



THE ALEXANDRIA ORAL HISTORY CENTER
OFFICE OF HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA



Oral History Interview

with

Kevin Reed

Interviewer: *Kerry James Reed*

Narrator: *Kevin Reed*

Location of Interview:
39 Vista Way, Ellsworth, Maine

Date of Interview: *11/24/2023*

Transcriber: *Kerry James Reed*

Summary:

Kevin Reed reflects on his time spent in Alexandria as a child and as an adult, with a particular focus on Alexandria's industrial past.

Notes:

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General	Childhood in Alexandria, Businesses in the Alexandria, Nightlife; Industry; Commerce; History of Alexandria; Potomac Yard
People	Kevin Reed; Ellen Reed; Kerry James Reed; Chris Austin; David Austin; Julian Arnold; Matthew Kersey; Phil Clark; Paul Doherty; Chris Reed; John Reed; Barbara

	Reed; Leonard Reed; Mark Reed; John Mercurio; Justin McCarthy; Kim McCarthy; Mary Blake
Places	King Street, Waterfront, Chincoteague, Del Ray, City of Alexandria; Telegraph Rd; Duke St; Fairfax County; Cameron St; Oronoco Bay; Washington St; Old Dominion Boat Club; Ellsworth, ME; Lee St Park; Wesmond Dr; Lynnhaven; Potomac Yard; Del Ray; S Pitt St; N Fayette St; N Royal St;

Kevin Reed: [00:00:01] Okay. My name is Kevin Reed, R-E-E-D. I am 68 years old. Today is the 24th of November 2023, and the location is Ellsworth, Maine. That's Down East, Maine. [00:00:25][24.4]

Kerry Reed: [00:00:29] Okay. My name is Kerry James Reed. I'm 26 years of age. It is the 24th of November. We are at 39 Vista Way, Ellsworth, Maine. So, thank you for agreeing to do this interview. We can start off with some pretty basic stuff. Where were you born? [00:00:45][16.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:00:45] I was born in Washington, D.C.. [00:00:46][1.1]

Kerry Reed: [00:00:49] Washington, D.C.. And did you grow up there as well? [00:00:51][2.4]

Kevin Reed: [00:00:51] In the district? No. [00:00:53][1.1]

Kerry Reed: [00:00:54] Where did you grow up? [00:00:54][0.5]

Kevin Reed: [00:00:55] I grew up in what's sometimes referred to as the Alexandria section of Fairfax County, which, as you remember, you may not or you may know this, in Virginia cities and counties are completely independent of one another. So as a result, the city of Alexandria does not include any part of Fairfax County and vice versa. Although they used to have whatever that was called, they would annex portions of the county. Back in the day. But at any rate, that's it. [00:01:38][43.8]

Kerry Reed: [00:01:40] So when you say the Alexandria-Fairfax portion, can you describe that bit more in detail. Like neighborhoods or anything like that? [00:01:48][7.3]

Kevin Reed: [00:01:48] Oh, sure. I could probably even name all the neighborhoods because of this section of the county I grew up in. But I grew up in two neighborhoods in Northern Virginia until I was, of course, 18. And then things changed a little bit. Virginia Hills from birth to nine years of age. Wilton Woods, from the time I was nine, or just turned 10, to the time I was 18. [00:02:27][39.1]

Kerry Reed: [00:02:28] So how far were those neighborhoods from the borders of Alexandria then? If you had to put an estimate on it? [00:02:36][7.4]

Kevin Reed: [00:02:36] Oh, maybe two miles? We could walk it and often did walk into Alexandria, but it was better to take the bus. [00:02:49][13.5]

Kerry Reed: [00:02:52] How often did you walk into Alexandria? [00:02:53][1.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:02:54] Oh, not, you know, just a couple of times a year. [00:02:56][1.9]

Kerry Reed: [00:02:59] Were those family outings? [00:03:01][1.3]

Kevin Reed: [00:03:01] No, no, no, no, no. Just my friends and I. Usually going to the scenery. I say that tongue in cheek. That was along King Street. You have a question that, do you want to take these exactly in order or can I skip around a little bit? [00:03:21][19.4]

Kerry Reed: [00:03:22] We can proceed however you like, if there's one you really want to talk about. [00:03:26][3.9]

Kevin Reed: [00:03:26] You asked a question about, what was it, oh what to what King Street looked like. Okay. [00:03:33][7.1]

Kerry Reed: [00:03:35] Yeah, sure. [00:03:35][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:03:36] So what did the Waterfront look like? [00:03:37][1.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:03:37] Yeah. So what did King Street look like when you guys went on these little adventures, I guess, as a child, what a King Street look like then? [00:03:43][5.9]

Kevin Reed: [00:03:43] Very different. [00:03:44][0.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:03:45] How so? [00:03:45][0.2]

Kevin Reed: [00:03:46] Well, in the first place, if you came in from our section of Fairfax, came in Telegraph Road and down Duke Street and then turned on to Diagonal Road and then go up King Street, there were about three or four car dealerships there. The real big one was Polk Motors, which was Chrysler Plymouth. My grandfather used to always buy his Plymouths there. Because he was a Plymouth man back when that meant something. Let's see. And there's another car dealership, Herbie's Ford, where my dad, who liked Fords, always bought his cars. So, there were a bunch of car dealerships down at the, not the river end, but the, god what do you call that? The only thing that's stuck in my head right now is what we used to jokingly refer to it as. Ah, I thought of the term, masonic temple, you know, the Masonic Temple. So it's a masonic temple side that where all the car dealerships were. By the way, what we used to refer to that as when we were kids is the Robert E. Lee Memorial phallic symbol. Haha, we thought we were funny, anyway. [00:05:02][76.1]

Kerry Reed: [00:05:09] So, you know, you're describing these car dealerships, but I'm sure as a youth, when you're going down King Street, those weren't the first things that caught your eye? [00:05:18][9.6]

Kevin Reed: [00:05:20] Well, no, it was much more of a commercial or even industrial city than it is now. Now, I mean, it's entirely designed for tourism. [00:05:30][10.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:05:31] Mm hmm. [00:05:31][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:05:32] But in those days, that was an aspect of the city of Alexandria. Its continuance, its *raison d'etre*. It's not that tourists so much as just, like, for example, there is a section of the waterfront, basically north of Cameron Street. So around Oronoco Bay, and up beyond that towards the Mirant power plant, which was the coal fired plant used to generate electricity for the city of Washington and right across the river as well, which was also a city of Washington. That was their sewage treatment plant called the Blue Plains. Anyway, so. Oh, I'm distracted myself, thinking of something. We were talking about what was it now? [00:06:46][73.7]

Kerry Reed: [00:06:47] Talking about how King Street looked or how Old Town looked. So you're saying there's a lot more industry back then? [00:06:52][5.3]

Kevin Reed: [00:06:53] Well, commercial. Commercial. I don't mean to say industry in the sense that they were making steel. So the commercial stuff. I remember I was thinking about this just the other day because I knew we would be doing this. So I did check these questions. And one of them was, well, whatever the question was, it made me think of the fact that right down on King Street, where King intersects with Washington Street, there were about five or six wig stores. You know, you bought women's wigs. [00:07:29][36.2]

Kerry Reed: [00:07:29] Mm hmm. [00:07:29][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:07:31] God, who knows why they were there. But that was kind of the thing that was really a lot, you'd find more commonly along King Street than on the, how should I say? I don't want to say anything too condescending. That's the only thing that's coming to mind right now. The fashionable, that's a charitable thing to say. The fashionable stores that you have along King Street now. There wasn't much of that. I think it's the main attraction for us kids, though. We kids. Was to walk down to Dockside. Dockside was at the end of King Street. Right where, well, the Old Dominion Boat Club was there. I was about to say still there. But that would imply that, it would imply a strange continuance of time. So, there was a building there, a couple of buildings there. Mostly they're still there. And then one was torn down, I think. Maybe that wasn't because that's where the record store was later. But anyway, so Dockside was, well, it was billed as some exotic place where you could find wares from all over the world had been brought, you know, to the trading post at the City of Alexandria. In point of actual fact, it was all, given the time frame, 60s, so it was mostly Japanese. Maybe a little Chinese stuff thrown in for good measure. [00:09:20][109.6]

