



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



**Project Name:** *Alexandria Legacies*

**Title:** *Interview with Ralph Grimm*

**Date of Interview:** *November 23, 2005*

**Location of Interview:** *Del Ray Neighborhood of Alexandria, Virginia*

**Interviewer:** *Anna Gardner*

**Transcriber:** *Anna Gardner*

**Abstract:** Ralph Grimm was born November 25, 1926, on East Alexandria Avenue, which was in Arlington County at that time. His family later moved to Del Ray, and he discusses the history of the neighborhood and his opinion about how it was given the name "Del Ray." He has many poignant stories and memories of life in Del Ray, which he shares with the interviewer. He grew up and worked in Del Ray until 1978 at which time he was transferred by his employer, State Farm, to Roanoke. He retired to Florida in 1997, but returns to Del Ray often to visit friends, his four children, five grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. He shared with the interviewer many photos and other memorabilia from his life.

**This transcript has been edited by the interviewee and may not reflect the audio-recording exactly.**

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<b>Introductions</b>	
Anna Gardner:	My name is Anna Gardner and it is November 23rd, it is about 3 pm, and I am interviewing Mr. Ralph Grimm.
Ralph Grimm:	I was born November the 25th, 1926, at 210 East Alexandria Avenue, which at that time was Arlington County, and then finally it was ceded back to Virginia, and all this area was known as "Potomac," the town of Potomac, and later on it became Del Ray. Now there's a mystery here of how it got the name Del Ray. Even many people who lived, born and raised here still argue about how it got the name Del Ray. But I came up with the only one that they can't say no to.
<b>Discussion of How Del Ray Got Its Name</b>	
Ralph Grimm:	<p>Way back there was a man and wife came down from Canada, this is going way back, that's when these lots in here were selling for fifty cents down and fifty cents or a dollar a month, whatever you could afford. And the lots were like 60 feet by 125 feet, they were little narrow lots. Some people bought two of them. This man and his wife came from Canada way back then, his name was Mr. Raymond, I don't know if you've ever heard of it, but he built all these apartment houses down in Del Ray that all look alike.</p> <p>The apartment houses you've seen that look all alike, the brick? They were framework then, they bricked 'em later, and they only had colors were white trimmed in green. They were all that fun color. And gettin' back to the name Del Ray. His wife's name was Delores, and she was the office manager and the bookkeeper. Mr. Raymond was the salesman who went out and sold the property and built the houses. So if you take Delores' D-E-L and put it with the R-A-Y you got Del Ray.</p>
A.G:	How do you think he got the name changed?
Ralph Grimm:	<p>Well, he bought up all of the land most of the land in here that he bought the homes and all on, I figured that he came up with this name Del Ray and it just stuck and stayed with us. And I researched it also, back into the early 1800s and late 1700s, and the only other one I could find was a woman who had the name Della. And then there was a Ray in that family, and they had property; they all lived in Lincolnia.</p> <p>You know where Lincolnia is?</p>
A.G:	Just vaguely.

Ralph Grimm:	<p>Out past Landmark.</p> <p>And that's where PT Barnum used to bring his elephants and all to quarter them for the bad winters up north way back...and I really couldn't track that one down other than no further than what I got: D-E-L-L-A and then the Ray part was from over on her husband's part of the family. So the best one that I can up with is the one about Delores and Mr. Raymond...</p>
A.G:	<p>What year do you think that changed—do you know?</p>
Ralph Grimm:	<p>Well, probably back in the [19]20s, which would be as far back as 1920, 1921, 1922...but a lot of people still went under the name Town of Potomac. And of course the next generation, I guess like us coming along, we all stuck with the Del Ray name.</p>
A.G:	<p>You called it Del Ray when you were growing up?</p>
Ralph Grimm:	<p>Right... the Del Ray name. Yeah. Now, nowhere down in City Hall in Alexandria can they come up with it. I've been through all that. Nothin'. So, I got some paperwork here too that you can....</p>
A.G:	<p>Sure, sure!</p>
<p><b>Childhood and Growing Up in Del Ray</b></p>	
Ralph Grimm:	<p>It's a little quiz thing, but talking about Del Ray, where Warwick Village is now, that used to be General Hume's old estate back in the Civil War. And we as kids going to Mount Vernon School down here, which was the old school sitting on the little hill that they tore down, did you ever see that school?</p>
A.G:	<p>No.</p>
Ralph Grimm:	<p>Okay, that was our grade school. We went to first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade—this little school sittin' on the hill over there where Mount Ida Avenue cuts through, they'd put the ropes up there and we could go out and play during the day, and they'd take the ropes down and the traffic could go through. And they tore that school down, and then next to it was where you went over and went until your seventh grade. And then seventh grade, by then we had the GW [George Washington] High School.</p>
<p><b>Teenage Years and Family History</b></p>	
A.G:	<p>You went to high school...through what grade?</p>
Ralph Grimm:	<p>Four years of high school.</p>
A.G:	<p>Four years of high school...</p>

<p>Ralph Grimm:</p>	<p>And we didn't have no school buses—you walked everywhere you went. Unless you had a bicycle, then you rode a bicycle. But up on that Hume Estate, we used to be taken up there as we were kids in school down here as part of our history, and he would let you go up there, and he had the old cannons and these big iron gates, and they would take you all through his nice beautiful mansion that he had up there with all these Civil War artifacts and everything, and you tour through it.</p> <p>So, it was really...it was very historical.</p>
<p>A.G:</p>	<p>Wow—how old were you when you went there?</p>
<p>Ralph Grimm:</p>	<p>I would have been, probably about the first time I went through that thing I was about six years old, seven years old.</p> <p>And it was very interesting, even when I was a teenager, we would still go up there. And his name was Frank Hume and he was born in 1843. He came out of Culpepper, Virginia, and when he was 16 years old he joined the Sarpies [?]. And he got wounded and his brother got killed, and that's all that history was there for us as we went up there. Another big thing of Del Ray was further down here on your right there used to be a bowling alley, a beauty shop, and all apartments upstairs and [incomprehensible] had a furniture store -- that must have been 1941, I guess. That whole thing burned up.</p>
<p>A.G:</p>	<p>Wow.</p>
<p>Ralph Grimm:</p>	<p>The whole thing burned up. There was a bowling alley in the basement and a restaurant over top of that, and then these apartments up and that was a big fire...burned all day long...</p>
<p>A.G:</p>	<p>Do you remember after the fire how quickly things were replaced?</p>
<p>Ralph Grimm:</p>	<p>They rebuilt them—I'd have to go look to see what they rebuilt. The old Palm Theater that I asked you about?</p>
<p>A.G:</p>	<p>Uh huh.</p>
<p>Ralph Grim</p>	<p>We had a theater down here on the left and we could go to the movies for ten cents if you wanted you carried the newspapers and made the money. And up on the hill of Russell Road where there's a Catholic school up there now, right across the street from that was Mickelback's mansion. Mickelbacks owned all that property, they owned a lot of furniture stores and everything all around town.</p> <p>Us boys used to go up there at nighttime, after it got dark, and they had two ponies. And we'd get the ponies out and ride them around and around and around...</p>

