when she was twelve. After their deaths, Mrs. Miller took over the management of the store and devoted her life to it. She loved her customers and the business, and made a real success of it. She was very generous, often selling shoes to people and letting them charge them. She often gave credit to black customers in the days when many white people would not. A number of people told Ethel Crowe that if it had not been for her mother, their children would have gone without shoes. "She gave folks a sense of pride."

Her daughter describes Tillie Miller as "jolly—she always had a smile on her face." She was five feet tall and weighed 145 pounds. She wore a size four, triple E shoe. Four is a child’s size, and even though she owned a shoe store, this size was just about impossible to get. So she wore a size five with lots of inner soles! Mrs. Crowe says she never saw her mother depressed—that if she was, she did not show it. She was very strong and upbeat. People confided in her. Her husband and Mrs. Crowe’s husband died six years ago, two days apart, both at Martha Jefferson Hospital. Mrs. Crowe says her mother "was devastated, but picked herself up and went back to work."

Tillie Miller died in October 1994. "Her customers loved her and miss her."

The Victory Shoe Store had been a family-run enterprise for three generations since it was founded by Isaac Kobre in 1922. Tillie Miller, her husband Bernard, and her brother Abraham Kobre all worked there, and Ethel Crowe is there now. It is a family store, selling shoes for ladies, men, and children. It was remodeled in 1948 and looks the same today. The store has had its ups and downs through the years. Business was very good during the years of World War II. The store sold silk and nylon stockings which were greatly sought after and very hard to get during the war. Nylon was being used for parachutes. They were expensive for those days—two or three dollars a pair. Mrs. Miller dreaded the development of the pedestrian mall. She feared it would hurt business.

Because the Victory Shoe Store was a privately owned shop, there was no place to return unsold shoes and they were stored away. Thus a huge collection of vintage shoes accumulated, of many styles going back through the history of the store. Examples of outdated fashions were four-buckle galoshes, open-toe and open-heel wedgies, and old ladies’ "comforts". The
latter were black, lace-up shoes with Cuban heels and beautiful detail. They were very popular with "cloggers", who put metal taps on the heels and toes. Waitresses at Fellini's Restaurant loved the wedgies because they were so comfortable. They bought them for five dollars a pair and softened them up with mink oil.

The store donated shoes to Culbreth Theater which auctioned them for Halloween and to the Salvation Army. In 1986 it held an enormous sale to which people came from as far away as Washington, D.C., and Richmond. It was advertised in the Washington Post and the newspapers in Richmond and Charlottesville. A thousand pairs of vintage shoes were displayed outside the store and the sale was a success. But despite the popularity of vintage shoes, there were still many pairs left over.

In 1957 the Millers sold the house at 712 Ridge Street to the Carter family. Ethel Crowe went back six or seven years later and was surprised at the differences. The house seemed much smaller than she remembered. New siding had been installed and bushes had been removed.

Mrs. Crowe had gone to the McGuffey School. She remembers her first grade teacher, Miss Harney—now Mrs. Sadler—who still lives in Charlottesville. She went to Lane High School, graduating in 1956. Here she met her high school sweetheart, Dallas Crowe, whom she married in 1960. After Lane High School she attended Richmond Professional Institute, now Virginia Commonwealth University, for two years while Dallas Crowe was in the service. When they married he was at the University of Virginia working toward a master's degree.

Dallas and Ethel Crowe had two daughters. Rebecca now teaches fifth grade at Walker Middle School in Charlottesville. At present she is on a leave of absence with a new baby. Sandra, an entrepreneur, is in business in Bethesda, Maryland.

Dr. Crowe taught at the Meriwether Lewis School in Albemarle County and then became principal of the Venable Elementary School in Charlottesville. This was during the period of integration in which he was deeply interested and involved. He was granted a leave of absence to return to the University of Virginia to get his Ph.D. which he received in 1971. The title of his doctoral dissertation was *The Desegregation of the Charlottesville, Virginia, Public Schools: A Case Study from 1954 to 1969*. He served as the director of special services in the Charlottesville school system for the remaining eighteen years of his career.

Ethel Crowe's first comments in the interview expressed her deep regret that we had not been
able to talk to her mother who could have given us so many details about life on Ridge Street from the time she moved there as a young woman. Mrs. Crowe no longer lives on Ridge Street, but she has taken over her mother’s place at the Victory Shoe Store, as her mother had done from her father before her.

*Faye Kobre and Ethel Miller Crowe. Faye, who was Miss Tillie’s sister-in-law, has also worked for many years in the shoe store.*

*Interviewed by Ashlin Smith and Diane Berkeley, February 23, 1995.*
Robert M. Harman

Robert M. Harman was born in Charlottesville on January 17, 1923, in an apartment in a building at the center of the block between First and Second Streets West, on East Main Street. The building, which was named after the builder, Matacia, has since been demolished. The building currently housing the Young Men's Shop, on the Downtown Mall, is the only one left in the block from that period. His father was Charles Abram Harman, from western Augusta County, near Mount Solon. He died in 1952. He was a photographer, with a studio on the second floor of the Matacia Building. His mother was Elva Gertrude Lough Harman and died in 1970. Harman himself never married, but lived at home with his parents until their deaths. His only sibling was a brother, William Bryan, who died in 1963.

The family moved several times, in and out of Charlottesville, but eventually settled in 715 Lafayette Street in 1933. Lafayette runs for about one block off the old section of Ridge Street that was cut off by the realignment of Ridge Street and Fifth Street. It was a road on the Quarles property, not a true city street, and has never been paved or maintained to any degree. Harman has lived at 709 Lafayette Street since 1936, except for the years during World War II, when he was away. The house at 709 was one of six, but is now the only one remaining, the others having been torn down in the 1970s when Fifth Street Extended was put through. The house was then and still is owned by the Quarles family estate. Harman went to McGuffey Grammar School, then to the old Lane High School which was in the old Midway School building.

Fifth Street was a narrow, crooked road. In the 1930s and 1940s the area was much more rural than it is now. Cherry Avenue stopped where the Estes Supermarket is today. A large field stood on the west side of Fifth Street Extended near Cherry. Near where the tennis courts now stand—at the corner of Fifth Street Extended and Cherry Avenue, at Tonsler Park—lived a black man called Deaf John; he did odd jobs and drove a wagon pulled by two mules. There were fairgrounds and carnivals out at the end of Ridge Street. Harman didn’t go very often, but the noise would carry in the quiet nights. A human cannonball was shot off at 10:00 p.m. As a child, Harman remembers garden plots being cleared off in the fall, with big bonfires lit to burn the dried debris.

Ridge Street was a prime residential street of mostly single family homes lived in by merchants.
and businessmen, such as the Hawkinses, Gleasons, Snyders, Detamores, Jarmans, Witkins, and Quarlesees. Harman also remembers families named Kobre, Updike, Harlow, Perkins, Young, Wheeler, and Thomas on Ridge Street, and the Fishers, Hucksteps, and Jenningses on Lafayette. Life was lived at a quiet, slower pace. On summer evenings the neighbors used to visit each other's houses. The Bolands and Wards were frequent visitors. The women and children were usually in one group and the men in another. There were fewer cars; more people walked. Most families had electricity and city water. Heat was provided by coal and wood. Some families had refrigerators, but the Elliott Ice Company delivered ice to many homes. Most people shopped downtown. The Monticello Dairy would deliver milk in glass containers directly to homes in the area. Small neighborhood grocery stores flourished in the area until the mid-1950s.