Kerry Reed: [00:09:22] So Dockside, was this like a flea market? [00:09:24][2.5]

Kevin Reed: [00:09:25] Yes, exactly. Okay. Good term for it. [00:09:27][2.5]

Kerry Reed: [00:09:29] Okay. Interesting. You said this was in the 60s? [00:09:32][3.4]

Kevin Reed: [00:09:33] Yeah. Probably still there in the 70s. No, it was not their the 70s anymore. I just remembered something that was there. Anyway. [00:09:44][10.1]

Kerry Reed: [00:09:49] All right. [00:09:49][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:09:50] So if you go up to the north, [pauses] up to the north. I'm trying to figure out if that's more west or north and it doesn't really matter. For anyone that's familiar with Alexandria, they know the area that I'm talking about when I say north of Oronoco Bay. So now in there was a whole bunch of, there was even a rendering plant in there. You know what a rendering plant is? [00:10:29][38.9]

Kerry Reed: [00:10:30] Loosely. [00:10:30][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:10:31] Yeah, it's where they take animal carcasses and basically boil them down. So you catch a breeze the wrong time of day right around there, and it just stank to whole heaven. But we used to go down, I used to go there with my friend Chris Austin when he first got his driver's license. His older brother would go to [laughs] Chincapig. Not Chincapig, That's something else. Chincoteague. He'd go to Chincoteague and get the horses, you know, when they had the pony swims? [00:11:07][36.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:11:08] No. [00:11:08][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:11:09] Really? Not familiar with that? [00:11:10][0.8]

Kerry Reed: [00:11:11] No, I'm not. [00:11:11][0.5]

Kevin Reed: [00:11:11] Misty of Chincoteague. [00:11:12][0.6]

Kerry Reed: [00:11:13] Misty of Chincoteague? [00:11:14][0.6]

Kevin Reed: [00:11:14] It's a book. It's a children's book [00:11:16][1.6]

Kerry Reed: [00:11:16] Oh, I'm not familiar with it. [00:11:16][0.3]

Kevin Reed: [00:11:18] Probably from the 40s or sometime maybe earlier than that. Misty of Chincoteague. Chincoteague is an island off the coast of Virginia on the Virginia Eastern shore. And it was populated, oh, I think it's about 300 years ago now with Spanish ponies. It was a galleon crashed or burned or whatever, sank offshore. And there were a bunch of horses, or ponies really, on it. And so they swam to shore that shore at Chincoteague. And I'll tell you why I keep saying Chincoteague in just a minute. But every year the fire department for Chincoteague, the fire department for that community, volunteer of course, would round up some of the ponies. And there was a, you know, like a causeway basically that was flooded. But

they could swim or even walk across it. So the ponies would drive them across and then they would auction them off. And my friend Chris, Chris Austin, his older brother David, for some, and he was a little strange. Anyway, he would go there at least for a couple of years and he would buy a pony. And so the Austins had a fair amount of land because both of his parents were doctors and physicians. And so they had land right there on Telegraph Road. And his brother would bring them. And so Chris would have to get them fed. So we would drive down, which is a big treat because we got to drive or he got to drive. Usually his older brother's car. We would go down to the, there was a place right by the rendering plant there in the city of Alexandria, right by the waterfront, where you could buy bales of hay. I have no idea why, you just could. And so I guess they had it there for horses and whatnot. So anyway, so that was what was along the waterfront. And there were some abandoned, when you go south towards Jones Point, there were some abandoned boat yards. Well, they say abandoned. There were wrecked boats in them. Sunk boats. Although years later, they created quite a controversy in the city of Alexandria. Those very spots were coveted by, I guess, the federal government, the city of Alexandria. Who knows, Maryland, maybe. Because it's prime real estate. Basically, I'm now talking about the area, you know where Lee Street Park is? Ok. Right across from Lee Street Park. I mean, literally right there on the river, right across from Lee Street Park is the area that I'm talking about. That's south, right, of Oronoco Bay. So if we go back on the other side, there was just that industrial stuff. And then there was Mirant. The coal burning plant generating electricity. [00:14:55][217.9]

Kerry Reed: [00:15:00] Interesting. So, did your family ever accompany you into Alexandria, or was this mainly just your own interest? [00:15:08][8.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:15:08] Oh, it was me, just me. I mean, certainly my parents and older siblings, our younger sibling, for that matter, would not have walked into Alexandria with me. And it was what my friends and I would do, although we would also take the bus at a time, particularly if we were going with young ladies, girls when we were in seventh grade. [00:15:30][21.8]

Kerry Reed: [00:15:34] So I know that your family has some history in the City of Alexandria. Would you care to describe that? [00:15:39][5.9]

Kevin Reed: [00:15:42] Well, I'm not quite sure. The earliest, which could not have obviously been the earliest occurrence, but the earliest record that I have of an ancestor in the city of Alexandria was someone named Julian Arnold. And Julian Arnold was a cop, policeman, city of Alexandria, policeman. And he happened to be the first City of Alexandria policeman killed in the line of duty. [00:16:16][33.6]

Kerry Reed: [00:16:17] Hmm. [00:16:17][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:16:18] And so prior to when they set up the first police department in the City of Alexandria, they had what they called watchmen. They just paid people to walk around at night, kind of keep an eye on things. But then they figured, well, we need to organize a real professional police force. So that's when they did that, created it. And apparently he thwarted a robbery, that is old Julian, thwarted a robbery. But in the process of doing so, he was killed. Another ancestor, Matthew Kersey, was a riverboat captain. Now, he was actually, Matthew

Kersey, he was actually a step grandparent to my grandmother, my mother's mother. So, [pauses] there was at least a rumor, and how often I wish my grandparents were around, even my parents, although the only one who would really know anything about it would be my mother. To ask these questions that occurred to me sometimes years later. But I recall hearing that Matthew Kersey had been involved, as a riverboat captain on the Potomac River, had been involved in running guns for the Confederacy. But I don't know too much more about it than that. Aside from that, my mother's mother grew up in the City of Alexandria. She actually lived on [pauses]. [00:18:19][120.5]

Kerry Reed: [00:18:29] Well, it seems like there's an extensive family history in Alexandria [00:18:31][2.8]

Kevin Reed: [00:18:31] Yes. [00:18:31][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:18:32] How did you learn these stories? Was it from your parents? Was it from your grandparents? How was this information, you know, passed down to you? [00:18:40][8.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:18:41] Parents, grandparents. What I could read. [00:18:43][2.1]

Kerry Reed: [00:18:45] Okay. [00:18:45][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:18:46] I'm always trying to investigate my family history, although I haven't really done anything with that a number of years now, so partially that as well. Simply interested in the historical aspects of where I was living. [00:18:57][11.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:18:58] Right. Where did your grandparents live? Because you mentioned that you lived in Fairfax County, did they live in Alexandria? [00:19:05][6.8]

Kevin Reed: [00:19:06] Yes. [00:19:06][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:19:07] Where in Alexandria did they live? [00:19:08][1.3]

Kevin Reed: [00:19:09] Are you speaking about my mother's family? My mother's parents lived in Parkfairfax. [00:19:15][5.8]

Kerry Reed: [00:19:18] Yes. [00:19:18][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:19:20] My father's mother lived, although she later moved out of this neighborhood, but she lived in, god what is that neighborhood called? Her address was 123 Wesmond Dr, and that's Lynnhaven, Lynnhaven neighborhood. What are the questions you asked? Something about the train. You know the train yard there? [00:19:55][35.7]

Kerry Reed: [00:19:56] Well, yeah, you know, I'm trying to get to that. [laughs] So you had mentioned when we discussed previously that when you would go to your grandparents in Parkfairfax, you would hear the trains in Potomac Yard. [00:20:08][12.5]