A.G:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	So, that was that...my daddy was town policeman.
A.G:	Oh, okay.
Ralph Grimm:	<p>He retired—he was the captain of the police force in Alexandria. He went on the force in 1929, that was when the stock market crashed. He was a house painter and paper hanger.</p> <p>And when the stock market broke he didn't have any money to buy the supplies, so he applied to the police department in 1929, got a job in 1929.</p>
A.G:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	<p>And then late World War II, my two older brothers—four boys, two girls in the family, there's only three of us left. My two older brothers joined the Marine Corps. They both went in on Iwo-Jima.</p> <p>And one of them was killed on the first wave in.</p>
A.G:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	Charles Herbert Grimm. —My father is the mainstay of building this youth camp down at Kilmarnock, Virginia, and they named the camp after my brother...it's Camp Charles Herbert Grimm.
A.G:	How long has that camp been around?
Ralph Grimm:	That camp's been there since nineteen...I think 1940, when my father and another police officer went down there and got that property. And I brought you a folder and all, I'll give it to you, a little something on the camp and everything...
A.G:	Wow.
<b>Tales of His Belated High School Diploma</b>	
Ralph Grimm:	<p>After I got out of high school, or while I was in GW High School, they had a program, it was during the war, and they wanted some of us to volunteer. To drop out of school to work in the torpedo plant, and they would have a school on the roof and guarantee you could continue on and get your diploma.</p> <p>Well, a lot of us guys out here—we dropped out of school, which was...we were in our second year, going into third year, and after about a year, the school stopped. [laughs] So, we continued on at the torpedo plant until the war was over and then I had to later on go to school and finish up and get my diploma.</p>

A.G:	So, the school that they promised you on the roof, it didn't continue after....
Ralph Grimm:	<p>No, because what they said was that they didn't have enough students to justify it so they dropped the school. Well, they didn't have any night school at that time, they only had day school, so [inaudible]...my buddy I grew up with [inaudible]. Said, "What're we gonna do?" Said, "Well, we'll just continue working here for the government until they cut us loose, and then we'll go from there."</p> <p>So, that's what we did. I finally did get my diploma. But I didn't get it here.</p>
A.G:	Oh, really?
Ralph Grimm:	No. I wound up getting it in Florida.
A.G:	Oh...I was gonna ask what made you want to go back and get your diploma if that was...
Ralph Grimm:	<p>Well, you know, strange thing...I guess it's one of those things where when you go to school you really don't like it...you know, nobody's crazy 'bout school, "What do I need all this school for?" Well, after that, you...you really do need that diploma, because, a lot of things come up. For example, I eventually went to work for State Farm Insurance Company, here in Alexandria, Braddock Road. And they never did say...the only thing they asked me on my application was to put down what high school you went to.</p>
A.G:	Right.
Ralph Grimm:	<p>So, I did, I put down GW High School.</p> <p>They never said "Did you graduate?" or "What year did you graduate?" None of that. So, in working for State Farm and I was being promoted and being promoted, and finally I was promoted to a supervisor of estimators and they transferred me to Roanoke, Virginia. And I was there for 19 years, plus the years that I had up here.</p> <p>And...one of them come along and said, "You don't have down what year you graduated." And I said, "Nobody ever asked me, and I never said."</p>
A.G:	Yeah...[laughs]
Ralph Grimm:	<p>They said, "My God, I can't believe this, you're doing a supervisor's job and you know more about the business." You know—</p> <p>"Why don't we just leave you alone until you retire?"</p>

A.G:	[laughs]
Ralph Grimm:	I said, "Okay." So I retired in 1995 and moved to Florida in 1997. And I got to Florida, and I said, you know...I'm in a retirement community where they do have Life Learn College, and they also did the GED [General Equivalency Diploma], so I went over and filled all the papers out and took my tests and passed with flying colors.
A.G:	[laughs]
Ralph Grimm:	So, I got my diploma.
A.G:	Got your diploma...
Ralph Grimm:	And they said, "Hey, what we want you to do, we want to put it on TV, and do a little story." So I said, "Oh, that's great." So, that's the way that happened.
A.G:	So, you were on TV?
Ralph Grimm:	Yeah!
A.G:	[overlapping] you got your diploma after you retired...
Ralph Grimm:	Oh yeah, they put it on TV and newspapers and the whole nine yards...thought it was great, you know, that period of time [laughs] to come back and do that. So that was great.  The old Palm Theater that was down here .We used to go there as kids; if you didn't have money to get in, sometimes boys would go to the back where they dump the tickets out that after they ran through them the grinder, and we'd get a ticket where it hadn't been all mangled—
A.G:	Uh huh...go back in?
Ralph Grimm:	Go in with the ticket, yeah...or, we used to open the back door and let our buddies in.
A.G:	Uh huh.
Ralph Grimm:	Yeah...
A.G:	How did you get your money when you could pay to go in?
Ralph Grimm:	Well, I always had a paper route. I sold magazines as a kid.
A.G:	What paper was it?