Ridge Street actually goes back to about 1835. Gray's 1877 map of Charlottesville shows it Ridge Road. The area started to change about the time of World War II, but mostly in the 1960s and 1970s. White families started to move out as black families moved in. The Fergusons were the first black family to move to the area. Others followed, often cutting the large, single-family homes into multiple-unit dwellings. Previously, Ridge Street from Main to Lankford (near Lafayette) was a mostly white neighborhood, although some black families lived in small cottages behind the large houses. Mostly black families lived from Lankford on out. Harman is thankful the street is making a comeback. He has joined the new neighborhood association. His family stayed in the neighborhood because it was home, and still is. His house gets drafty and cold sometimes, but it suits him. The house was built in 1925 with materials left over from World War I army camps.

Harman has been a musician most of his life. One of his first music teachers was Miss Eva Cleveland, who taught organ and piano. Harman started studying music formally at age nine years. Later he studied organ at the University of Virginia with James S. Constantine, a member of the UVA faculty. He received a Bachelor of Science in Education there in 1948. He attended the First Methodist Church, although his first job as a church organist was at Holy Comforter Roman Catholic Church. He has been playing piano and organ, either regularly or as a substitute, ever since, even during World War II, when he served as a chaplain's assistant overseas in North Africa and Italy.
There was very little interaction with black children while Harman was growing up. Harman himself was somewhat of a loner—someone who liked to read. The neighborhood was quiet and much safer then. He does remember the steam trains that used to pass under the bridge near Mount Zion Baptist Church. The steam would rise through the wood planks of the bridge, making it look as though the bridge was on fire. He also remembers the city trolley cars, which were replaced by buses in 1935. The trolley car storage shed was located at the Ridge Street entrance of the present Greyhound Terminal.

Melvin Hamilton, born in 1915, the third of nine children, spent much of his youth living with aunts in the city and part of his childhood on a farm in Tennessee, although his family originally came from South Carolina. The Tennessee farm was owned collectively by several families, both black and white, who acted as sharecroppers. Because of this arrangement, Mr. Hamilton grew up understanding that there were no differences between the races and he treated all people with equal respect. As an adult in Charlottesville, his coworkers commented on his using the words "yes" and "no" rather than the colloquial "yessir". Mr. Hamilton attended school through the eighth grade, common for blacks during this period.

When old enough to support himself, Mr. Hamilton traveled from town to town searching for work, often by hitching a ride on a railroad car. He was arrested and jailed several times for trespassing on railroad property in places including Cincinnati, Ohio, and Atlantic City, New Jersey. While in jail in Madison, West Virginia, he earned his keep shoveling snow and cooking for a local family: the jailor released him each morning and he returned voluntarily every evening.

While in New York in 1942, Mr. Hamilton was drafted into the U.S. Army and sent to Fort Jade in New York. From there he traveled to another base, and eventually to Fort Bragg where he was trained to operate a boat for the anti-aircraft division. He earned twenty-one dollars per month. Upon being told of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, Mr. Hamilton responded "Where’s that?". He served in the Pacific on several islands, in Australia, and in New Guinea.
Mr. Hamilton considers himself a lucky man. For example, toward the end of the war, his regiment held a drawing, the winner of which would be granted leave. Of 15,000 entrants, Mr. Hamilton’s name was drawn. Several delays caused his homeward journey to last over two months and just two days before reaching San Francisco, the Japanese surrendered. Mr. Hamilton was discharged to Georgia and returned temporarily to Johnson City, Tennessee, his home town.

Before leaving for the war, in the summer of 1942 while in Philadelphia, Mr. Hamilton met his future wife, Gertrude Maria Michie. Shortly after his return to Johnson City, he and Mrs. Hamilton married in Philadelphia and soon returned to her family home in Virginia to live.

Mrs. Hamilton, born in 1914, was the only child of Reverend and Mrs. James Michie of Louisa County. She grew up on a tobacco farm and walked seven miles to school each day. Although she never finished high school, she was educated by her father. Mr. Hamilton called her the "brains" of their family. Gertrude Hamilton died in 1992 and was interred on her family’s property in Louisa.

In April 1946, the Hamiltons moved from Louisa County to Charlottesville and rented a house on Sixth Street near Jefferson School. All three of their daughters were born while they lived in that house—Melvina Paulette, named after her father, Gloria Diana, and Nina Amelia. All three of his daughters graduated from Lane High School. The eldest was one of the first black students to attend Lane. While most black children completed only through the eighth grade, the Hamiltons insisted their daughters complete high school. He wanted his children to have greater opportunities than he and his wife had.

Dr. Dennis Jackson’s and Mr. Ferguson’s (an undertaker) children were the first to attend the previously all-white Lane High School. Both attended Burley High School, which was all black. Melvina was the next black student to attend Lane. According to Mr. Hamilton, all the whites hated him because of his daughter’s attendance at Lane. Both he and his wife were approached numerous times by white citizens attempting to convince them that Melvina would suffer and her attendance would achieve little. A local banker who had loaned Mrs. Hamilton money was one of those who tried to use his influence to keep Melvina out of Lane. Mrs. Hamilton, an active member of the NAACP, politely but flatly refused to yield. Mr. Hamilton countered the visitors’ arguments with the wisdom that their girls would grow from the experience far more than they would be hurt. He added that he appreciated their visit, "but nothing had better happen to my family."

Melvina Paulette currently lives in Chicago and works for the University of Chicago. Following high school, she enrolled at the University of Tennessee, but received her degree from the University of Michigan. She lived in Washington, D.C., for several years where she owned an ice cream business. The business failed and she returned to Charlottesville for about two years. During her return she worked for the University of Virginia and purchased the house at 705 Ridge Street. The house was converted into apartments and is currently rented. Nina Amelia
received her bachelor’s degree from a division of Rutgers University and got her graduate degree at Antioch. Presently Gloria Diana, a University of Michigan graduate, is a photographer in Santa Barbara.

Mr. Hamilton once worked at Ix’s as a loom cleaner for 75 cents an hour. During his tenure there, an antidiscrimination law passed and the company raised his salary to $1.25 per hour. Mrs. Hamilton also applied for a job there, but they apparently refused to hire black women. She subsequently got a job with UVA where she stayed for thirty-one years. Mr. Hamilton was later laid off and for a short period of time, using the GI bill, became a plumber’s apprentice. Shortly after this he got a night job as a janitor and mail clerk at Vepco and stayed there for thirty-one years. He was one of the few black men employed by Vepco at the time. Because of the low wages, he also worked during the day and on weekends—whenever possible—doing odd jobs as a carpenter, plumber, etc.—whatever was available.

While working at Vepco, an antidiscrimination lawsuit was brought against Vepco’s Bremo Bluff facility. Apparently the company had a history of hiring blacks to do only the most despicable work. As a result, Mr. Hamilton received four or five years back pay.

The Hamiltons purchased the lot on Lankford Avenue in the late 1940s. He felt very fortunate to have been able to buy the property, especially because he was not able to get a loan for it. The land contained a small house on a stone foundation with no basement. A creek running in the back of the lot provided water for the family. A number of African-Americans owned land in this area, and many worked for the railroad. Others worked at a foundry near the site of the new UVA Hospital and others for a brickyard near Tonsler Park.

Eventually he built the current house. He hauled the timber from his wife’s family farm in Louisa. It took him approximately two years to build the house. Originally it contained a coal furnace in the basement—it had to be replaced after it "backfired" and caught the rear part of the house on fire.
Mr. Hamilton was concerned over the construction of Garrett Square because he felt a better alternative would be to create a community where families and individuals could own their homes. Mr. Hamilton displayed a definite pride in his home and neighborhood.