Kevin Reed: [00:20:10] Well, that would be at my father's mother's house. [00:20:14][4.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:20:14] Oh, okay. [00:20:14][0.2]

Kevin Reed: [00:20:17] That's where she was, because Lynnhaven is right on Route 1 there, basically between Commonwealth Avenue and Route 1. And that's right next to Potomac Yard. That's where I could hear Potomac Yard. Now, from my other grandparents, the ones that lived in Parkfairfax, in those days there was a train that ran across, ran from City of Alexandria. Actually, there was a railroad track that ran out and it became the Ohio... Whatever that was. Oh, my goodness. Why am I drawing a blank on these things? The W.&O.D The Washington and Old Dominion, W.&O.D. So, it had a spur. But you could take a train from basically Old Town and it ran all the way up to Purcellville. That's western Loudon County. [00:21:20][63.5]

Kerry Reed: [00:21:21] Mm hmm. So when you would go into the city, did you mainly stay along that King Street corridor? Did you ever go to Uptown or into Del Ray or anything like that? Or was it mainly just focused on... [00:21:38][17.5]

Kevin Reed: [00:21:40] Del Ray? Yes. [00:21:41][0.6]

Kerry Reed: [00:21:40] You went into Del Ray? What did Del Rey look like back then? [00:21:43][2.8]

Kevin Reed: [00:21:43] Funky. Just like it is now. Same place. We used to call it Funky Del Ray. Because it was probably, in its own way, except for there weren't any blacks. One of the more eclectic parts of the city. I mean, there were some very wealthy neighborhoods. You would look at the houses now and you'd say, 'What? Really?' But there was a nice neighborhood called Beverly Hills, basically back in that general vicinity. But Del Ray attracted a urban pioneer sort of element to it. And so you would have that in addition to really old Alexandria families, you know, a real old redneck. I'm thinking of one I know right now. Real old redneck families that had, you know, lived there for 200 years, whatever the case might be. [00:22:44][60.7]

Kerry Reed: [00:22:45] So you mentioned that you were always interested in the historical aspects of Alexandria. Did you when you went to Del Ray, did you know that that was the Town of Potomac at one point? Or was that's not something that was advertised? [00:22:56][10.9]

Kevin Reed: [00:22:58] I don't recall it being advertised, but I do recall reading it. So yeah, there was actually a string of little houses or burgs or whatever you want to call it. Not houses, excuse me, little towns or settlements that ran right along and all in through there that later just kept getting incorporated into, you know, various areas because Virginia allowed annexation. So Alexandria was always annexing various parts of Fairfax County. And Arlington was variously annexing parts of Fairfax County. So, eventually they did away with the annexation law that allowed cities just to grow by annexing surrounding counties. [00:23:46][48.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:23:53] So did you notice when you were going into Old Town back in the 60s and 70s an emphasis on tourism within the city? Or did that come later on? [00:24:06][12.8]

Kevin Reed: [00:24:06] I would really say it came later on. There was always an aspect of it because it was George Washington's hometown, as they used to say. And there used to be historic placards around that you could see, but it was nothing like it is now. In the sense that Alexandria now, Old Town particularly, exists to cater to, you know, year round tourist trade. Let's bring in the people from Fairfax County or wherever to come and go drinking in Old Town do that kind of thing. So there is, of course, that element. [00:24:42][35.9]

Kerry Reed: [00:24:50] So I guess that would apply to you as well, wouldn't it?. Fairfax County kid coming into Alexandria. [00:24:57][6.9]

Kevin Reed: [00:24:58] Yes. [00:24:58][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:24:58] But you eventually moved to Alexandria, right? [00:25:00][1.7]

Kevin Reed: [00:25:00] Yeah, when I was 18. With my parents. [00:25:03][2.6]

Kerry Reed: [00:25:03] With your parents when you're 18, can you describe your parents? [00:25:05][2.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:25:08] They were typically parents of their generation. [00:25:13][4.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:25:16] All right. Fair enough. [00:25:17][0.5]

Kevin Reed: [00:25:18] Let's say they were both actually very good people. You know, they certainly had their flaws, but they certainly were very, very good people. [00:25:24][6.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:25:24] So why did they decide to move into Alexandria? [00:25:27][2.3]

Kevin Reed: [00:25:28] Well. My dad wanted to free up some money to start a business, which he did. And the easiest way to do that was to sell their house that they had in Fairfax County. Take part of the proceeds and put it into the new little business he was starting and then used the bulk to buy a house in Old Town, which they did. 321 South Pitt. Because my mother had always wanted to live in Old Town. Always Because she had that familial connection. I mean, I never saw them. I never knew any of these people. But we apparently had some additional relatives that were in the city that were related on her side of the family, my mother's side of the family. So, again, something I need to investigate. I never really did. You know, people sometimes kind of lose touch with their relatives like I have done with mine because of some argument. So. [00:26:53][84.6]

Kerry Reed: [00:27:01] So your mother wanted to live in Alexandria? [00:27:04][3.2]

Kevin Reed: [00:27:05] Yes. [00:27:05][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:27:06] In Old Town specifically? [00:27:06][0.7]

Kevin Reed: [00:27:07] Yes. Specifically Old Town. [00:27:08][1.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:27:08] Why specifically Old Town? [00:27:10][1.3]

Kevin Reed: [00:27:10] Because her mother had grown up in Old Town. And apparently there were some additional, well, wherever Julian Arnold came from, he was probably in Old Town. I mean, there really wasn't a lot much more to the city than that for many, many years. [00:27:25][15.2]

Kerry Reed: [00:27:26] So when you moved there with your parents, this would have been '74? '75? [00:27:29][3.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:27:34] It would have been '74. [00:27:35][0.8]

Kerry Reed: [00:27:36] Okay. Interesting. So, do you remember what that house cost by any chance? [00:27:48][12.5]

Kevin Reed: [00:27:49] Which one? [00:27:49][0.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:27:50] The one at 321 S Pitt. Do you remember what it looked like? [00:27:56][6.7]

Kevin Reed: [00:27:57] Oh, yeah. I mean, it's still there. Obviously, all those things are protected by the B.A.R. [00:28:01][4.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:28:02] Mm hmm. [00:28:02][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:28:08] Do I remember how much they paid for it? No, I really don't. For some reason, I want to say 380,000. [00:28:20][12.8]

Kerry Reed: [00:28:23] Okay. [00:28:23][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:28:24] I know the next one that I got, which was on S. Lee St and that was about 500,000. [00:28:30][5.5]

Kerry Reed: [00:28:33] When did they moved to S. Lee St? [00:28:34][0.8]

Kevin Reed: [00:28:35] Two years after moving to S Pitt. [00:28:36][1.4]

Kerry Reed: [00:28:37] Okay. And any particular reason for that move so quickly? [00:28:44][7.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:28:45] Yeah, my mother loved the house on S Lee even more. [00:28:48][3.5]

Kerry Reed: [00:28:49] Right. So you're 18 when you moved with your parents into Old Town. You mentioned, you know, earlier growing up, going walking down King Street with your

chums. What was it like being a young man in Alexandria during that time? Was there a lot of nightlife? [00:29:08][19.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:29:09] Yes, there was. [00:29:10][0.6]

Kerry Reed: [00:29:10] Really? [00:29:10][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:29:11] Yeah. I mean, you could always, and we often did, go into the city about which I mean, Washington, D.C., for nightlife. But increasingly, you could find things along. In Alexandria, in Old Town along King St. There was a bar that I'd like to go to, for example, called Masons. I don't think they were connected in any way with the university. And they were at the corner that would have been at corner of King and Fairfax. [00:29:50][38.8]

Kerry Reed: [00:29:53] So were there a lot of bars in the city at that time? [00:29:56][3.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:29:58] Increasingly, yeah. [00:29:58][0.7]