Ralph Grimm:	<p>I had...let's see...it was...it was a Washington...called <i>Washington News</i>, it was an area paper, wasn't like the [<i>Washington</i>] <i>Post</i> and all these big papers...was a small paper. I distributed hand-flyers for the hardware stores and grocery stores. 200 flyers for a dollar. 200 flyers for a dollar! And then I would come up to the grocery stores on Saturday, with my wagon, and I'd stand out front waiting for people coming out with bags of groceries, and I'd offer to take their groceries and put them in the wagon and deliver them to their house.</p> <p>Never asked for any money, whatever tips they give us...nickel or dime...</p>
A.G:	Did you come up with doing that on your own? How'd you think to do that?
Ralph Grimm:	Yeah!
A.G:	Yeah?
Ralph Grimm:	<p>And in the winter-time to make money, I would use my wagon—I mean my sled—and I would go from door-to-door knocking on doors for people that needed kerosene for their stove.</p> <p>You know, kerosene stove. And they would give me their cans and I would go to the hardware store, get 'em filled and I'd drag 'em back and deliver 'em back to the house and whatever tip they give me. Nickel, dime...yeah—</p>
A.G:	That seems pretty industrious. Was that common back then, or were you just—
Ralph Grimm:	We all did.
A.G:	Yeah?
<b>Del Ray During the Years After the Great Depression</b>	
Ralph Grimm:	<p>Yeah...like I say, Del Ray was like living amongst a big happy family, and no matter what nationality or your background... and nobody locked doors, when we'd go to somebody's house, I'd go to my buddy's house, for example, I'd go over and all I'd do is holler in the screen door, "Anybody home?" and they'd holler back, "Yeah, Ralph, come on in." They didn't lock doors or lock windows...anything like that. Course you had no air-conditioning...so during the summers we'd have screens in the windows, things like that, and your screen door you'd just latch, and would leave it open, you know, like that.</p>
A.G:	Yeah?

Ralph Grimm:	Because you didn't have all these things going on then that go on today. It was just--you could walk anywhere you wanted. The other thing, as all of us were kids, we were all taught the same thing: no matter who it was, anybody that was an adult, you were "Yes sir," "No sir," "Yes ma'am," "No ma'am." And if you were misbehaving, any adult could correct you. Any adult. And you did not speak back to them. They caught you horsing around in the store or something, "You go home, I'm going to tell your Daddy." Daddy's the town cop, so—
A.G:	[laughing]
Ralph Grimm:	We know who your daddy is!
A.G:	Right.
Ralph Grimm:	But, that was the way growing up together.
A.G:	Was it a small enough community that you knew most of the adults?
Ralph Grimm:	I knew practically every house, everybody, in this place. Because Del Ray was basically from Monroe Avenue all the way to Number One Highway [Route 1/Jefferson Davis Highway] all the way to Russell Road down to Glebe Road. That was basically what was called Del Ray.
A.G:	Did you mix much with the Alexandria community?
Ralph Grimm:	Oh, sure.
A.G:	Yeah?
Ralph Grimm:	Yeah, we used to walk all over town. I belonged to Alexandria Boys' Club when I was a kid, played basketball, boxed over there, all those good things. We used to walk all the way from Del Ray to the Washington Monument.
A.G:	Wow!
Ralph Grimm:	We'd walk from Del Ray down to the Washington National Airport. Or we'd take a bicycle.
A.G:	How old were you when you did that?
Ralph Grimm:	Anywhere from ten on...
A.G:	Your parents weren't concerned about you?

Ralph Grimm:	<p>No, because they knew that we were going to be back before dark and we always told them where we were going. Long as they knew where we were going, it was all right. Just, the big one, “Don’t you hitchhike.” Nope, didn’t do that when we were kids. Of course, we did misbehave there because there was an old trestle that went across Potomac Yards. It’s not here anymore, they tore it down. It was at the end of Mount Ida, where it comes out at Number One down there. There was a trestle going all the way over on the other side of the railroad, over by the railroad, and we would go across the railroad [inaudible].</p> <p>We never did tell Mom and Dad about that...</p>
A.G:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	But, you know, I think our games were kick-the-tin-can, run-sheep-run, hide-and-peek, all those kind of games that we played.
A.G:	What’s run-sheep-run?
Ralph Grimm:	Run-sheep-run, you know, was you had a chain and some would hide and someone come looking for you and they’d get close to you, you know, “Run sheep run!” and you’d have to run all the way back to the telephone pole before they could tag you!
A.G:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	<p>That was run-sheep-run. Then, kick-the-tin-can, you know, we’d get the old tomato can, set it out on the corner...</p> <p>And one person, we would take numbers and draw and whoever got this one bad number, they had to stay there with the tin can.</p> <p>And they could then start going out looking for somebody and they would say, “Hey! Hey, Ralph, I got you!” And then I had to come in. But while somebody, while you were off across the street looking for somebody, I could come up and kick the tin can, run out and hide again, and you had to go get the tin can, put it back on base, and start all over again. So, sometimes, the one guarding the tin can could be stuck all night.</p>
A.G:	Were there lots of open areas to play, then? Or did you play in the street?
Ralph Grimm:	Oh yeah, sure...played in the street.
A.G:	Yeah?
Ralph Grimm:	You know, didn’t have curbs or gutters, didn’t have no sidewalks...
A.G:	[laughter]

Ralph Grimm:	Didn't have paved streets either.
A.G:	Really?
Ralph Grimm:	We had dirt roads, you know.
A.G:	Do you know when they paved the streets?
Ralph Grimm:	They started paving the streets, well, like Mount Vernon Avenue or something like that, they'd done those earlier back in...the 1922 or something like that...I think they'd paved that. But side streets—a lot of those didn't get done until probably...1925, and on up from there. And they used to, the first time they used to just come by and spray tar, let that sit. 'Course then we kids'd go barefoot and get into the tar, and you'd have to clean your feet with kerosene...
A.G:	That's nasty.
Ralph Grimm:	And wash 'em after that. ... let's see what else have we got here...
A.G:	Well, you were talking about going to see movies. What movies did you go see?
Ralph Grimm:	It was always a Western.  It was some kind of Tom Mix, Ken Maynard, all those kind of Western things.  And then they would have a couple cartoons in there with it.  It was a lot of fun. That later became...the Palm Theater when it closed up became Turks' Men's Shop. Sold men's clothes.
A.G:	Did you take your brothers and sisters with you? ...Did you hang out with your brothers and sisters?
Ralph Grimm:	Uh, no. Well, one brother, yeah. My older brother, Henry and I. Then there was Herbert and then there was Norman. Norman retired from the police department. He put in 20—over 25 years and he retired. He was commander of detective bureau—in fact, I had lunch with him today. And my sister, she was with us for lunch. She still...she lives right off of Duke Street.
<b>409 Howell Avenue, His Childhood Home</b>	
Ralph Grimm:	If it wasn't for her husband, she'd still be living in Del Ray. We lived at 409 Howell Avenue. Double house...big double house.
A.G:	—is the house still there?