The story of the Reaves family and the Ridge Street neighborhood begins with Lottie and Lewis Reaves who purchased an old white frame house and four acres on Hartman's Mill Road. They had sold their home place in Free Union, Virginia, an area where both Lottie's family, the Adamses, and the Reaves family had lived for a long time. In 1926, after living for six months in Buffalo, New York, they returned to Charlottesville. The Reaveses lived on First Street and then Booker Street until they found the tract of land behind Ridge where they could again have a garden, an orchard, and a few animals. The house was large enough for the family but some remodeling was necessary and a bathroom was added. Today the house is thought to be one hundred years old, but the addition of modern metal siding belies its age.

Lewis Reaves supported his family by working for the city of Charlottesville in maintenance and later at the University of Virginia for forty-five years. Lottie Reaves never worked outside of the home.

Booker Reaves

The story of Ridge Street and the Reaves family continues now through the life of Booker, one of the six Reaves children who grew up at 118 Hartman's Mill Road. He remembers taking care of the pigs, chickens, geese, and guineas. There was also one cow that supplied the family with milk which was kept cool in a concrete milk box at the edge of the spring. At the age of ten years, Booker was hired by Mr. and Mrs. Emmett Gleason to "look after" their young son, David. The Gleasons lived on Ridge Street and had a large grocery store at the corner of Main and Fourth Street, S.E. In the 1930s, when David no longer needed looking after, Booker Reaves continued to work at the Gleason residence, doing some cooking, cleaning, and driving. He says that's where he learned to cook.

Lottie and Lewis Reaves encouraged their children to obtain good educations. They wanted the new generation to be better off than themselves. Booker Reaves walked from Ridge Street to
Fourth Street, N.W. to attend classes at the old Jefferson Elementary School (no longer standing). It had eight spacious rooms and a basement. He later graduated from the eleventh grade at Jefferson High School which had opened on Fourth Street in 1927 and started with the sixth grade.

Winton Coles, a friend from Lankford Avenue, graduated with him. Other neighborhood friends were Alfred Bynum, Annie Bynum's son, from Ridge Street, and Herbert Porter who still lives on Hartman's Mill Road.

Booker Reaves continued his studies at Hampton University and after graduation he began his career as an educator in Fluvanna County at Abrams High School in 1938. The very next year he moved to a teaching position at Jefferson High School in Charlottesville. He remembers teaching classes in history, government, sociology, and math until 1951 and serving as assistant principal for some of those years. By that time the city and Albemarle County had joined together to create a new school for black high school students on Rose Hill Drive. After Burley High opened, Jefferson School became an elementary school, and Booker Reaves became its first and only principal. During this time he also began his graduate studies at Howard University in the summers. Because of the inconvenience of commuting he was later able to start again at the University of Virginia where he finished in 1955. Booker Reaves was the first black graduate of UVA from Charlottesville.

Donna Reaves

While Mr. Reaves was associated with Jefferson High School, another important event occurred. He met and married Donna Wars. She had been one of his students. After marriage in 1940, Mrs. Reaves completed one year of study at Virginia State University and then returned to Charlottesville. Before marriage she had lived with her mother, Pauline Wars, at Carr’s Hill, where her mother cooked for both John Newcomb and Colgate Darden, successive presidents of the University of Virginia. She and her mother occupied a separate house behind the
Donna Reaves was born in Keene, Virginia, and for a short time her mother taught school in Esmont. Later, while her mother worked in New York, Donna lived on Sixth Street with the Barbour family who were very kind to her. The Bell, Coles, and Jackson families also lived in the Starr Hill neighborhood and were good friends.

A Home on Ridge Street

The newlyweds lived with Mr. Reaves's sister, Mrs. John Gaines, on Ninth Street, N.W., for five years. They had their own apartment upstairs containing a living room, bedroom, bath, and kitchen, and their daughter Karen was born while they lived there. In 1946 they were able to buy their own home, 755 Ridge Street. It is located on the west side and two houses down from Lankford. Its exterior is stucco with a pebble dashed finish. The Cook family who built the house were of German descent and much about the house is reminiscent of German home building. The wide overhang of the roof, for example, makes it unnecessary to have gutters or downspouts, and small ditches set in the ground below catch the runoff and direct the water away from the foundation. A long side porch made of low stucco arches overlooks a side yard which is much smaller today because of a duplex on the lot. The land slopes back to another larger yard behind the house. The plantings are generous with many boxwood and cherry, apple, and pear trees. Mrs. Reaves also remembers a beautiful tulip magnolia, sweet shrub, crepe myrtle, and peonies.

The Reaveses were the first black family to live at 755 Ridge Street. The Cooks sold their home to Mr. Meade, a black man who could never live there. He in turn sold it to Mr. Odom, a white man who divided the interior into two separate living units. It was that way when the Reaves bought it and they quickly converted the two-story house back to a single family use. There were four bedrooms and the master bedroom at the back of the house was especially large with several good windows. There were walk-in closets and even a full bath on the first floor. The house and yard were perfect for raising children, and the next two Reaves children, B.T. and Julia, were born when the family lived on Ridge Street.
This end of Ridge Street was integrated with several black families already living on its east side. Miss Jessie Carey lived on the corner of Hartman’s Mill Road and taught for many years at Jefferson School. Booker Reaves was both a former student and a fellow teacher of hers. Next door to Miss Carey lived her sister Mrs. Buford. Further north were the Luck, Currenton, and Nicholas families. Across the street from the Reaveses at 754 Ridge Street there was a white family named McCauley. Mrs. Reaves happily remembers watching the McCauleys’ little son learn to skate in front of her house because there was no sidewalk on the east side of Ridge. Later, when the house was occupied by another white family, she enjoyed watching her daughter, Karen, playing with the little girl who lived across the street. The girls became the best of friends, laughing, talking, and playing dolls—but neither one ever crossed the street.

The Reaveses were the first black family to live on the west side of that block of Ridge Street. Their next door neighbor was Mr. Eston Updike, an owner of the Updike Brickyard in Fifeville. He was an old gentleman and an especially nice neighbor. He kept a very neat garden, lined off with strings. To please Mr. Updike, Booker Reaves decided to keep a large, neat garden too, and they became even better neighbors while the men "talked gardening."

After Mr. and Mrs. Updike died, their home was sold, and Booker Reaves was glad to stop gardening. He let the Kirbys, who lived behind on Linden Lane, use the land for their garden.

The Reaveses lived on Ridge Street until 1970. By that time their children had left and the big house and yard were more and more difficult to care for. Also "there had been a shooting three or four doors up the street" which signaled the beginning of violence in the neighborhood. The Reaveses found a smaller one-story house on Buckingham Road where they live today.

School Integration

Although the initial desegregation of Ridge Street in the 1940s and 1950s was quiet and gradual with a feeling of community and good will, it was not so with the integration of schools in the 1960s. Although the superintendent of schools, George Tramontin, supported and furthered integration, the school board was in favor of massive resistance, and both Lane High School and Venable Elementary School were temporarily closed. The other white schools remained open because black children did not live in those neighborhoods. In the meantime Jefferson Elementary School, where Booker Reaves was principal, had an enrollment of a thousand or more black students. The building had become so crowded that its auditorium had to be partitioned into four classrooms. George Tramontin, previously the supervisor of instruction for the city, did all that he could to provide Jefferson School with supplies and books equal to those in the other elementary schools. He appreciated Booker Reaves’s efforts to improve the school and to know his students and their parents.