Kerry Reed: [00:29:59] Mm hmm. [00:29:59][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:30:01] I mean. At the time I remember Masons, which is no longer there, became a restaurant. 219, which is also a restaurant, had a bar in the basement, walk down bar. That used to be actually the place that we all went and hung out mostly. And then there was Bull Feathers down the street. [00:30:30][29.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:30:30] You have to be a little closer to the microphone, if you don't mind. [00:30:30][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:30:41] Bull Feathers was down there like the 200 block of King Street. And also down there was, oh, what was the name of that restaurant? Darn it. Give me a minute. I'll think of it. Maybe not. It's on the tip of my tongue, like so many of these things. It was. And with the exception of your mother, there's absolutely no one I can ask. [00:31:15][33.8]

Kerry Reed: [00:31:21] Well, it's all right. [00:31:22][0.8]

Kevin Reed: [00:31:24] It bothers me that I can't remember. And I will remember. It'll just take me 15 minutes. As I've explained, my memory works like an old mainframe reel to reel. It's got a spool all the way up and then wind back in order to play what's recorded. [00:31:42][18.5]

Kerry Reed: [00:31:49] What do you do for work at this time? Or did you go to school? [00:31:53][3.6]

Kevin Reed: [00:31:54] I went to school. [00:31:54][0.4]

Kerry Reed: [00:31:55] Where did you go? [00:31:56][0.4]

Kevin Reed: [00:31:56] George Mason. [00:31:57][0.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:31:57] George Mason. [00:31:58][0.3]

Kevin Reed: [00:31:59] Well, at first, no, actually, I went, to tell you the truth. I went for a year and a half to a school in Pennsylvania. Saint Vincent College. [00:32:07][8.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:32:08] Ok. [00:32:08][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:32:10] In Latrobe, Pennsylvania. Don't ask me how I ended up there. It's a long story. And then my plan, of course, to go to McGill in Montreal. And various and sundry reasons I ended up at Saint Vincent. And it was a very good school. Don't get me wrong, I had no complaints about the school at all. But it had not been on my list. [00:32:31][21.1]

Kerry Reed: [00:32:33] So when you were going to George Mason, did you drive there? What was the commute like back then? [00:32:39][5.6]

Kevin Reed: [00:32:39] Yes, I did drive there. Okay. What was the commute like? I remember reading the question that you asked. Let me tell you, for basically the two, two and a half years that I was going to Mason. You have to understand, by the way, it's a little bit of a timing here. I went to Saint Vincent my freshman year, the fall. My freshman spring semester, I got very sick and left school. And I did that in early February. So that's basically a gap for most of my education that, all my education really at that, for that semester. So that is why there's this half of a year gap in my schooling timing-wise so that just explained that. All right so, when I was commuting to George Mason was the time they rebuilt the Beltway. And when I say rebuilt the Beltway, you have to appreciate that up until that point, the Beltway had been a four lane highway. Two on each side. Well, now they wanted to make it three and even four in certain places because that much, you know, build up in traffic more and more by then. The area was really getting populated by the 70s and that's when this was. So, the entire time I commuted there I was driving over the construction. There was always construction going on, driving over the railroad ties that they put up because they were digging tunnels and all this other stuff. So it was always an adventure. I never knew each day what I would face. [00:34:45][126.2]

Kerry Reed: [00:34:47] How long did it take them to complete the Alexandria portion of the Beltway? So when you graduated, were they still working on it? [00:34:54][7.8]

Kevin Reed: [00:34:56] Well, let's make sure we know what we're referring to here. When you say the Alexandria section of the Beltway, are you talking about the original Beltway or the refurbished one? I assume you're talking about the refurbished one. [00:35:10][14.7]

Kerry Reed: [00:35:11] Yes. [00:35:11][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:35:11] Okay. How long did it take? Two and a half, three years. [00:35:14][3.1]

Kerry Reed: [00:35:18] Did it make a difference? Was there still as much you know, today you go down and... [00:35:24][6.3]

Kevin Reed: [00:35:25] It probably took about six, eight months for it to completely fill up. You know, what happens is, you know, people do buy houses farther out because the commutes easier. Then the commute isn't easier anymore. [00:35:41][15.6]

Kerry Reed: [00:35:41] Right. So while you were, you know, living in Alexandria, commuting to Mason, did you notice a lot of urban renewal projects going on in Alexandria at this time, or did you mostly just stay around Old Town? Around the B.A.R. protection? [00:36:01][19.9]

Kevin Reed: [00:36:06] No, no, no. I went to various places in the city. [00:36:09][3.5]

Kerry Reed: [00:36:14] So that industry that you talked about when you were a kid, was that still there when you were a young adult? [00:36:21][6.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:36:21] It was being phased out. I mean, if you look at the northern end of Alexandria now where the Potomac Power Plant is or was. I think I read that they dismantled that. But not living in the area anyway, I can't just say, 'oh, I think I'll just drive down there and check, see what's going on.' So, I'm sorry, what was your question again? [00:36:54][32.9]

Kerry Reed: [00:36:57] Along that King Street, you know, corridor with all the commercial industry, I guess, how you described it when you were growing up, was that changing when you were a young adult? [00:37:07][10.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:37:07] Yeah, yeah, very much so. Yeah. Buildings being revamped, refurbished, new buildings being built. Quite a lot. [00:37:21][13.4]

Kerry Reed: [00:37:22] Could you maybe be a little bit more specific than that? You mentioned the car dealerships, right? Were those still around or? [00:37:28][5.7]

Kevin Reed: [00:37:30] You know, I don't know exactly when the car dealerships kind of disappeared. I guess sometime when I was in college. Well, what really got rid of them, made them disappear was when they built the metro and they put in the King Street station. Because that's where Polk Motors had been. And they were the largest one down there. Well, there was Temple, Buick and Polk Motors, but they were owned by the same family. I would just say that, you know, those things were being phased out. [00:38:15][44.9]

Kerry Reed: [00:38:15] Mm hmm. [00:38:15][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:38:17] For more upscale properties. [00:38:22][5.9]

Kerry Reed: [00:38:28] Do you remember when the King Street metro was built? [00:38:29][1.6]

Kevin Reed: [00:38:30] Yeah. Oh, sure. [00:38:30][0.6]

Kerry Reed: [00:38:31] Could you describe that process? Not meticulously, like the construction materials or anything, but within the community. Was there an excitement about it?

Was there a bit of consternation? What was the attitude towards the King Street Metro?
[00:38:45][14.3]

Kevin Reed: [00:38:48] Mostly, I think it was that people were happy with this. What it would provide. Although the King St metro always was a little inconvenient, it was inconvenient to get to. Wasn't so bad if you rode the bus. And that, I think, was their intention. They being city planners and WMATA, metro, to get you to ride the bus to the train. The problem with that is what happens on the other end. I've read multiple studies which suggest that people will happily ride a bus to a subway, to the train, but if they arrive at their destination and they have to get off the train and get back on another bus, they won't do that. They'll drive. [00:39:45][57.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:39:47] Hmm. Interesting. So after you graduate... [00:39:54][6.8]

Kevin Reed: [00:39:55] I was just going to say, there were just things that, it was disruptive. There was a restaurant that was right there in the midst of that car dealership, Polk Motors, called Albert's. And my grandmother really liked Albert's, my father's mother. So she liked to go there every once in a while. Well, that got torn down. Lots of things got torn down to put in that train station. Mm hmm. [00:40:29][34.2]

Kerry Reed: [00:40:31] I want to circle back to my question earlier about the nightlife. So, when you would go out to Mason's or to 219, I think was what you said, what did the demographics of those bars look like? [00:40:47][15.5]

Kevin Reed: [00:40:50] Young. Urban, professional types. [00:40:50][0.6]

Kerry Reed: [00:40:51] Mm hmm. So did you ever go more towards Queen Street or maybe towards Uptown, or what is now Parker Gray and any of those areas? [00:41:02][10.8]