Ralph Grimm:	House is still there. Still, every time I come up, I go and take a look at the old house.
A.G:	Does anyone from your family live in it anymore?
Ralph Grimm:	No. I don't know who lives in there now. There's not many of the originals in Del Ray. If I had to put a number on it...probably 25 to 35...
A.G:	People from when you were growing up?
Ralph Grimm:	Yeah...a lot of 'em have passed on. In fact, I have a birthday the 25th. Big Turkey Day! Which I'll be seventy-nine.
A.G:	That's your birthday?! Well, happy early birthday!
Ralph Grimm:	Yeah. When I was a kid, you know, before they changed it, it was a set date of the twenty-fifth.  And then later on, one of the Presidents changed it to a certain Thursday. And every Thanksgiving, my mom would make this big turkey and all of the stuff to go with it and everything, and six little kids sitting around the table, but I always got to pick what I wanted. "What part do you want? It's your birthday."
A.G:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	[laughter] Yeah...Ralph gets to pick the turkey -- he gets the drumstick...
A.G:	[laughter]
<b>Prices and Salaries During His Childhood</b>	
Ralph Grimm:	So, it was good. My dad, at that time, when he was on the police force...he worked twelve hours on and twelve hours off. So, the only thing he could do when he got home was sleep, and then go get ready to go back to work.
A.G:	How many days did he work?
Ralph Grimm:	Seven days a week.
A.G:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	Seven days a week, and they finally started giving him a day off a month.  And then they finally got around to two days a month. But he put in a lot...a lot of hours. In fact when they finally got motorcycles, he went for riding a motorcycle, because they got five dollars more a month to ride a motorcycle.

A.G:	Huh!
Ralph Grimm:	He only...when he took that job I think it only paid somewhere around 700 and some dollars a year, and seven months [inaudible].
A.G:	How was that, back then, was that sort of medium—
Ralph Grimm:	Well, it was a fact that there weren't many jobs, and money was tight! So it was great. You could get a lot more for your money. Kerosene, gasoline. Gasoline, you know, way back was 8 cents a gallon, 12 cents a gallon. Prices of things was just very, very reasonable. When you look at it today, you see a house that we paid 1200 dollars for selling for four hundred fifty thousand, five hundred thousand, right here in Del Ray. Just blows my mind.
A.G:	I bet...
Ralph Grimm:	To hear that kind of thing...I've never seen that much money in my life! [laughter]
A.G:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	But we all were involved...brothers, we all had paper routes, magazine routes. I even sold...they used to have a little tin of salve, used to be for people that had problems with their skin and all that. ...Clover Leaf Salve was the name of it. Something like ten cents a can...you'd get a commission for selling so many.
A.G:	So,you sold those?
Ralph Grimm:	Yeah.
A.G:	Door-to-door?
Ralph Grimm:	Yeah!
A.G:	Yeah?
Ralph Grimm:	Knocked on doors, yeah. One thing you know, make a buck or two...
A.G:	Most of your money went towards movies or—

Ralph Grimm:	<p>A lot of people just figured it helped you out a little bit...let's see what else we've got...kick the tin can.</p> <p>I'm going to see if they're gonna turn the radio down for me just a little bit while you're thinking...[tape stops] [tape resumes] My dad's letter. 1929, when they told him he had to move into the city of Alexandria. [laughter] We were living at Mount Vernon Avenue and Alexandria Avenue, that was GW High School. That was Arlington County then! Cottage Park they called it.</p>
A.G:	So, you had to move?
Ralph Grimm:	<p>Yeah. I was born down there, it was called Cottage Park. And it was Arlington County.</p> <p>So, we had to move to 409 South Washington Street so he could get the job.</p>
A.G:	So, you moved in 1929?
Ralph Grimm:	<p>He went to work in 1929. Put in thirty-some years.</p> <p>I did an interview by phone with some young Boy Scouts. I was in Florida, and they called from Alexandria, and because they heard about me and...and they asked me some questions. I told them. They said, "We want to ask you some questions." I said, "Okay." They said, "Did you have...did y'all have drugs when you were kids?" And I said, "No. But the only thing about drugs when we were kids was the drug store where we went to get an ice cream cone."</p>
A.G:	Really?
Ralph Grimm:	And one of 'em said, "Did people get high when you were a kid?" And I said, "We used to get high as kids...we'd walk to Washington and climb up in the Washington Monument...it was 555 steps high. That's how high I got."
A.G:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	And these kids really enjoyed it. They were just really cracking up.
A.G:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	And one of 'em said, "Well, did y'all have anything called 'pot'?" And I said, "Yeah, my mom put her flowers in it." And one of 'em asked about speed and I said, "Yeah, that's when the police car got after us."
A.G:	[laughter]

Ralph Grimm:	...my son-in-law has this troop, and he was the one that set this up, to do the interview by telephone. So then, one of the next times I came up, I went over to meet them...met the kids. That was great.
A.G:	So, they enjoyed that? How many kids do you have?
Ralph Grimm:	I have three daughters, a son, and I have seven great grandchildren and five grandchildren.
A.G:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	And I came up because one—the eleven year old—is in a play. Alex Fornoff, went, wanted to be there for his play. And when I got back to Florida, I had a trophy made with his name on it and the name of his play and the date. And sent that to him and he called me up, “Grand-daddy, I never had a trophy!!” He went bananas over this thing.
A.G:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	And then, one of my granddaughters, who played the lead in the <i>Nutcracker</i> ballet. And then she was in a play just the other night and we went to that one. So, now I gotta go back and send a trophy to her.
A.G:	Uh huh! She’ll be waiting for that one! Most of your kids and your grandkids, everybody lives here in the area?
Ralph Grimm:	Oh yeah, yeah...we’ll all be getting together...I go to Charlottesville tomorrow, and we’ll all get together. I put together a kazoo band where I live in Florida. There’s me [showing photograph].  [Reading caption] “The kazoo band performs in a production called Wednesday Night Live.” That’s all my buddies down there. That’s me.
A.G:	[laughter] That’s funny.
Ralph Grimm:	Well, that’s what we used to play as kids.
A.G:	Oh, really?
Ralph Grimm:	That was our musical instrument—kazoo. We used to get right out on this corner and have yo-yo contests. The Filipinos used to come around and sold the yo-yos and all, Duncan yo-yos, original Duncan. And they would have contests out here of who could do the around the world and walk the dog and rock the cradle. You ever seen them done?
A.G:	...just a couple times.
Ralph Grimm:	Yeah, I was. Earned a couple prizes right out here, on that corner. With a yo-yo.
A.G:	You were good at yo-yo?