When integration began, Jefferson School was closed and the students were placed in the other elementary schools. It was Booker Reaves’s job to place the Jefferson School teachers in other city schools. Many say that Mr. Reaves was the key to a smooth integration because he was known and liked by members of both races. His last years as an educator were spent first at
McGuffey Elementary School and then as an administrative assistant to the Superintendent of Charlottesville schools. He retired in 1979 as Assistant Superintendent.

In the meantime, Donna Reaves was working part time at the Jefferson School while it accommodated middle school students. Walker and Buford Middle Schools were still being built. After Jefferson closed, she was moved to a secretarial position in the guidance office at Lane High School. Mrs. Reaves was the first black business staff person to be employed at Lane. She enjoyed working for Mrs. Lucille Michie, Mrs. Garrett, and Mr. Barnes. Mrs. Michie had originally been opposed to integration but changed her mind after working for George Tramontin. Donna Reaves moved to Charlottesville High School when it replaced Lane High School and remained there until her retirement in 1980.

On September 3, 1994, there was a grand reunion of Jefferson High School alumni. Booker and Donna Reaves were unable to attend, but a plaque was later presented to Mr. Reaves expressing gratitude for his dedication and leadership in the field of education. Indeed this could have been a message from the entire Charlottesville community:

Awarded to
Mr. Booker Reaves
in recognition of his many years
of dedication to the field of education
and leadership as principal
presented by
Jefferson High School Alumni
September 3, 1994

After Joan Woodfolk invited us in and introduced us to her sister Theresa, we commented on the beauty of their home. The house is spacious, with high ceilings, two adjoining parlors downstairs, and five bedrooms. Its main features are a white stucco finish outside made from stones imported from France, a graceful curving stairway off the front parlor, and a round, stained-glass window on the first landing of the stairs. Joan explained it had been built in 1905 by a German family who had moved from Charlottesville to Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. The tenants before the Woodfolks were former Jefferson School Principal Booker T. Reaves and his family.

We also met Joan and Theresa’s mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Woodfolk, and brother. They had lived at 755 Ridge Street since 1970. Joan has lived at 710 Ridge Street since 1980. Their previous home had been at 264 Hartman’s Mill Road, at the corner of Ridge Street. It was a big five-bedroom house.

Theresa said, "We love this street, it’s one of the prettiest in Charlottesville. You feel good about living here. I remember walking home from school. It was so pretty with the flowers blooming in the spring."

She remembered playing marbles with friends in the neighborhood, catching tadpoles in the creek, hunting rabbits, chasing the horses on Mr. Henley’s properties, and playing in the woods. Joan remembered crossing the railroad bridge. She could look down Ridge Street and "it was
"But so many historic homes are gone," added Joan. Nevertheless, many of the old families and friends have stayed in the neighborhood. They include the Swifts, Virginia Carter, Mrs. Dawson, and Pynke Gohaner-Lyle's mother. One owner of several Ridge Street properties, Mrs. Irene Allen, now lives in Washington, D.C., where her daughter lives. There is still a feeling of community and "it feels good living here."

In their high school years, Theresa graduated from Lane High School and Joan attended and graduated from Jackson P. Burley School.

Joan is vice president of the Ridge Street Neighborhood Association. She remembered Mrs. Poindexter who worked with the neighborhood association before she died. She would like to see more African-American-owned stores and businesses in the neighborhood. Also, she would like a community cultural center to preserve the area's history and "people could be recognized and remembered, and especially, for young people." It is needed for visitors too, especially those who come from out of town.

The Woodfolks attend Mount Zion Baptist Church on Ridge Street. "Our great-grandmother's brother, Mr. Truehart, was superintendent of the Sunday school," said Joan. She also offered to loan a book she owns that has the history of Mount Zion.3


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3A copy of this volume is in the Albemarle County Historical Society Library.
Walter Allen Payne was born in 1918 in the Mechums River area of Albemarle County. He lived and worked on his father’s farm until 1934. He fed horses, cut hay, plowed corn, and went with his father to Charlottesville to sell fresh vegetables from a Ford truck when he was eight years old. He went with his father and uncle to Charlottesville to trade horses at the old trading ground off Water Street where the parking garage completed in 1994 is located.

The first Monday of each week was Court Day when the farmers would bring in their horses, cows, and goats for trading. The freight depot was close by and there was a nice water fountain on the trading grounds.

Mr. Payne and his family have written a history of the Payne family which begins with the story of his father’s farm and is entitled *Eight Acres and One Team.*

**Education and Work**

His early education was at the Ivy and Crozet elementary schools and later at the Albemarle Training School. When Mr. Payne moved to Charlottesville he lived with and worked for the John Hopkinson family in Fry’s Spring for one year. He did house cleaning and cooking and was a butler for this English family. In 1935 John Frizzell hired him to serve as butler and chauffeur. He remembers driving Mr. Frizzell’s son, Lockwood, to and from Episcopal High

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*A copy of this volume is available at the Albemarle County Historical Society Library.*
School in Alexandria.

At the age of twenty-four, Mr. Payne was drafted into the army and was trained to be a longshoreman. He received technical and leadership training in New Orleans and was finally stationed in San Francisco. There he had the regular duty of loading and unloading ships, but also earned extra money by moving gold bullion for the mint and by scraping vessels in dry dock. He ended his military service as a technician fifth grade, and at that time he was also taking business courses at the University of California in Berkeley.

After his discharge, Mr. Payne returned to Charlottesville and began working for Paul Victorius, nationally known manufacturer and finisher of strip moldings used for picture frames. He learned gold leafing and hand polishing from Richard Hanson who always demanded perfection in the finished product. He worked for Victorius for thirty years.

After Mr. Victorius's death in 1970, his business was sold to Virginia Metalcrafters in Waynesboro where Mr. Payne worked as a foreman until his retirement. At that time he started his own framing business by using old stock from the Victorius business. His shop was located on Fifth Street where the high rise apartment building for the elderly now stands. The original building had housed a billiard parlor and was owned by Lawrence Tonsler. Mr. Richard Barrick was the lawyer who helped organize Mr. Payne's family business called Superior Molding. After three years it was moved to 705 West Main Street, a building owned by Elmer Estes, and the name changed to Payne's Restorations and Repair Service. In 1980 Mr. Payne reestablished the business at 216 Hartman's Mill Road, his first home in Charlottesville. He remains in business to this day at the same address.

House and Land

The house on Hartman's Mill Road was bought in 1940, soon after Walter Payne married Dorothy Theola Reaves, daughter of Lewis and Lottie Reaves. Before that time, the Paynes lived with her family on the same road, next door to where the Paynes now live.

The four-room house was probably built in the early part of the twentieth century. Mr. Payne did not consider it an old house when he bought it with four acres of land for one thousand dollars from Fred Stargell. Mr. Stargell financed the first three hundred dollars and lawyer Billy Long helped him obtain the balance by a loan from Stonewall Michie who lived in the Batesville area. He was able to pay off that loan during World War II because of the extra money he was making while in the army. When 216 Hartman's Mill Road was bought by the Paynes it had one cold water spigot and no sewer line. There had been a well but it was covered over. Mr. Payne subsequently kept hogs and golden bantams on the place. He remembers how the bantams "liked to fly into the cedar trees and hit the ground fighting." The Payne family never ate the chickens, only their eggs.