Kevin Reed: [00:41:04] There really wasn't anything to go to on Queen Street. Now, let me qualify that. In fact, let me point something out about your question here. You asked me if I had been to the Berg sometimes referred to as the Burd, by the way. You may notice that. Uptown or the Hump. All those are Black neighborhoods. I wouldn't really had any reason to go into those. [00:41:36][31.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:41:38] Okay. [00:41:38][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:41:39] I'm just saying. A little different time then. [00:41:42][3.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:41:43] Right. So, you know, would you say that the city was still very much a segregated city when you were young adult? [00:41:52][8.6]

Kevin Reed: [00:41:56] When I was a young adult? Lessening. [00:42:03][6.7]

Kerry Reed: [00:42:05] Lessening? [00:42:05][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:42:05] Lessening. The problem with Alexandria in a sense is it's, because of its proximity to Washington, D.C.. I mean, it's commuter's paradise and other factors, you know, historical chops, as it were. It's fascinating architecture. The thing about it is, is that, I can't really think of, I'm trying to figure out how to say this without necessarily lambasting all my fellow residents of Alexandria as bigots. I don't mean that... There was a just a built-in form of bigotry in the system in the 50s and the 60s, and it would have been part of my world even later to a degree. The demographics of the establishments that I went to were, you know, completely white if that's your question. [00:43:18][72.4]

Kerry Reed: [00:43:31] I was thinking like, you know, because I've done interviews with other people who grew up in Uptown and things like that. And we about the interactions they had with the rest of Alexandria. [00:43:43][12.5]

Kevin Reed: [00:43:45] With the what? [00:43:45][0.2]

Kerry Reed: [00:43:46] The rest of Alexandria at the time and I was just trying to trying to see. Because they've, I mean, they've mostly described negative experiences, I suppose. [00:43:56][9.9]

Kevin Reed: [00:43:57] Negative experiences? [00:43:57][0.5]

Kerry Reed: [00:43:58] Yes. And I was curious as to whether you would say if the environment in Alexandria when you were a young adult was still, I mean, this is Virginia and, you know, right after civil rights. So a certain amount of. [00:44:12][14.6]

Kevin Reed: [00:44:13] Oh, you're saying were there racial tensions. Yes. But they didn't really impact me. I was aware of them. I remember being told by my mother one time there had been this is actually after the assassination of Martin Luther King. There'd been a riot in the City of Alexandria, and there had been wholesale threatening, chasing, you know, white commuters as they were going through the city back to Fairfax, kind of coming out of the District, you know, threats and chasing after them on the roads and stuff like that. [00:44:47][34.4]

Kerry Reed: [00:44:48] Mm hmm. [00:44:48][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:44:49] So there was certainly that kind of issue. I would not say that it was in any way harmonious, racially harmonious by any stretch of the imagination. I just think that it's important to keep in mind that the time that we're talking about, though. [00:45:15][26.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:45:15] I'm well aware. So, after you graduated from Mason, were you still living in Alexandria? [00:45:25][9.9]

Kevin Reed: [00:45:26] Yes. [00:45:26][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:45:28] Okay. What were you doing at that time? [00:45:30][1.8]

Kevin Reed: [00:45:31] I went to work for my father. He asked me to. [00:45:33][1.9]

Kerry Reed: [00:45:37] What kind of business did your father have? [00:45:39][2.6]

Kevin Reed: [00:45:40] He had an envelope printing business. [00:45:41][0.8]

Kerry Reed: [00:45:41] Envelope printing business. Where was that located? [00:45:44][3.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:45:46] Originally, it was it on North Fayette St. I think the 100 block of North Fayette St. And then they moved it, and he moved it to the 1100 block of South Pitt. North Pitt. Excuse me. [00:46:00][14.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:46:05] Okay. [00:46:05][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:46:07] And sorry, that wasn't North Pitt. That was North Royal. 1100 block of North Royal. [00:46:12][4.4]

Kerry Reed: [00:46:14] Mm hmm. What did you do for your father's company? [00:46:19][5.7]

Kevin Reed: [00:46:22] Uh, well. I won't give you the whole you don't want to have all the details as to why I'm in this situation at that point in my life. [00:46:32][10.2]

Kerry Reed: [00:46:32] You may, if you want to share. I'm not going to stop you. [00:46:34][2.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:46:35] It really just came down to my dad and his business partner had hired a, I don't know if I can even say a mutual friend, actually. He was the husband of one of the flight attendants that Phil Clark, business partner of my dad, worked with. So they hired this guy shortly after he'd gotten out of the Marines. Name was Paul Doherty. He was a nice enough guy, kind of vapid, not, you know, not the sharpest knife in the drawer. But they had hired him to basically be a front man. Because they didn't want their employer to know that they were running this company, it wasn't really competing. They weren't doing anything truly illegal, but their employer would probably frown on it and they would even lose their jobs. So anyway. Excuse me. But why do I do that? [00:47:44][69.2]

Kerry Reed: [00:47:47] So, you know, when you're working for your for your father at South Pitt St, I believe you said? [00:47:52][4.4]

Kevin Reed: [00:47:58] North Royal. [00:47:58][0.4]

Kerry Reed: [00:47:59] North Royal Street. Excuse me. Re Were you living int he city at that time? Were you still with your parents? [00:48:02][3.6]

Kevin Reed: [00:48:05] I was still living with my parents. [00:48:06][0.9]

Kerry Reed: [00:48:06] Okay. [00:48:06][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:48:07] And then I moved out and moved in with my brother Chris, who was renting an apartment, actually was a townhouse on South Columbus St. [00:48:23][15.2]

Kerry Reed: [00:48:26] So how long did you work for your father in Alexandria. [00:48:30][4.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:48:33] Well, it lasted a lot longer than I thought it would. I got married in the process. And that made me think, well, you know, why don't I just do this? Work for my dad. Course, I never really liked it. In fact, I'll go so far as to say I disliked it immensely, but I felt obligated. I mean, he had started this business as a retirement program for himself, really. And Clark's motivations were, whatever his motivations were. And Paul Doherty got scarfed up by another company in town. So that put my dad in a real bad situation. We could either close this business, Envelopes Incorporated was what it was called, or you could try to make a go of it for real. You know, he had had this idea. This was something that, you know, during the end of the day, he would go in, you know, stop on his way home from work or his sales route and check and see how things were going and tell people what to do, that sort of stuff. And so, when Doherty left, he was confronted with, well, I got to close this or I'll keep it open. Well, he couldn't keep it open by himself. At least he didn't think he could. So then he asked me if I would help him. "Just for a couple of months. Just for a semester." I remember him telling me. Years later, not really long, but about five years later, I just decided that I can't take this anymore. So I told him, "I'm sorry. This just isn't what I want to do. And so you'll have to let me go." [00:50:38][124.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:50:42] When did you meet your wife? [00:50:43][1.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:50:50] Well, I got married in. Spring of 2013. So I met her... [00:50:58][7.9]

Kerry Reed: [00:50:59] 2013? [00:50:59][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:51:00] That year of 1983. [00:51:04][3.7]

Kerry Reed: [00:51:07] Oh, okay. [00:51:07][0.2]

Kevin Reed: [00:51:08] So, I would have met her a year before. Little bit more than a year before. At 219. [00:51:23][15.4]

Kerry Reed: [00:51:25] Oh, really? [00:51:25][0.2]

Kevin Reed: [00:51:25] Yeah. [00:51:25][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:51:27] So it sounds like you frequented that place a fair bit. [00:51:30][3.3]

Kevin Reed: [00:51:30] I did. But it is not like it sounds. Actually, I had a friend that didn't know him that well, but I was friendly with named John Mercurio, and I knew him strictly from 219. He was always one of these guys, he's very responsible individual, but he would stop in, you know, certainly every Friday night. And that's about the only time I went to because that's

when he put his weekly newsletter, newspaper, to bed. So then he would go out and get drunk and start the whole process the next week. He was a good guy. He's dead, died unfortunately. He was Lynn's live-in. [00:52:13][42.9]