Ralph Grimm:	I think I was!
A.G:	Yeah? [laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	Yeah! It was...we were all good. It was we'd have at least 15 to 20 of us out here with our yo-yoing...
A.G:	Did you have many other toys that you played with? Other toys? What sort of—
Ralph Grimm:	Well, the yo-yo and the kazoo band. My big thing now is golf two or three times a week.
<b>His Retirement Life in Florida</b>	
Ralph Grimm:	We have a club for every state in the union in the retirement community I live in.  And I'm president of...The Virginia Club [tape side change]... I have...I now have 165 members.
A.G:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	I have a meeting once a month...I have entertainment at every meeting. Have food at every meeting. And I put on a picnic on the patio for 'em. And I put on a Christmas party for 'em.
A.G:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	And I hire some entertainment, some musical entertainment, so they enjoy that real well.
A.G:	Sounds like a big community down there.
Ralph Grimm:	It is! We now have probably somewhere around 45-50,000 people in that retirement community.
A.G:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	We travel everywhere by golf cart. I go to the church, I go to the doctor, I go to the dentist, go to the grocery store, I go to the restaurant...
A.G:	On your golf cart?
Ralph Grimm:	On the golf cart. We just set the world's record for the most golf carts in one parade.
A.G:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	We had 5,361 carts in that parade. The old Guinness record was 1,160. So you can imagine how many golf carts we had.

A.G:	[laughter] You said you had a church down there. When you lived here, did you...did your family go to church?
Ralph Grimm:	We all did. Yeah, we went to Del Ray Methodist, which was around on Windsor Avenue.
<b>Volunteer Fireman Years 1941–1945</b>	
Ralph Grimm:	And later on, when I got to be 16 years old, I was able to join the Fire Department as a volunteer.
A.G:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	Right here at Number Two on Windsor Avenue. In fact, on weekends, I slept there. So if there was a fire, us kids were there to go to the fire. Later on, they wanted to know if I wanted to be a paid fireman. I said, “Oh, you don’t pay enough money for me!”
A.G:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	The city didn’t pay much.
A.G:	Really? So were you a volunteer—I’m trying to figure out the dates—were you a volunteer when they had the big fire, 1941?
Ralph Grimm:	Yeah, I was a volunteer when they had the big fire down here. Think I was...think it was [19]41. I was volunteering [19]41, [19]42, [19]43, [19]44, and [19]45. In fact I still got my badge and everything.
A.G:	Really?
Ralph Grimm:	Yeah.
A.G:	So, what did you do to fight the fire? Specifically the 1941—what was that like?

Ralph Grimm:	...it was exciting! And they trained you. They taught you how to jump off the roof into the net if you had to. They taught us how to climb up on the roof and how to handle the hose. How many people it had to be to hold the line and everything, and I finally...of the volunteers, I became commander of the hose, which meant that they couldn't...they could do the pull off and go, but they couldn't go in until somebody said, "Now you can go, you've got five people holding the line back there." 'Cause the hose would whip you when you turned the pressure, so you had to have enough people to hold it, so you had to make sure you had the guys that hold it, and you had to make sure they had the proper equipment on. Had their helmets on, had their jackets, pants and the boots and all those kind of things. And, in between the night, if we didn't have a fire, every time the rescue squad went out, I could go on rescue squad. So, all the wrecks and the murders and the babies being born, I would ride out at nighttime with that.
A.G:	I bet you saw a lot doing that.
Ralph Grimm:	Sure did. Seen a lot of it. Very young...a lot of the guys, they said, "What are you doing around that fire? That's dangerous!" I said, "Well, you know, there's a couple of guys around there that are grown men, they know what they're doing, so you know, I'll just hang with them."
A.G:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	That was very exciting...that was.
A.G:	What about...oh [overlapping].
Ralph Grimm:	No, go ahead.
<b>The Torpedo Factory and Some Potomac River History</b>	
A.G:	What about your job with the Torpedo Factory? What kind of work did you do there?

Ralph Grimm:	<p>...in high school I took up machinist work...the two years I was there I took machinist work. And that's what we went into at the Torpedo Factory. I worked on tail cones. Tail cones of the torpedo-- that was the tail end of it, for the rudders and everything.</p> <p>And my buddy, he worked on nose cones. The nose of it where they put the charger and everything in it. ...it was very interesting. To see these things piece-by-piece-by-piece-by-piece and finally you would see them on completion, then they would take em out back and load 'em on barges, take 'em down by Dahlgren and they would test-fire 'em, to see if they were working properly, and the depth and the height and all this stuff. And if they did they brought em back, stamped 'em for approval, and shipped 'em off to go to the ships.</p>
A.G:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	Which would be down in Norfolk, places like that. So, it was very interesting.
A.G:	Was it long days?
Ralph Grimm:	<p>No, they had shifts. Eight-hour shifts, but if production needed to be stepped up or something they would come around and see if they could get people to work overtime, which, you know, I didn't mind, a couple hours here, there, or whatever. I said, "Yeah, sure." Didn't mind.</p> <p>But we had a row boat and everything down on the Potomac River, my dad did. And of course we were always down on the water. We used to put our—what do you call it?—eel lines when we were kids, to make money, and they had little hooks, little dough balls on em and the eels would come up and get on there. And you'd put them in a bucket. And when you had a bucketful, we would take em up to 14<sup>th</sup> street and sell 'em. And they'd pickle 'em. Pickled eel. We'd get a dollar a bucket.</p>
A.G:	Who'd you sell 'em to—the stores?
Ralph Grimm:	The fish place up there. The fish stores up there. The ones that pickled 'em and everything.
A.G:	I see.
Ralph Grimm:	We'd sell 'em to 'em. And they would put 'em up in jars. Some people eat pickled eel—I won't eat no pickled eel.
A.G:	I've never had it.
Ralph Grimm:	I won't eat no eel at all!
A.G:	[laughter]

Ralph Grimm:	Because they look like a snake! You know, they do. That was the way we made...you know...a little money, and excitement too, because we were on the river with the row boat, and that's a good job when you can row from Alexandria to the Fourteenth Street Bridge.
A.G:	I bet.
Ralph Grimm:	You know, that's a pretty good row!
A.G:	Yeah.
Ralph Grimm:	It was good, we enjoyed it.
A.G:	It's funny, I wouldn't think of catching anything to eat out of the river out there.
Ralph Grimm:	Well, you know, if you go back into the late 1800s and the early 1900s, sturgeon came all the way up into that river. Sturgeon is caviar. It came up into that river. Hard shell crabs came up into that river. But, as the pollution got worse, the only thing that lives in there today is a catfish and an eel. And at that time we used to swim in it!
A.G:	Yeah?
Ralph Grimm:	You don't dare do that anymore!
A.G:	Not anymore...
Ralph Grimm:	No. It's just terrible, because with Washington, D.C., Anacostia, Navy Yard...there was no way they could handle all of the sludge for treatment. They had a little treatment plant, but it just couldn't take it. That's what polluted that river. And there's a lot of history off of that river way back. In 1844 a frigate called the <i>Princeton</i> brought the Secretary of War, Secretary of State...they came down the Potomac River, and they went to Mount Vernon. And they had these ladies, they had their wives along and everything. When they got down by Mount Vernon, as the captain was having them turn the ship around and come back, you could see, one of the ladies said, "Why don't you fire a cannon?" So, they fired the cannon. And they said, "Oh, that was real exciting, fire another one." They fired the second one, it exploded, killed the Secretary of the Navy, killed two of the sailors, as a result of that cannon exploding. They had John Dahlgren, if you remember, Dahlgren of Virginia, his name was John A. Dahlgren, they said, "John, we need a new cannon—this thing is blown up." He designed what they call a Dahlgren cannon. Ever see any old cannons that were big like this and then went up to a barrel? That was the man that designed the bottle cannon, and that's what they used in that war. Back in those days.