Adjoining Mr. Payne's property is the Nimmos' land including the Nimmo family cemetery. When the City of Charlottesville could not buy the Nimmo property for public housing in the
1970s, it then tried to obtain Mr. Payne’s property, but he was offered only $1,800. He refused to sell, and the city brought a condemnation suit. Mr. Payne hired attorneys Samuel Tucker from Richmond and William A. Perkins of Charlottesville and won such a large award that the city dropped its suit, and Mr. Payne saved his land.

Family and Friends

While living on Hartman’s Mill Road, Walter and Theola Payne raised four children. Theola also worked outside of the home, mainly for the Emmet Gleason family on Ridge Street and later at the University of Virginia Hospital, where for ten years she was in charge of special laboratory cleaning and sterilization. Walter Jr., Lottie, and Gloria all graduated from Burley High School, and the youngest daughter, June, graduated from Lane High School during the early years of integration. The Paynes remember gratefully Pam McLean, eldest daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Copley McLean, who became a good friend of June’s and frequently gave her a ride home from school.

All of the Payne children received college educations, the girls at Virginia State University and Walter Jr. at the University of Virginia’s School of Engineering. Three of the children, Walter, Lottie, and June received Ph.D.s. Gloria Payne Womack lives with her parents and works for the city schools.

When Walter Jr. attended the University, the Paynes befriended other black students there and on most Sundays had five or six guests for fried chicken dinner. This was especially appreciated by students who depended on the school’s eating facilities during the weekdays but had few choices on the weekends.

Hartman’s Mill Road

There were fourteen houses on Hartman’s Mill Road when Walter Payne bought his property. He associates three family names with the road--Harmon, Bishop, and Nelson--and it has always been an integrated road with the white families living at the "lower end." Until the early 1940s, Hartman’s Mill Road was a deeply rutted dirt road. The city would scrape it once or twice a year. The next surface treatment consisted of sanding and tarring which became a messy nuisance to most of the residents. Sewer lines were also added after World War II. The road led to Hartman’s Mill. In order to get to the mill one had to ford Moore's Creek. The mill was not working when Mr. Payne moved into the neighborhood, but he remembers its wooden wheel and a good impression of the mill race still being there.

Ridge Street

In order to reach Hartman's Mill Road, one had first to travel along Ridge Street, and Mr. Payne has some memories of people who lived on that street as well as its appearance. He remembers it as "a straight, smooth, and wide street---the most beautiful in Charlottesville. There were many large old trees lining it, but most have been lost or butchered by the power
company. Most of the street had sidewalks."

Horses and wagons comprised some of the traffic on Ridge Street. John Robinson, who rented from the Nimmos, had a team of mules which he used to plow people's gardens. Another resident of Ridge Street, Junius Walton, had a horse and wagon that helped him collect garbage and trash from the university neighborhood. The neighbors used a lot of their garbage to feed hogs. Artie Ward had particularly fine hogs. Mr. Ward also took care of other people's animals and without formal training was able to cure many unhealthy animals.

Ridge Street was segregated in the sense that white families lived on the northern end and black families lived at the southern end. Some of the black families Mr. Payne recalls are James Payne who rented a house three doors down from Lankford Avenue on the east side and who worked as a janitor and as a yard man. Other family names were Currenton, Mitchell, and Carey. The Careys lived at the north corner of Ridge and Hartman's Mill Road where there is a beautiful but broken stone wall. The family lived there for a long time. Robert Holmes, a relative of the Careys, lived on the other corner. The Muses lived on the west side of Ridge Street next to the Lewises' store. Isaac Carey, who was no relation to the other Carey family, also lived on the west side. Others were Annie Lewis, Annie Bynum (east side), Thomas Wrenn (east side), and James Henley who worked at the Ix Mill. Henley had a number of ponies on his place and would give pony and cart rides to the neighborhood children. The Reverend Gordon lived across from Artie Ward. There were Mollie Burton, Junius Walton who hauled trash, Mary Carter who helped run a laundry on 10th Street, and Pocahontas Sellers. Also on the west side were Harry Slaughter, Lora Hicks, and Mr. Wood.

On the north end of Ridge Street where the white families lived, Mr. Payne remembers some names but has little information about the families. He spoke in particular of a Mr. Fowler who ran a dry cleaning business and of Lynn and Frank Hartman who were in charge of Buildings and Grounds at the University. He remembered J.B. Andrews who owned a grocery store and a farm, and Harry Linton who owned an apple orchard in Covesville. The Brown family owned Brown Milling Company and the Updikes owned a brickyard in Fifeville. He also remembered the Gleasons, the Hawkinses, the Michtoms, the Kobres, and the Wheelers. Perhaps the most impressive memory was of Roosevelt Brown, a well known black professional football player who bought his family the first "white" house on Ridge Street.

Walter Payne would like to see Ridge Street look again the way it used to and doesn't want to see "the wrong kind of houses on it."

Mrs. Gohaner was born in Albemarle County on November 4, 1921, on a farm that is adjacent to Joe Smith’s farm. Her family lived there for nearly a century. Her father ran a truck farm and would sell vegetables at the farmer’s market in Charlottesville. He was a conductor for fifty years on the C&O Railroad. Her mother, Lillian Swift, had sixteen living children, including two sets of twins. They lived in a big white house with fourteen rooms on a hill near Route 250 East. The C&O bought the property and the house was demolished for tracks.

The family moved to Charlottesville and bought a house at 761 Ridge Street. They lived there many years, at least fifteen. Afterwards, Mrs. Gohaner married and she and her husband built the house at 803 Ridge Street where she lives to this day. Her husband was in the U.S. Navy and made munitions at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. She lived in Washington for three years, and when he resigned from the Navy, they returned to Charlottesville. They lived with her parents for four years and then built 803 Ridge Street. They worked at other jobs during the day and at night built their house. He worked in construction and at Allied Supply and for himself. He built houses. Mrs. Gohaner stayed home when she had her children and raised them. They went to Jefferson School on Fourth Street where Carver Recreation Center is now located. They then went on to Burley High School. Mrs. Gohaner took in laundry to earn money. She had an old washing machine and would scrub the clothes by hand on a board.

Ridge Street was one of the best streets in Charlottesville, but over the past few years the city put in project houses and now the Gohaners feel it is one of the worst streets in the city. Everything changed with the 1970s when they put in a lot of low-income housing. The street protested at first, but it did not do any good. Before this, everyone owned their own homes, and now the street has many rental units. They both hope that it can change back to a street of home ownership.

They shopped down on Vinegar Hill and there were trolleys, horse and buggies, and she remembers a blacksmith shop and a fish market. They shopped at Inge’s market.

Mrs. Gohaner remembered when they lived near Shadwell, walking into Charlottesville for school—a trip that took one and a half to two hours a day each way. She did this until the fourth
grade. She also went to Jefferson School and from there to the Albemarle Training School in Union Ridge. The school had one large building with three grades in one room. Her teachers were Ethel Nicholaus, Mrs. Cooper, and Chelsie Clark. They had the usual courses in French, home economics, and music.

The church was and is still the Union Ridge Baptist Church. She still goes every Sunday and sings in the church choir. She started singing at the age of five. She would travel from church to church and was very well known. She received a music scholarship but turned it down in favor of marriage and children. Her parents did not want her to go away. She still sings in the church choir and used to be the lead choir singer. They had several pastors and several choirs, and she was a member of the Pastor’s Aid Club and Knights of Damascus, but she now has slowed down. She loved working in the church and singing. Her entire family was musical and were in the Union Ridge Jubilee Choir. When she was first married they lived and worked in Hartford, Connecticut, for four years. A friend helped them get work at an inn. Mrs. Valentine, the supervisor, was a very precious woman. They took the train to get there. It was a beautiful place in Lakeville, Connecticut. It was open all year round. Then Mrs. Gohaner’s father became ill and wrote to ask her to come home. She stayed there to take care of her parents until they passed away, her father at the age of eighty-eight and her mother at eighty-seven. She went to work for private families doing day work at Fry’s Spring, Bellair, and the University of Virginia for four or five days a week.