Kerry Reed: [00:52:17] Hmm. [00:52:17][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:52:19] So through John Mercurio, through Lynn, I got to know Lynn's sister Ellen, your mother. And actually, they sort of picked me out. I was not aware of this at the time, but Lynn had sort of picked me out, 'Oh, this is the right guy for my sister.' So that's how that ended up happening. [00:52:44][25.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:52:46] That's funny. So when you were dating your wife, did you spend a lot of time in Alexandria? [00:52:54][8.5]

Kevin Reed: [00:52:55] Yeah. [00:52:55][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:52:56] So what sort of things did you guys do for dates? Where did you go? You know, restaurants or? [00:53:01][4.7]

Kevin Reed: [00:53:03] Restaurants, yeah. We went to restaurants, yeah. There was a, what was that? It was Nepal, the restaurant. Yeah, for Nepalese food. [00:53:24][20.4]

Kerry Reed: [00:53:24] Mm hmm. [00:53:24][0.2]

Kevin Reed: [00:53:25] That was in the same building as Masons. Actually, Masons was in the basement of this building. And then on the first floor, I don't have any idea what was on the second or third floor, but on the first floor was this restaurant, which was Nepalese. So we used to go there a lot. We liked Nepalese food. [00:53:43][17.2]

Kerry Reed: [00:53:43] Was there a lot of ethnic food in the Old Town at the time? [00:53:46][2.4]

Kevin Reed: [00:53:46] Yeah, believe it or not. Yeah. [00:53:47][0.8]

Kerry Reed: [00:53:47] Really? Do you remember anything besides Nepalese food? [00:53:51][4.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:53:57] Ethiopian. Korean. There were others. German. German. [00:54:11][13.7]

Kerry Reed: [00:54:12] German. Really? Yeah. Interesting. [00:54:14][1.8]

Kevin Reed: [00:54:14] You know, schnitzel. [00:54:15][0.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:54:16] Yeah. Okay. So you mentioned that you didn't want to work for your father in the printing business. What did you want to do? [00:54:26][10.3]

Kevin Reed: [00:54:30] What I ended up doing. [00:54:30][0.7]

Kerry Reed: [00:54:32] And what was that? [00:54:33][0.7]

Kevin Reed: [00:54:34] Writing software. [00:54:34][0.9]

Kerry Reed: [00:54:35] Software? [00:54:35][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:54:36] Yeah. [00:54:36][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:54:37] Okay. When did you get interested in that? [00:54:38][1.5]

Kevin Reed: [00:54:40] In the eighth grade? [00:54:42][1.8]

Kerry Reed: [00:54:43] Yeah. So, when computers first started? [00:54:44][1.7]

Kevin Reed: [00:54:46] Yeah. For my math class, we went on a field trip to the Fairfax County Computer Center. And I was absolutely astonished and hooked, for that matter. [00:54:58][12.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:55:00] What were computers like back then? [00:55:01][1.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:55:02] Size of rooms. [00:55:03][0.4]

Kerry Reed: [00:55:04] Size of rooms? [00:55:04][0.3]

Kevin Reed: [00:55:05] Big. [00:55:05][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [00:55:05] How did you code on something like that? [00:55:07][1.8]

Kevin Reed: [00:55:08] Well, I didn't, except much later when I was going to G.W. University. Why was I going there? I'll explain that another time. But I was going to G.W. University. I was taking computer science. We would write our programs on terminals. Dumb terminals. So that's how you coded on a mainframe. Of course, you could use a smart terminal to code too. But that's generally how it was done. [00:55:43][34.2]

Kerry Reed: [00:55:47] So when you finish that and you know you had your degree in software, where did you go work? Were you still living in Alexandria at that time? [00:55:56][9.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:55:59] No. My parents had moved back to Fairfax County. Down to Mount Vernon, that area. [00:56:12][13.2]

Kerry Reed: [00:56:14] Why did they do that? [00:56:15][0.6]

Kevin Reed: [00:56:18] Oh, I'm not sure that that's an appropriate topic for this.
[00:56:22][4.1]

Kerry Reed: [00:58:27] Well, it's interesting that, you know, for your mother moved out of Old Town when she loved it so much. [00:58:32][5.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:58:33] Oh, right. Okay. So they wanted more room for that, because they were going to bring up John. [00:58:37][4.1]

Kerry Reed: [00:58:38] Okay. [00:58:38][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:58:39] Wanted more room. So they bought a big house down in Mount Vernon. Oh, I said at the time, believe it or not, I had actually moved. This is ridiculous to do this for this. I hope you edit most of this out. [00:58:56][16.6]

Kerry Reed: [00:58:56] Well, you know, if you don't like anything you say, we can edit it out. Yeah. [00:59:00][3.2]

Kevin Reed: [00:59:00] If I what now? [00:59:01][0.3]

Kerry Reed: [00:59:01] If you don't like anything that was said, we can edit it out. I just think it's an interesting dynamic, you know? So your parents buy a house in Old Town twice, and then, you know, clearly they like the area very much. Your father owns a business in the city, yet they decide to move out to Mount Vernon. So. But if you don't want it, you don't want to talk about it anymore. [00:59:22][21.1]

Kevin Reed: [00:59:23] Well, it was nothing more than just having a bigger house.
[00:59:24][1.7]

Kerry Reed: [00:59:25] Okay. [00:59:25][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [00:59:26] Because, you know, when you get bigger houses in Alexandria, they start to really cost a lot of money. They moved out, moved down there. I in turn had moved. I actually moved into Mark's old house. He and Diane had bought a house. He was stupid. They did such stupid things. And depending on the economic situation, I mean, there are times that you can buy a house just by fogging a mirror, and other times it's extremely difficult. That was a very, very easy time to purchase. [01:00:15][48.8]

Kerry Reed: [01:00:17] When was that? [01:00:17][0.4]

Kevin Reed: [01:00:18] Oh, that would have been late 70s. And so anyway [pauses] can we take a break? [01:00:27][8.8]

Kerry Reed: [01:00:38] A break? We've been talking for an hour. We can stop if you want.
[01:00:42][4.1]

Kevin Reed: [01:00:43] No, I like answering these questions because in part, I feel like this is your history, too, and you should hear it. Because, you know, what avenues do I normally have to discuss these very topics with you? [01:00:57][14.1]

Kerry Reed: [01:00:59] I mean, I feel like we've discussed them a lot as I've grown up. [01:01:03][3.4]

Kevin Reed: [01:01:05] Did you know about Matthew Kersey? [01:01:06][1.0]

Kerry Reed: [01:01:08] No. But then again, you know, you say the names of your childhood friends and they sort of just go in one ear. [01:01:15][7.4]

Kevin Reed: [01:01:16] That was that was the gunrunner. The Confederate Gunrunner. [01:01:18][2.4]

Kerry Reed: [01:01:18] Oh, no. I was familiar with Julian Randall, but not Matthew Kersey. [01:01:21][2.9]

Kevin Reed: [01:01:22] Arnold. [01:01:22][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [01:01:23] Julian Arnold. Yeah. Um. And, you know, it is my history as well. So I am interested in it. But there is a certain broader element for people other than myself who might be listening to this some time where I think they might be interested to know, you know, why certain things occurred. [01:01:45][22.1]

Kevin Reed: [01:01:46] All right. [01:01:46][0.2]

Kerry Reed: [01:01:46] Well, but... [01:01:47][0.2]

Kevin Reed: [01:01:47] Let's keep going then. [01:01:47][0.4]

Kerry Reed: [01:01:48] Okay. [01:01:48][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [01:01:51] What question are we on? [01:01:52][0.9]

Kerry Reed: [01:01:53] So eventually, even though you got your degree in software, you took over your father's business. Right? [01:01:59][5.3]

Kevin Reed: [01:02:01] Yes. [01:02:01][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [01:02:02] Why did you do that? [01:02:03][0.8]