	So, there's a little history for you. I got so wrapped up in the history that the wife would ask me, says, "You weren't even that good when you went to school!"
A.G:	[laughter]
<b>Car Dealerships in Del Ray and the Old Family Car</b>	
Ralph Grimm:	That's my brother, Norman.  He's the president of the Retired Police and Firemen's Association. Has been for the last ten years, and this year is his last presidency—he's giving it up. So, I wrote a piece of poetry for him and my sister's going to read it, here in Del Ray...I got a little test thing I want to leave with you. Del Ray at one time, we had a bunch of automobile dealers down here, Alexandria Rambler, we had a Studebaker dealer, we had Winchester Packard, we had a recapping place, we had Arrow Chevrolet, we had BC [?] Motor, we had all these car dealers! And you'd never know it today.  There's only about one or two down here, in Del Ray now.
A.G:	Did your family have a car when you were growing up?
Ralph Grimm:	The only car we had when I was a kid, small child, was a Model A Ford that my grandfather died and left to my mother. And that was the only car we had, that old Model A car. We had relatives in Culpepper, Virginia, which at that time was like going across the world.  Would take us all day to get there in this old Model A, 'cause tires would blow out and then you'd have to glue patches on 'em and pump 'em back up by hand.
A.G:	Yeah?
Ralph Grimm:	So, you're all day getting there and half a day getting back. [tape 1 side 2 stopped at about 140]
<b>Camp Charles Herbert Grimm</b>	
Ralph Grimm:	...my father wrote it into the charter that you cannot sell it. You can rent it. You can let the church use it. You can make a park out of it. But you can't sell it for a profit.
A.G:	So, what are they doing with it now?
Ralph Grimm:	It's still a camp.
A.G:	Is it? Just summers?

Ralph Grimm:	Yeah! Here's another report I brought you. It's from one of the fund-raisers, fifty years ago.
A.G:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	This thirty fifth anniversary of the Retired Police and Fire Association. I'll show you how many times...my father organized this. He was the first president, organized it and everything, Norman Grimm...all the way down the line. And he's still the President. I told him, "Get out, boy!"
A.G:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	But I still belong to the Retired Police and Firemen Association.
A.G:	Oh! From when you were a volunteer, is that..?
Ralph Grimm:	...yeah, they let us go right over to the retired police and fire association, 'cause I'm retired. And I'm still a member of the fire department...
A.G:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	...as a volunteer.
A.G:	Uh huh.
Ralph Grimm:	But, they don't have volunteers anymore. But, us old volunteers, they agreed to let us continue on.
A.G:	That's cool.
<b>The Watermelon King of Alexandria</b>	
Ralph Grimm:	This man here was called the Watermelon King and the Flower King of Alexandria. He was very colorful. That's the way he dressed!
A.G:	Yeah?

Ralph Grimm:	<p>He'd go down Mount Vernon Avenue until it goes past GW High School and winds around to the left and goes under the railroad bridge, and on the left was a restaurant in there called the Alva Del. Alva—Alexandria, Virginia. Alva Deli.</p> <p>And he had the watermelons and the flowers in there. You could go there and get ice-cold watermelon, and he'd have them in a red big barrel, chunk of ice and everything. We'd go down and take some of this watermelon and bring it back to Del Ray. We'd go down here to the schoolyard and sit there and cut it up and eat it. That kind of thing. There'd be a gang of us. If we went down—watermelon was like 35 cents or something—we'd say, "Well, we only got fifteen-twenty cents." He'd say, "Well, all right, get the watermelon and get on outta here." That was and I've come to know him more in his old age. I have 61 years in the Fraternal Order of the Eagles in Alexandria, Virginia...61 years. So when I come up, the old timers, they always do a presentation. And last time I come up, I reckon I was telling so many of the old members were enthused that you could, that I had that to present...</p>
A.G:	Now, what did you say that was? The Eagles?
Ralph Grimm:	Fraternal Order of Eagles.
A.G:	What is that?
Ralph Grimm:	That's a group of men and women, and our goal is...to [help] children that the parent has died to help them get an education, families who don't have...[or] can't afford clothes and shoes, we help out with that. We give away food for Christmas, we give away food for Thanksgiving, just a real charitable organization.
A.G:	Is this something you were in when you lived here?
Ralph Grimm:	Yeah.
A.G:	Not when you were growing up...like maybe when you were working, or...when did you join?
Ralph Grimm:	Well, I joined way back in...the [19]40s.
A.G:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	I joined it when I was at the torpedo plant.
A.G:	Oh really?