Mrs. Gohaner’s father found his house on Ridge Street through Roy Wheeler and they stayed there until he died.

Her parents’ families were from Albemarle County but her husband was from Oak Union, which is our Barracks Road area. Their house was near the Oak Union Baptist Church.

Pynke Gohaner-Lyles remembers that her grandparents had this large house in the county and then moved to a smaller house on Ridge Street. Her grandmother was an extraordinary cook and baker, lots of from-scratch food, great big meals every day, and bigger ones on the weekends. All the children and the grandchildren stayed there and it was a very loving place. It was a very good life and especially for an African-American family. Both in the country and in the city they were an extremely close and loving family.

The area in which they lived contained mostly African-American families, although white families such as the Updikes were always there and stayed in the neighborhood. Mrs. Updike was a nurse at Martha Jefferson and he was a lawyer. The Woodfolks used to have a large white house here that was torn down to build the rental housing. Hartman’s Mill Road was able to fight off low-income housing, but Ridge Street was not. The change was very traumatic for the neighborhood.

Safety is now a factor to worry about, and she does not know many people here anymore except for the Rosses, the Smiths, and her younger brother who lives down the road. Mrs. Pleasants still lives here but now has twenty-four-hour care. They used to leave their doors unlocked.
when they went shopping. Years ago the whole street raised the children. Children were corrected by any adult and behaved. Children would sing on the street corner. It was a family and it was cohesive and together. Many people go to suburbia if they can afford it, away from the urban setting. We live in fear today. Her husband died in 1986 and now she lives alone. Most people on the street know her and respect her.

Only one sister and two brothers are alive and Mrs. Gohaner was in the middle.

She noted that back then Ridge Street was paved where she lived, but was gravel further out. Now it is all paved. Pynke Gohaner-Lyles went to segregated schools and to Burley High School, which was an African-American school. A few Caucasian teachers came to teach there during sophomore or junior year. It was interesting that she could have gone to Lane High School which was for whites but she and her family decided that she would stay at Burley. She felt that African-American teachers have a greater impact on the African-American child. Many African-American families in the neighborhood—the Williamses, the Fergusons—did choose to send children to Lane High School. She had the option and decided to have African-American teachers. Alicia Lugo taught her and energized her. Education, housing, and jobs are all very important. Life used to be better here. Her family used to have a very good life. There were African-American role models in the community and in the merchants of Vinegar Hill that are not there today. The African-American lifestyle was much better.

There was some protest over the destruction of Vinegar Hill, but the community was not well enough organized to stop it. We learned the hard way that "urban renewal" does not necessarily work. A big white house on the corner—over one hundred years old—was torn down for low-income housing.

Mrs. Gohaner now works four days a week and is the assistant activity director at the Thomas
Jefferson Adult Health Care Facility—the day care center for adults with Alzheimer’s disease. She is a certified nurse’s assistant. After her husband died she stayed home for two months and then said to Pynke that she had to do something and "please get me a job. I am one of the best workers they have and have been there eight years. I love it and they love me. It is like a family and they look forward to seeing me. I have my clients and it gives me a chance to help people in need who need help."

Interviewed by Lois McKenzie and Mary Gilliam. February 17, 1995.
"I have had myself a ball growing up here on Ridge Street," announced Virginia Ross, a seventy-two-year-old, life-long resident of the Ridge Street area. She added, "but I never did like those devil horses." She was referring to horses owned by a white farmer who grazed cattle and horses in the fields toward the southwest end of Ridge Street.

Mrs. Ross was speaking in the living room of the frame, galleried house she and her husband have lived in since her husband, a native of Amherst County, built it with contractor Woodsy White on the lot her parents gave the couple "maybe forty years ago." Dozing in the chair beside her was her ninety-nine-year-old mother Clara Thompkins. "Why, I take care of my mother now, just like she took care of me when I was little. It’s only right. And I took good care of my auntie too, a spinster lady. That’s why I had to sell the home place (still standing on Raymond near the corner of Ridge) where I was born and my mama and maybe even my grandmama, Molly Burton. Why, I remember my great grandpapa, John Brown, there in that house. We’ve always been from Charlottesville, six generations and more if you include my little twin grandchildren. My grandmama, Molly Burton, she was a lovely person. We were a lot of twins through the years. My daddy was a twin, and I had a set of twins, and one of those boys has a set of boy twins, my grandsons.

"Why, I was just glad to have the old homeplace to sell, so my aunt could go to a good nursing home and I would have enough here to care for my mama, just in case she outlasts me. And lately I’ve had a few things wrong.

"All of us, my grandmama and me, we grew up here on Ridge Street. That’s all we remember, and we’ve had a good life. Why, my mama just about raised the Thach boys." She walked from Ridge Street all the way to the end of Rugby Road, near Preston where the Thachs lived.
according to Martha Gleason. She did that for decades and decades. "The Thachs were always so good to my mama. They even just last week brought her a birthday present.

"We've always had everything we need right here. My daddy walked me to school, the Jefferson School." She did not think it was unusual that her father was gone for many years to work in the mines in Pennsylvania to provide for the family. They were able to borrow money to build their house. "We could get everything we didn't grow in the garden or can from the Gleasons, but now I just walk to the IGA. I never did learn to drive. Why, I am just too dumb to drive, but, then, I never did need to drive.

"All of the old folks who've always lived on Ridge Street, we go to the Ebenezer Baptist Church. I've been an usher for fifty-three years there, and I've been in my certain seat going on sixty-three years. Everybody gets around there and moves when they see me coming. Eugene Williams's mother, Seppy, she came along about the same time I did, but she was some older."

"Then there's Pokey, that's Pocahontas Sellers. The Woodfolks, Lucille, about seventy-two, and Annie, around eighty, they live down in the bottom. Mary Carter and Mary's daughter, Virginia Carter, live at 884 Ridge Street. The Swifts are still there; Cordelia was a Slaughter, and her daughter Camelia Slaughter Swift. Mr. Ward and Mr. Slaughter each had a horse and buggy. Mr. Ward, he was the biggest mess with his horse and buggy. He was a big mess."

"Now Ferguson's Funeral Home came here up the street a while later, but we never dealt with them. We used Bell's Funeral Home. He's a relative. Raymond's mother was a relative."

Mrs. Ross is pleased that her husband had a fine job with Mr. Buddy Thach at the moving company, so that she could do housework for different people when she had to, but there was plenty of time to be home with the three boys. "I never had trouble with my boys. They are fine sons, and even today they just love me to death. You just missed one of them; they've been
over here today worrying about me, like always."

Mrs. Ross had put away her basket of string beans on top of the wood stove to talk to us, and she said that she dreaded the coming month when she would spend the whole time canning. "We have real good peaches this year. And I've gotten to where I just freeze so many of the things I used to can. They'll last a year, just washed and put in bags to freeze. I don't even worry about blanching anything. When I think of all those years I canned everything."

When Mr. Ross joined the navy and went off to Bainbridge, Maryland, in 1944, "I stayed right here. I never have left Charlottesville. Except I did go over to Amherst County to the farm where my husband grew up. It was a nice farm, and they were nice folks, but I like it right here. No, I've never taken a vacation or been anywhere. I didn't need to. It never bothered me."