Kevin Reed: [01:02:04] He asked me too. [01:02:05][0.5]

Kerry Reed: [01:02:05] Okay. So even though you didn't like this business. [01:02:10][5.4]

Kevin Reed: [01:02:12] Well, I didn't know I didn't like it. [01:02:13][1.1]

Kerry Reed: [01:02:15] Really? I thought you said you didn't like it. [01:02:16][1.2]

Kevin Reed: [01:02:17] This is the situation. Well, I know I grew to despise it, but I didn't hate it in the beginning. [01:02:23][6.2]

Kerry Reed: [01:02:24] Okay. [01:02:24][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [01:02:25] You know. Here's the situation. All right. I mean, I was looking at this and I was thinking, you know, what's going to happen probably going into business isn't the worst thing that could happen to me. You know, it's what most people do I could end up being quite well-to-do, etc., etc., and so forth. Hell, I'd married an accountant. [laughs] So, that's where things kind of stood. It was only later when I decided, because there are a lot of pressures that are associated with running a business, particularly under the circumstances that I was. So it really spoiled, it poisoned the entire experience for me. That help? [01:03:18][53.4]

Kerry Reed: [01:03:19] Yeah. So what was Alexandria like at that time? So it was an envelope manufacturing business. So that's maybe you can call that light industry. I guess we could say. [01:03:31][12.2]

Kevin Reed: [01:03:32] Yeah, I had that big business in Alexandria for about a year, and then we moved. We moved down to Lorton, Virginia. [01:03:41][9.3]

Kerry Reed: [01:03:42] Why did you move the business? [01:03:43][0.7]

Kevin Reed: [01:03:43] Needed more space. [01:03:44][0.7]

Kerry Reed: [01:03:45] More space? [01:03:45][0.2]

Kevin Reed: [01:03:46] Yeah. The. The facility that my dad had on North Royal was, how to describe this, it was like a little warehouse with a drive in area like a garage, might have even been originally planned for, you know, automotive repair or something like that. Wasn't any place that you would want to move big materials, you know, big truckloads of materials. Yet that's exactly what we ended up having to start doing. So it made sense to move to a location where we had a standard loading dock of standard height and it wasn't a six hour ordeal for a tractor trailer to back in. That kind of thing. [01:04:33][46.8]

Kerry Reed: [01:04:36] So as a business owner, did you try to cultivate any relationships with the community in Alexandria? Like, did you try to approach the city and be the contractor for all other letters, I suppose, or? [01:04:49][12.8]

Kevin Reed: [01:04:49] Yeah, I did. Sure. [01:04:49][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [01:04:52] What did that process look like? [01:04:53][1.0]

Kevin Reed: [01:04:54] Well, it's a bidding process. You know, they all jurisdictions, at least ones that I'm aware of, will put out a list, a packet of materials that they required. In this case, for my business, they put out a list of envelopes, sizes and quantities of envelopes that they needed for doing mailings for taxes and things like that. So it's just a matter of getting on that list and then figuring out your cost and bidding it out. [01:05:22][27.3]

Kerry Reed: [01:05:24] Did you get the bid? [01:05:25][0.5]

Kevin Reed: [01:05:25] No. Never got a bid. [01:05:27][1.6]

Kerry Reed: [01:05:31] So you didn't keep this business long. What made you... [01:05:35][3.9]

Kevin Reed: [01:05:36] Went bankrupt. [01:05:36][0.2]

Kerry Reed: [01:05:37] Went bankrupt. How did that happen? [01:05:39][2.5]

Kevin Reed: [01:05:43] See, this is why I was almost reluctant to do this. [01:05:45][2.0]

Kerry Reed: [01:05:46] Well, you don't have to answer. [01:05:47][0.5]

Kevin Reed: [01:05:48] Yet, you know? I mean, that's a good question. And I should answer that question for you. It's just I don't see where it's anybody else's business but ours at this point. [01:05:57][9.6]

Kerry Reed: [01:05:59] Okay. Fair enough. So once the business was defunct... [01:06:05][6.2]

Kevin Reed: [01:06:05] I mean, I am a private citizen after all. [01:06:08][2.3]

Kerry Reed: [01:06:08] Yes. Once the business went defunct, what did you do? Were you still living in Alexandria at this time? [01:06:13][4.7]

Kevin Reed: [01:06:15] I was married by then. Yes, we had our condominium. [01:06:20][5.4]

Kerry Reed: [01:06:21] Where was that? [01:06:22][0.4]

Kevin Reed: [01:06:23] In Parkfairfax. [01:06:23][0.4]

Kerry Reed: [01:06:24] Parkfarifax. [01:06:25][0.5]

Kevin Reed: [01:06:35] On, what was the name of that road? On Valley Drive. [01:06:36][1.4]

Kerry Reed: [01:06:41] So when did you move out of Alexandria? [01:06:43][2.4]

Kevin Reed: [01:06:46] Me personally or my parents? [01:06:47][1.1]

Kerry Reed: [01:06:48] Well, your parents moved out... [01:06:49][0.5]

Kevin Reed: [01:06:50] Before. They moved down to... [01:06:51][1.3]

Kerry Reed: [01:06:51] Mount Vernon. [01:06:52][0.3]

Kevin Reed: [01:06:52] Mount Vernon. And then they subsequently sold that house. Well, Mark and John weren't living with them. They didn't need a house that big. [01:07:02][10.7]

Kerry Reed: [01:07:03] Mm hmm. [01:07:03][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [01:07:05] Didn't want it either. [01:07:05][0.6]

Kerry Reed: [01:07:06] Mm hmm. [01:07:06][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [01:07:07] My dad couldn't stand cutting the grass. And he had a fairly good-sized home. Anyway. [01:07:18][10.9]

Kerry Reed: [01:07:20] So around what? What year was this when you decided that you've had enough? You've had enough with the business and you were going to move out of Alexandria, when is that? [01:07:28][8.2]

Kevin Reed: [01:07:35] 1987. [01:07:35][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [01:07:39] Do you remember when the Braddock metro was put in? [01:07:41][2.3]

Kevin Reed: [01:07:44] Yeah. [01:07:44][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [01:07:46] Did you have any strong opinions on that at the time? [01:07:48][1.9]

Kevin Reed: [01:07:52] I thought it was a good idea, actually, in a small world. At that time, I was taking karate lessons. At a karate studio right there on King Street. [01:08:09][17.4]

Kerry Reed: [01:08:10] Mm hmm. [01:08:10][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [01:08:11] Where that massive complex built, you know, the courthouse and whatnot that are back there. Well, before that, it was a strip mall. Well, the strip mall along the front there, all along Duke Street, not King Street. Behind that, behind the strip mall, was a junkyard for cars. So in fact, I remember going back there a couple of times. This is when I was 16 and those 16-year-old boys have a certain interest in fixing cars. At least at that time, probably not at all anymore. But at that time it was a fairly common thing to want to be able to do. So you could go to that junkyard in Alexandria and buy old parts. [01:09:10][59.3]

Kerry Reed: [01:09:11] Mm hmm. [01:09:12][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [01:09:12] So I'd been to that place several times to look for old parts. [01:09:18][5.9]

Kerry Reed: [01:09:21] Where did you say that junkyard was again? On Duke Street? [01:09:23][1.8]

Kevin Reed: [01:09:24] It was on Duke St. [01:09:24][0.6]

Kerry Reed: [01:09:25] Okay. When did they take out that junkyard? [01:09:30][5.5]

Kevin Reed: [01:09:33] When they built the Eisenhower, when they built that complex that's there. Yeah. [01:09:37][3.9]

Kerry Reed: [01:09:43] So when did they start doing that? [01:09:43][0.6]

Kevin Reed: [01:09:43] Early 80s. [01:09:43][-0.6]

Kerry Reed: [01:09:56] And then they replaced the strip mall or the strip mall came in? [01:10:00][3.5]