<p>Ralph Grimm:</p>	<p>Yeah ...18 of us at the torpedo plant went in and joined at one time. I'm now a life member, so I don't have to pay no more dues. I'm a life member.</p> <p>So, ask me some questions. What else do you need to know?</p>
<p><b>State Farm Career, Move to Roanoke and Florida Retirement</b></p>	
<p>A.G.:</p>	<p>Let me see what else I've got. We've talked about a lot! ...well, you know, we didn't talk too much about after you started working at State Farm.</p>
<p>Ralph Grimm:</p>	<p>I went to work for State Farm in Braddock Road, right here off Duke, and I went in as a property damage estimator. Which means everybody that wrecked a car, that drove it [inaudible]...but couldn't drive it out I went to the garage and wrote an estimate of repairs.</p> <p>Because in high school, I did the machinist and I also did all the automotive...I continued on that line later on, going to all the automotive schools I could go to, the paint schools, automotive clinics, and all these little dealers that used to go here. On weekends I'd go down and see if I could help out and make a buck or two, you know, help 'em fix a car.</p> <p>So, I stayed with that line. And then I went to...I would take my vacations...I'd go to Detroit and go to the factories, and they would put me on as an employee on my vacation two weeks, then I would go to Ford and then I would go to...[inaudible]</p> <p>So, when I got my promotions as I went up, and finally I got to the top of my grade as an estimator. They needed an estimating supervisor in southwest Virginia, which meant you did about two-thirds of the state mainly, and coal mines, and districts with the poor people in 'em, and...rather, not too honest some areas of 'em, because when the coal miners go on strike, you couldn't pay for the trucks, they would burn 'em up so they could collect some insurance and not have to pay for it. Or they'd just run 'em off the mountain, say the brakes failed. But that was what I got in, that was what I wound up in...later on.</p>
<p>A.G.:</p>	<p>So, what year did you move to Roanoke?</p>
<p>Ralph Grimm:</p>	<p>I moved to Roanoke in...1981, late 1981. Stayed there for...I was there for sixteen years. Besides my time I had up here.</p> <p>I did sixteen years there. And then in 1995 I retired, and...it snowed so bad that year, I told the wife...I said, "We gotta do something about this snow," and she said, "Well, what are you going to do other than shovel it?"</p>

A.G.:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	<p>I said, "I'm going to do without it." So, we went to Florida, we found this retirement community, and we told the kids, they like to went crazy. "You can't do that, Dad. You can't go off and leave us." "Oh, I'm not going to leave you. I can come up once in a while, and you all can come down. And we'll have this nice retirement home down there, one of these days, you all will have it."</p> <p>That's the way it is. But, they don't like for us to leave to go back. You know, "Why don't you stay another week, another week?" "I gotta get back because my buddies are waiting for me to play golf."</p>
A.G.:	I bet.
Ralph Grimm:	My wife is...she's playing golf, she's also into the flower club, the computer club, garden club, council meeting at the church on Monday mornings...you know, we've got more things than we can...
A.G.:	You stay busy!
Ralph Grimm:	We have traveled to Germany, Russia, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Holland. We're going back next year to Moscow...
A.G.:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	We've done four river cruises, we've done quite a few of the big ship cruises, but we like the river cruises. So, we do a lot of river cruises. We've seen pretty much...
<b>Meeting and Marrying His Wife</b>	
A.G.:	When did you and your wife get married?
Ralph Grimm:	...we've been married 51 years. 51 years, three weeks ago.
A.G.:	Is she from Alexandria too? Del Ray?
Ralph Grimm:	...she comes from the rivalry, W and L [Washington-Lee High School in Arlington, Virginia], the one we used to have to try to beat.
A.G.:	Oh.
Ralph Grimm:	So, my buddies always got after me, said, what are you doing, you're marrying a girl from W&L, you shoulda married a girl from GW [George Washington High School]. Well...didn't happen to find one from GW.
A.G.:	[laughter] How did you meet her?

Ralph Grimm:	I had a good buddy of mine lived up here in Hume Spring, and we ran around together, and he was dating this lady, this girl, that he finally married. Then, her sister would come over to visit, and I would happen to be there, and next thing you know, we were dating, and finally I said, “You know, we could make this a whole lot easier if we got married. Wouldn’t have to be running back and forth all the time.”
A.G.:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	“Well, I’ll have to think about that.” I said, “Well, I can give you ’til tomorrow.”
A.G.:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	She said, “Tomorrow!”
A.G.:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	<p>We got married in Washington, D.C., and that was a...you know, you can almost tell a story about anything, and this was a true story too. When we got married in Washington, over at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Washington, I got a hold of a good friend of mine in Alexandria—Eddie Quinn. His mom and dad owned Alexandria auto accessory stores for years—’course that’s all gone now. He was my best man. And then, she wanted her mother there. So, I said, “Well, that’s okay. Ed will be the best man, and your mom will stand for you, and it’ll all work out.” So we had the wedding, and after the wedding, Eddie Quinn is going to go over to the rectory to leave the envelope for the priest. And the wife’s mother said, “Well, I’ll go over with you, ’cause I want to leave an envelope too.”</p> <p>So, they both go over. They come out...they’re laughing like crazy, and I said, “What’s so funny?” They said, “Well, we walked in and the secretary over there says, ‘Can I help you?’ ” And Ed Quinn said to the lady, “Well, we just came from our wedding over here, and we wanted to leave an envelope for the priest.” Well, she assumed that Eddie had married Loretta’s mother.</p> <p>And the lady said, “Well, sir, I hope you two have a happy marriage.”</p>
A.G.:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	Ed said, “I’m not married! This is his mother-in-law!” Thought seriously that Ed had married...[inaudible]
A.G.:	[laughter] That’s funny.
<b>Stories of Del Ray</b>	

Ralph Grimm:	<p>And same way in Del Ray; we had all the stories to tell. We had a fellow here that used to visit one of our buddies to see the parents. And he had a little car and he used to park it right under the street light, where we played kick-the-tin-can and everything. Well, we asked him not to park there, and he said, “I can park wherever I want to.” And he’d park right there. So it kind of messed our game up. So I...we got our heads together, we’ve got to do something. I said, “Jimmy, go in the house and get a potato.” So he went in the house and got a big potato. And you may have heard what people do with potatoes? Shove it in the tail pipe! So he shoved it in the tail pipe. And he goes to start the car. Rrrrr...errgh...just cranks and cranks. Finally he gets enough gas in there, he goes POW!—blows that potato out the back, you know, makes a lot of noise.</p> <p>Scared him to death! Well, we thought it would work that way. We put the potato up in the tailpipe, and he’s up there grinding as he’s going home, as he keeps grinding, that’s raw gas that hadn’t ignited yet. Builds up in the muffler. POW! And it blew the muffler up.</p>
A.G.:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	<p>Blowed the muffler apart! We all hid behind the hedge. I said, “Oh man, we are in a world of trouble!” So we come from around the hedge, around the backside the house, and we come on up, Windsor Avenue, we come out by the firehouse on Number Two, Mount Vernon Avenue, we went all over to Del Ray drugstore and that’s where we stayed for a couple hours before we went home.</p>
A.G.:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	<p>Went home...I didn’t go in Jimmy’s house...I said, “Good night, I’m going. I’m going on home!” And, I went back over to Jimmy’s house the next night, we heard about it! We heard about it. His dad was there. “You boys put a potato up that tailpipe!”</p>
A.G.:	How’d he find out?
Ralph Grimm:	<p>Well, he knew it blew up! He knew what we...he knew what we were doing. Yes, sir, we did. “Ain’t going to tell your parents,” that’s what he did. He said, “Well, Roy”— that was the guy’s name, Roy Thorn, he said, “Well, Roy will be lookin’ for you.” I guess a couple days later we’re up there playing and here comes Roy. He let us know what we had done. And how mad he had been. But he got over it.</p>
A.G.:	Yeah?