She took us out to the large vegetable garden beside the house, showed us the peach and apple trees and she pointed out the house around the corner where she and her mother were born. She pointed out the lots where all the old black families had lived for generations even until the last ten years when so many were torn down "to make way for these tacky little houses. I don't even know the folks who live in them."
Twins Jerry and John Ross, at age four, sons of Virginia and John Ross.

As for life on Ridge, "We all did pretty good considering... One thing about me, I've always got along with people... If you mind your own business and leave the other people's business alone, you do all right for yourself, and you get along with everybody."

That sums up life in the Ross family. Mrs. Ross was frank and outspoken, yet she insisted more than once that she was satisfied with the quality of her life in Charlottesville. She was pleased to be a true daughter of Charlottesville, born of people who were born there.

Pocahontas Sellers, Mary Sellers Carter, and Virginia Carter

The Sellers family home is a carefully tended historic house at 884 Ridge Street. On the day that we visited, the porch was lined with chairs arranged to take in the expansive eastward view and the iron railings along the steps were freshly painted. It is home to two sisters, Pocahontas Sellers and Mary Carter, and to Mary’s daughter, Virginia Carter. Both sisters were born in the front parlor and Mary, the eldest at eighty-five, said that the house was old when she was a child.

Pocahontas and Mary were two of six children born to Anna and Joseph Sellers. Their mother was born on Lankford Avenue, and their father came from Blenheim. Joseph Sellers worked many years for Judge Lyons who owned a farm on Park Street. Joseph walked to work; on Saturdays, however, Mr. Sellers would borrow Mrs. Lyons’ horse and surrey to go get groceries. He would park the horse and buggy wagon down where the Lewis and Clark Building now stands. There was Robey’s Groceries opposite the old Leggett Building and the first Piggly Wiggly where the Young Men’s Shop now stands. The sisters felt that Mr. and Mrs. Lyons had been good to Joseph Sellers. When he started to buy this house on Ridge Street, they purchased it for the Sellers family.

All three women attended Jefferson School. When Mary was coming along, Jefferson only offered an education up through the eighth grade. Mary moved to Richmond one year to attend ninth grade. She then was unable to continue on in school. When Pocahontas completed eighth grade a few years later, she traveled to Virginia State College for her ninth grade year. By that time Jefferson had been extended through twelfth grade and Pocahontas became a member of the first graduating class from Jefferson High School in 1929 or 1930. Unlike most of her classmates, Pocahontas had the good fortune to attend a four-year black college, Virginia State College near Petersburg. After graduating with a teaching degree, she returned to the area to teach at Chestnut Grove in Esmont. Later her principal, Mr. Bennett, took a position in Covington and asked Miss Sellers to move there. In Covington, the school administration
selected Miss Sellers to transfer from a black school to a white school as a first step in integrating the teachers of Covington. Pocahontas said, "They wanted to do it and they thought I could do it." Traveling in those times was usually by train. "In the early years there were no black hotels so you had to go to people's homes." Pocahontas lived with a dentist's family when she lived in Covington.

Mary Carter remained in Charlottesville where she married Joseph Carter; Mr. Carter worked for the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad as a mail handler. For many years Mary was the assistant organist at Mount Zion Baptist Church. She learned to play as a child when a teacher came to their house to give piano lessons.

Virginia Carter, they all agreed, had more advantages. She graduated in 1944 and went on to Saint Augustus College in Raleigh, North Carolina. Virginia worked in Culpeper for a few years and then was drawn back to Charlottesville where she worked as a secretary in the schools. Many of those thirty-four years were spent at her alma mater, Jefferson School.

The Sellers house, 884 Ridge Street, and the house across the street were the last houses on Ridge Street. Beyond these houses lay big fields with horses and cows. Occasionally they held carnivals in those fields. The fields were owned by B.E. Wheeler who lived where Ferguson’s Funeral Home is located. In those days they had no electricity or running water. They used to get water from the well across the street. There were several nearby wells. Sometimes they would go down to a spring on Fifth Street (near Jackson-Via School). The Sellerses never had a garden but the old bachelor across the street, Mr. Fleming, had a big garden.

As children, the Sellerses do not remember being concerned about the disadvantages of segregation. Looking back on their lives, though, disparities were obvious. Virginia Carter recollects, "You talk about advantages... There was no such thing as a day off from school because of snow. No school buses. You walked. The streets weren’t paved up to Lankford Avenue. The pavement started going that way, not this way," pointing to their end of Ridge Street. "We had good shoes to, let’s say, go to church. We had to put on old shoes until we got to Lankford Avenue and then we’d take them off and put them in bags and put our good shoes back on. They’d mostly walk everywhere. If you went to buy groceries, you had to walk your package." Virginia remembers having to pass by Midway High School, the all-white high school, to get to Jefferson.
In those days black families were limited to the houses at the very end of Ridge Street. Virginia points out that "You must remember now that three houses on the other side of Hartman's Mill Road and from Hartman's Mill Road back this way were black. The others were white." Also, "Blacks lived on the little corner down here. It's called Raymond Road, but they used to call it Woodfolk's Lane."

The Sellers family has a lot of good memories of life on Ridge Street in the old days. "Everybody knew everyone. No one locked doors." There were things to do together—church activities, picnics, and get-togethers. They would take trips to church conventions in Richmond, Petersburg, and Lynchburg. The sisters remember the iceman used to come out here in his horse and buggy. You would have to chop off a block of ice and carry it to your icebox. The milkman came by their house when Virginia was a baby at around 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. They all agreed that they had come a long way. Upon reflecting on their many memories, Mary Carter mused, "I'm telling you, we could write a book."

Lucille Woodfolk Jones grew up at 922 Raymond Road, which is located just off Ridge Street. Her father designed and built the house after their first house, which sat on the adjacent property, burnt down. At that time, the street was called Woodfolk Lane, until the city took over the road and renamed it after Mr. Raymond, who owned land nearby. Later, the city named a nearby street Woodfolk Drive after the family. The dedication ceremony honored Mary Truehart Woodfolk in particular. Her father, Ollie Thomas Woodfolk, was from Greene County and her mother, Mary Madlyn Truehart, was from Albemarle County. She was the daughter of Sallie Kimbo and John Truehart. After they were married, the Woodfolks moved to Charlottesville, where they raised nine children. Lucille was one of the youngest children. As a child, Lucille played with her brother Ollie and her nephew James. Grandmother Sallie Truehart lived with the Woodfolks and helped to care for the children. Ollie Woodfolk delivered prescriptions for Timberlake’s Drugstore and also hauled University of Virginia students’ trunks from the train station to the dorms in his transfer truck. "Everybody knew him [along Ridge Street]," remembered Lucille fondly. "They called him Ollie T."

Ollie bought the property many years before he lived on it. The entire Truehart family built
houses along Woodfolk Lane. The first house on the left was where Tommy lived. Next came Dan’s house, then the Woodfolk home, then Jack’s house and finally William’s house.

"My parents were loving parents ... I remember how loving and sweet they were." The Woodfolks had a garden on the property and owned a horse to plow the garden. Lucille’s chores included dishwashing and cleaning. Her brother brought in wood for the stove. James helped in the garden and the older boys cared for the horses. Annie helped both her mother and father.