Kevin Reed: [01:10:01] No, the strip mall. They replaced that. Yeah. All that complex that's there now was built on the old junkyard and there was also a steel, James steel fabricators back there, you know. Jensen machine. A machine company. And stuff like that. [01:10:27][25.9]

Kerry Reed: [01:10:34] So we've been talking a while now. Sort of running out of questions here. But eventually you did end up working for Northern Virginia Community College in the Alexandria campus. So while you were working as a professor there, how often did you get the chance to go into the city proper? Not just on the West end there? [01:11:02][27.7]

Kevin Reed: [01:11:05] Not very often. Not really. [01:11:06][1.1]

Kerry Reed: [01:11:09] Okay. [01:11:09][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [01:11:12] If you're looking for any kind of community involvement, I was on the City of Alexandria Information Technology Committee for a couple of years. Yeah. [01:11:22][10.3]

Kerry Reed: [01:11:23] What did that committee do?. [01:11:23][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [01:11:25] Officially advised the city on acquiring new technology, the use of technology computers. That was officially, unofficially, it was just a rubber stamp. [01:11:39][13.6]

Kerry Reed: [01:11:42] Do you remember any big initiatives that came through that you were for or against or any big recommendations you all made? [01:11:47][5.5]

Kevin Reed: [01:11:48] No. [01:11:48][0.0]

Kerry Reed: [01:11:49] No. [01:11:49][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [01:11:50] There wasn't anything really like that going on at the time. You know, it was really just a matter of, well, we want to buy some new computers to replace the ones in our shipping department. Okay? Okay. We have no problem with that. [01:12:05][15.6]

Kerry Reed: [01:12:11] How did you come to be on that board? You just asked or appointed? [01:12:15][3.7]

Kevin Reed: [01:12:19] I was appointed by the dean. [01:12:21][2.1]

Kerry Reed: [01:12:23] Oh, okay. [01:12:23][0.4]

Kevin Reed: [01:12:25] Because she got a call from the city and they said, "our bylaws require you to supply a member of our committee to us." You know, just for a faculty member from your esteemed academy to be on our advisory board. So she said to me, "that's you." Actually, she liked me very much. Jenny Graves. But so anyway. So it was that. But the problem was they met on Monday nights. Monday nights are the most popular night for us to teach. [01:13:12][47.1]

Kerry Reed: [01:13:13] Mm hmm. [01:13:13][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [01:13:15] So I got out of two. But I had to teach on some Monday nights, and that was the end of that. [01:13:24][8.3]

Kerry Reed: [01:13:25] Hmm. When did you start working at NOVA? [01:13:28][3.1]

Kevin Reed: [01:13:36] January of 2000 [01:13:37][1.7]

Kerry Reed.: [01:13:47] How big was it at that time? Because I know Northern Virginia is a huge community college network. But when you started working there in 2000... [01:13:56][8.8]

Kevin Reed: [01:13:58] About the same size. [01:13:59][0.8]

Kerry Reed.: [01:13:59] About the same size. [01:13:59][0.4]

Kevin Reed: [01:14:00] The campus was probably about the same size it is today. Okay. We got a new building. But that just really replaced that older one. [01:14:08][8.2]

Kerry Reed.: [01:14:08] What about student body? Had the student body increased or decreased over your time spent there? [01:14:14][5.3]

Kevin Reed: [01:14:16] I never sat on any committees for that was a matter of formal information. If I'd asked somebody, they would have told me in a heartbeat. But off the top of my head, I can't recall ever being actually told the population of City of Alexandria Campus. The school as a whole I know. The school as a whole hosts about 70,000 students. Huge. Not the largest institution in the country. It's not even the largest community college in the country, but we're like number two. [01:15:00][44.0]

Kerry Reed.: [01:15:04] All right. So we've been recording for a while now. We're going to start to wrap up here. Do you have any favorite memory of Alexandra? [01:15:16][12.2]

Kevin Reed: [01:15:18] Gosh, there are so many. There are so many. I glanced at that earlier before we started, and I stopped and considered the fact that where my grandparents that lived in Parkfairfax. They had some neighbors, actually they had a lot of neighbors, but they had some neighbors, the McCarthys. And the McCarthys, basically, I was very friendly with them. They weren't twins, but they're very close in age. Justin and Kim. Justin was like my best friend. Kim, his sister. She was when I was nine, ten, eleven, the love of my life. [01:16:14][56.2]

Kerry Reed.: [01:16:15] Mm hmm. [01:16:15][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [01:16:17] So even [laughs] on the day I was married, my mother's friend, Mary Blake, who had known me since I was born and known the McCarthys and all that, all these people. And she came up to me and she said, "you know, I'm very happy for you. Ellen seems like a wonderful girl. But I always thought you'd marry Kim McCarthy." [laughs] She was a nice girl. So there was that. I don't know. There were kids our age lived over in that area and we would hang out with them when we went over there. And so it was like a continuation. Now, as Chris became more and more sports involved, that became a little less practical. You know, he couldn't go so my parents wouldn't be taking us quite as off and that sort of thing. But anyway, that was one thing that I certainly remember with great fondness, the two of them. [01:17:38][80.8]

Kerry Reed.: [01:17:42] Do you have any hopes for the future of the City of Alexandria? What would you like to see happen in the city? [01:17:48][5.3]

Kevin Reed: [01:17:48] Well, I'd like to see it kind of continue the way that it has been going. You know, I think its history is such that it deserves to be front and center. It deserves to be the real focus. We don't have a lot of history in this country, and we need to cherish every little piece that we've got. And that's a pretty good piece right there. City of Alexandria. [01:18:15][26.5]

Kerry Reed.: [01:18:20] Do you think that the city should be more, I guess, up front about some of the darker aspects of its history? [01:18:28][8.5]

Kevin Reed: [01:18:29] Oh, I think so, absolutely. [01:18:30][0.6]

Kerry Reed.: [01:18:30] Because, you know, there is is like there are markers in several instances where people got lynched, unfortunately, back in the early 20th century. So there is the

sort of public memorialization of some of the worst aspects of Alexandria history. But some of the other stuff isn't as well known. I feel. [01:18:53][23.0]

Kevin Reed: [01:18:54] Where was somebody lynched in Alexandria? [01:18:55][1.1]

Kerry Reed.: [01:18:56] Oh, gosh. I knew you were about to follow up on that. I can show you after this. [01:19:03][6.7]

Kevin Reed: [01:19:10] Because frankly, it does not surprise me. But I have no recollection of anybody ever telling me that that had ever happened in Alexandria. [01:19:22][11.7]

Kerry Reed.: [01:19:22] It was a slave port, though. [01:19:24][2.2]

Kevin Reed: [01:19:27] Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Okay. I could show you where they did all the slave trading. [01:19:29][1.9]

Kerry Reed.: [01:19:30] Hmm. [01:19:30][0.0]

Kevin Reed: [01:19:31] Oh, that brings something up. By the way. You left out a neighborhood. You left out an area. And your little listing here with the Hump. And Uptown. And the Berg. The Dip. [01:19:44][13.3]

Kerry Reed.: [01:19:45] The Dip. [01:19:45][0.1]

Kevin Reed: [01:19:46] You know the Dip? [01:19:46][0.4]

Kerry Reed: [01:19:47] Yeah. Yeah. And then if you could hold on to one memory forever. What would it be? [01:20:03][16.5]

Kevin Reed: [01:20:12] Holding you for the first time. City of Alexandria Hospital, Inova, Alexandria. [01:20:18][5.8]

Kerry Reed: [01:20:21] All right. Well, thank you so much. This has been an absolute pleasure hearing these stories all over again. [01:20:28][6.7]

Kevin Reed: [01:20:29] My pleasure. [01:20:30][0.3]

Kerry Reed: [01:20:29] And I really do appreciate it. [01:20:31][1.4]

Kevin Reed: [01:20:32] My pleasure. [01:20:32][0.3]

Kerry Reed: [01:20:33] Thank you. [01:20:33][0.0]

[4140.7]