Ralph Grimm:	Yes. Yeah, we had, we had a lot of interesting things in Del Ray. But, you know, you never heard about drunks, drugs, stealin'...any kind of robberies...you never heard none of that.
A.G.:	Did it seem like it was going on in other neighborhoods, or just..?
Ralph Grimm:	Well, there was a little bit over in Alexandria, over in that town, a <i>little</i> bit, but not, not bad enough that you couldn't walk around at nighttime at all.  We'd walk these streets in pitch black. We never had to worry about nothing.  Just...only thing is, you might be walking out here at night time, the police car might come along and say, "You boys all right?" "Yeah, yessir." "Okay. See you later." You know?  We'd catch the bus here. We'd catch the bus, get to Alexandria for a nickel. That's another story. Just for spite, we'd go in the grocery store and get five pennies for the nickel.
A.G.:	[laughter]
Ralph Grimm:	Well, you're not supposed to do that. The pennies go through as a dime.
A.G.:	Oh...
Ralph Grimm:	And we'd get on the bus. It would be Jimmy, myself, Bobby [inaudible], we'd get on, fshew...five pennies drop down the hole. Five pennies, and the guy's cranking the old box like they used to do. "Boys, you know, I don't ever want to see that again, 'cause that shows up as a dime."  'course, he has to turn the fare box in!  And...finally we got to where...we didn't do that no more [laughter] 'cause he said, you know, he had the regular run. He said, "When I come through here, you all aren't going to get on the bus! I'm not going to let you on!"  "You'll have to walk." So, we had to stop that.
A.G.:	When you did get in trouble, who was the disciplinarian? Did your dad yell at you? Your mom?
Ralph Grimm:	Whoever's parents heard about it.
A.G.:	Yeah?

Ralph Grimm:	Yeah, whoever, whatever parent heard about it was the one that corrects you. Again, that was kind of like an unwritten law. Any parent could correct you. Yep.
A.G.:	Tell me about your mom, what was she like?
Ralph Grimm:	<p>...she was a regular home lady. You know did not get out, get around too much. Because of four kids, you know. Six kids, rather! And you got them all stair-stepped, trying to take care of them...the worst thing that happened was when I was about sixteen years old, she was crossing Mount Vernon Avenue, going across the other side to go to Del Ray drug store to get some ice cream. And us kids were home, and a neighbor was watching us. And she come to get ice cream to bring back for all of us. And as she started back across the street with the ice cream, there was a car that come around the corner speeding. And hit her. Broke her left leg in four places, and her right leg in five places.</p> <p>They had to remove her right heel. Doctor wanted to amputate her left leg. My father got a hold of a new doctor that'd just come to town, named Doctor Fiffer, and he saved her leg and everything. But she was crippled rest of her life.</p>
A.G.:	Oh...was she in a wheelchair after that?
Ralph Grimm:	<p>For a while. Yeah, but finally she got so she could walk. And a cane, and she got she could do pretty good without it.</p> <p>But it took its toll on her. But, every neighbor for blocks and blocks around brought food, washed the clothes, you would've just thought that...you wouldn't believe the people were coming from three or four blocks away, bringing food, comin' in, and cleanin' the house, washin' clothes...</p>
A.G.:	Wow.
Ralph Grimm:	That's the way it was. And everybody did it for each other like that.
A.G.:	Right...
Ralph Grimm:	Yep. But like I say, it was one big family. Everybody knew each other. Every adult knew the youngsters. We knew every kid that lived in Del Ray by name, and everything else.
A.G.:	Sounds like a great place to grow up.

<p>Ralph Grimm:</p>	<p>It was! It was really [inaudible]. And you found...I went all the way to California one time...took a trip to California.</p> <p>And there was a TV shop down here by Arlandria, called Cottons TV Shop. And I...wife and I [inaudible], we took a cruise and wound up in California, and I wanted to get a cab and go to Old Town. And they had a zoo and everything, and I wanted to see it. I went over to a policeman and I said, "I want to go to Old Town; is there a quick way in?" He said, "There's cabs sittin' right across the street," he said. "They'll take you out there," he said, "but let me tell you ahead of time, don't you give them over twelve or fifteen dollars. Some of them will charge you twenty-five."</p> <p>'Cause you don't know. He said, "Don't let 'em do that to you." I said, "Okay." So I went over, I went to the third cab, 'cause the guy was sitting there reading a paper. And I don't know why I went to the third cab, and I said, "'scuse me," I said, "would you like to take us over to Old Town?" And he said, "Sure, that's what I'm here for." So. I called them on over and we got in the cab. I sat up front with the cab driver. And we were riding along and he said, "Where you from?" I said, "I'm from Alexandria, Virginia." He said, "What part?" I said, "Del Ray." He said, "Del Ray?!" He said, "I lived in Del Ray!" I said, "You did? Well, what're you doing out here in California?" He said, "Well," he said, "my wife died. And my daughter lives in California. She asked me to come out." So he said, "I came out." I said, "Oh well!" I said, "What did you do in Del Ray?" He said, "I had a TV shop down in Arlandria called Cotton's TV shop."</p> <p>He said, "Did you know where it is?" I said, "Cotton?!" He said, "Yeah." I said, "My gosh," I said! He said, "What's your name?" I said, "Ralph Grimm." He said, "You got a brother named Norman on the police force?" I said, "Yeah!" I said, "You know, since you mention it, he's lookin' for you!"</p>
<p>A.G.:</p>	<p>[laughter]</p>
<p>Ralph Grimm:</p>	<p>He said, "What do you mean he's lookin' for me?!" I said, "The TV you fixed for him, it don't work anymore." ...he cracked up.</p>
<p>A.G.:</p>	<p>[laughter]</p>
<p>Ralph Grimm:</p>	<p>[inaudible]</p>
<p>A.G.:</p>	<p>Small world...</p>
<p>Ralph Grimm:</p>	<p>Yeah. And then, of course, he didn't want me to leave 'cause he wanted me to talk about Del Ray. He didn't want me to go! [laughter]</p>

A.G.:	Well, here, I gotta get this tape recorder back, so let's take care of some of this paperwork.
Ralph Grimm:	Okay. Let's see...[tape ends] [End]