"Christmas was wonderful. Everyone always had loads of gifts and there was plenty of food ... We cut our own tree from close by. It was a cedar; sometimes we used a pine ... We made the ornaments with popcorn and berries. We made little ornaments out of paper and we always had Christmas streamers coming from one end of the room to the other. We had turkey and ham because my father used to raise pigs here. He cured his own hams in a shed in the back." Lucille remembered her mother was a great cook. She made hot yeast breads and spoonbread. She used to cook for the Evergreen Tea Room, which was run by Mary Hosmer on Evergreen Avenue, off of Park Street. "I remember carrying Sunday dinner to ex-Governor Battle’s parents and I used to wash dishes at the tea room. Mrs. Battle gave me a nice little apron that she had made as a Christmas gift."

At Easter, Mary Truehart Woodfolk would make her daughters’ Easter bonnets. "She would
decorate them with streamers and flowers. We always went to Sunday School every Sunday at Mount Zion." Her Sunday School teacher was Mrs. Virginia Kelly Brown who is still living. Mary Truehart Woodfolk sang in the choir and Ollie Woodfolk was a deacon. All of the children also sang in the choir. "And," remembered Lucille, "we organized a quartet: The Woodfolk Family Singers. When the Paramount Theater first opened up, we sang on the stage. It was my three sisters, Evelyn, Carrie and Marion and myself. I sang alto. "Oh Danny Boy" we sang that and we clapped along."

As a child, Lucille looked forward to parades and to the circus which came to Belmont.

Lucille attended Jefferson School, both elementary and high. She would walk along Ridge Street to get to school and to church. Or sometimes, her father would drive the children in his Model T Ford. "Ridge Street had lots of big, beautiful oak trees and lovely homes," remembered Lucille. "Mr. Gleason and Mr. Brown and the Yanceys all lived on Ridge Street. The Yanceys' daughter had a little kindergarten between Oak and Dice on Ridge."

After finishing school, she went to work at a summer resort. She lived in New York for one year but didn't like it. Lucille met her husband through a friend. He was a private first class in the Army. They were married at her uncle's house on Oak Street and had one child, who now lives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Before moving back to Charlottesville, Lucille and her husband lived in Elkton, Maryland. When they came back to Charlottesville, they lived on Lankford Avenue. Lucille has been working at The Cedars Nursing Home as a nurse's aid for twenty-nine years. She lives with her sister, Annie Actie, in the house their father built.

*Interviewed by Ashlin Smith and Kara Cox. May 19, 1995.*
### CEREMONIES

**MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES** ............ MS. MADELYN MANLEY

**PRAYER** ........................... REV. JAMES E. SMITH  
INTERIM PASTOR OF OAK RIDGE  
BAPTIST CHURCH

**HISTORY OF THE FAMILY** ........... MRS. MARION CLARK

**TRIBUTE TO** ................. MRS. MARY T. WOODFOLK  
MRS. HATTIE BURNS

**TRIBUTE TO** .................. MR. OLIVE T. WOODFOLK  
MR. WALTER PAYNE, SR.

**REMARKS** ...................... REV. E. G. HALL  
PRESIDENT OF PIEDMONT  
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

**DEDICATION OF STREET** ........ MRS. ELIZABETH GLEASON  
CITY COUNCIL

**BENEDICTION** .................. REV. WARNE DAWKINS  
HOST PASTOR OF MT. ZION  
BAPTIST CHURCH

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Program for dedication of Woodfolk Drive and tribute to Mary Truehart Woodfolk.
Dedication Speech by
City of Charlottesville Vice Mayor Elizabeth Gleason
September 13, 1980

Members and friends of the Woodfolk family, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning.

It is with a very great deal of pleasure that I take part in this delightful ceremony this morning. Duties of City Council members are sometimes disagreeable or dull but those responsibilities are thankfully offset by ones such as this one today.

On May 19, 1980, City Council adopted the following resolution:

Be it resolved by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, that a certain unnamed street or road lying southeast of Baylor's Lane, adjacent to parcels 50 through 65 on City Real Property Tax Map 26, shall henceforth be known and designated as Woodfolk Drive, in honor of Mrs. Mary Truehart Woodfolk, a long-time citizen of Charlottesville and resident of that area of the City; and

Be it further resolved that the Clerk of the Council is directed to send a certified copy of this resolution to the Clerk of the Circuit Court for recordation in the street closing book.

The Mayor of the City asked me, as Vice-Mayor, if I could be present September 13 as a time selected as most suitable to the Woodfolk family, to dedicate this newly named street, and I told him I would be most honored. I read back over the Council Resolution and thought how little that really told me. I wanted to find out something more about Mrs. Mary Truehart Woodfolk; after all, having a City street named for you is a mighty high honor, and I wanted to know why they had chosen Mrs. Woodfolk.

I found out from her daughter, Mrs. Marion Woodfolk, that Mrs. Woodfolk was born August 11, 1883, in Charlottesville, the daughter of Sallie and John Truehart; that she had attended local public schools and completed her education at Ardowe, Pennsylvania, that she had married Ollie T. Woodfolk Sr. and was the mother of nine children, five of whom survive today. I learned that Mrs. Woodfolk was a member of Mount Zion Baptist Church, an honorary member of the Missionary Circle, and a member of the Senior Choir.

Earlier this week I had the opportunity to have lunch and chat some more with another of Mrs. Woodfolk's daughters, Mrs. Lucille Jones. She told me about her living brothers and sisters, Theodore Woodfolk and Annie Actie who have retired; Marion Woodfolk at the University Alumni Association office; and Ollie Woodfolk at Lawyer's Research. We had an enjoyable
time talking about mutual friends at the Cedars Nursing Home where she works. She told me that her mother had one sister who had died as a child in a tragic accident in which she was dreadfully burned. Mrs. Jones said her mother often spoke of how she missed that precious sister but also of how lucky she was to have had six devoted brothers.

I learned that Mrs. Woodfolk had married Ollie T. Woodfolk Sr. and after a very happy marriage had been widowed at the age of forty-two. Mr. Woodfolk, a devoted father, was forty-five at the time of his death.

Mrs. Jones also told me that there were five grandchildren, fourteen great-grandchildren, and ten great-great-grandchildren! My what a tremendous legacy! I don’t know how many of you are here but I hope you all are and that those who are here will be certain to tell all of your cousins who might not have been able to come all about this important occasion.

As Mrs. Jones talked on about her mother, I began to feel as if I had really known her. I loved hearing about Mrs. Woodfolk’s devotion to her church, Mount Zion. She knew how valuable it was to bring up her family "in the knowledge and love of God." I laughed as I heard about her being a real sports fan and delighted to learn of her interest in world affairs. Mrs. Mary Truehart Woodfolk was a person who loved her family, her church, her community, and her world. She was truly alive in the best sense of the word and didn’t want to miss anything for almost ninety-five years.

To the family of Mrs. Woodfolk I say, "Be proud." You have a glorious heritage. To belong to a family wherein each person loves and cares for the other is the greatest gift on this earth. This is the way we learn to care for others outside our family, too. I read very recently an article in the paper about the exceptional kindness shown a very ill seven-year-old patient at the University Hospital by a man named Woody Woodfolk, and I just knew he had to be related to this family.

Another inheritance you have is a good name and the responsibility to keep it that way.

I am indeed pleased, proud, and honored on behalf of the City Council of Charlottesville to designate this street as Woodfolk Drive.
...
Preservation Piedmont is a nonprofit corporation organized for charitable and educational purposes. It is dedicated to the preservation of the built environment and its setting in order to protect and create an appreciation for the historic resources of the region.

Preservation is promoted by the protection and rehabilitation of historic buildings, sites, and neighborhoods, as well as the natural and created landscape, traditional routes, and open spaces.