



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



Project Name: *Alexandria Legacies*

Title: *Interview with Gladys “Dani” Lail*

Date of Interview: *February 26, 1982*

Location of Interview: *Ms. Lail’s Home in Southern Towers, Alexandria, Va.*

Interviewer: *Claudine Weatherford*

Transcriber: *Stephanie Loden*

Abstract: Gladys Lail, known to her friends as “Dani,” was born in 1911 and grew up in Hume Springs outside of Alexandria, Virginia. She discusses what life was like while she was growing up and how the town has changed since her childhood. She discusses the progress that the city has made and what she thinks about the differences in the city that she grew up in but in some aspects does not recognize anymore.

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Claudine Weatherford interviewing Gladys Lail in 1982

Introductions

Claudine Weatherford:	Gladys Lail is being interviewed at her home at the Southern Towers in Alexandria, Virginia. The date is February 26, 1982. The interview is being conducted by Claudine Weatherford.
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St. Elmo’s Church

C.W.:	Okay, we’re talking about St. Elmo in Arlandria and your contact, the contact that you made, and what she said about it. And could you repeat that again please.
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Gladys Lail:	Give me that paper so I’ll have the name [inaudible].
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C.W.:	All right. Good.
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Gladys Lail:	First I contacted Ralph Kulp [?]. And he’s on that Sunday School picture, and he will verify the start of that church. And it was later moved to Del Ray [VA] area and they never gave Dan Grover or Mr. Ridgeway any honor for their work at all.
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C.W.:	And what church was that? What was the name of that church?
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Gladys Lail:	It was either called the Christian Church or Church of Christ. It’s the same thing. I believe that most churches call it the Christian Church. Then we first held services there in what had been Moriarky [?] Store, and then we held it, and Ralph and I were laughing this morning, when we held services in the old chicken house because it still had some mice in it and
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	we'd listen to wild scratch a while [laughs].
C.W.:	So it was first in the store and then after it was in the chicken coop?
Gladys Lail:	Uh-huh
C.W.:	That's the second place.
Gladys Lail:	Then I married and moved away from there. I don't know when they moved it to Del Ray. But Mr. Frame came in there after [Mr.] Grover gave it up, and it was moved to Del Ray, and its still there as far as I know. But, I know because I tried to trace records on it sometime back, and everything only dates to [Mr.] Frame.
C.W.:	Good.
Gladys Lail:	And when I called Alma Paterson, and she has information on the Del Ray and the Hume Springs [VA] area because she lived both places.
C.W.:	Ah.
Gladys Lail:	She must have been a child or still at home at the time her parents moved up there, I believe she's at Raymond Avenue. There were apartments up there that were owned by Helen Calbert [?], and I hadn't known that. And she can give you the name of the old couple. Her parents lived in the upstairs apartment, and the old couple that owned it, she can give you the names of them. So I expect they'd been there a while. She said that St. Elmo's extended over towards what is now known as Potomac West. And I, now don't quote this for fact, but I think I have it straight as she told it, that where the schoolhouse was, is where the race track used to be.
The Old Schoolhouse	
C.W.:	Which schoolhouse it that?
Gladys Lail:	That would be the old one that they tore down.
C.W.:	Do you remember the name of it? The name of that school?
Gladys Lail:	It was just the elementary school in Del Ray.
C.W.:	So before the elementary school it was a race track?
Gladys Lail:	That's what she said. And she might be able to give you some information also on whatever was there during the Second World War. But as far as I can remember, and that school was old when we moved out there, that elementary school set there. And they've torn it down now and there's a play area in there. And where the elementary school is there now, that was the high school. Because my sister and brothers went there.
C.W.:	When?
Gladys Lail:	I don't know exactly when, I know that old school, the floors were, you know, up and down like this. It was old then.

C.W.:	Sure.
Gladys Lail:	Ms. Hale was the schoolteacher there in that old school. And she married Dr. Major, was a dentist there in Del Ray.
C.W.:	Hale. H-A-L-E?
Gladys Lail:	Uh-huh. And she died and then he married her older sister. I guess he was going to keep it in the family [laughs].
C.W.:	Oh goodness. Married Dr. Who?
Gladys Lail:	Dr. Major. M-A-J-O-R. I remember him well cause I used to go to him once in a while.
C.W.:	Was his office in—
Gladys Lail:	It was right there above the school on the opposite side of the street in a private home, and they had made an office down on the first floor.
C.W.:	His office is in Del Ray?
Gladys Lail:	Uh-huh.
C.W.:	Was he particularly well known or someone of...?
Gladys Lail:	No, he, see there wasn't that much in Del Ray at the time my parents moved to Hume Springs. And they [people] slowly started coming in, and there hadn't been a dentist there before that I ever heard of.
C.W.:	Oh, he was a dentist.
Gladys Lail:	Uh-huh. And Mita Safell [?] her maiden name was Glascop [?], and she was a schoolteacher there at that little old school. And because she taught there for a few years at least. She could give you more information on that immediate area than I can.
C.W.:	She was also a teacher in Del Ray?
Gladys Lail:	Well that was Del Ray, Honey.
C.W.:	That's what I mean, she was a teacher in Del Ray.
Gladys Lail:	I was about fourteen years old, I guess, when we moved to Hume Springs. And Del Ray was there when we moved there. St. Elmo was there when we moved there. And I don't know maybe the name St. Elmo was forgotten long ago. But it was there. And I don't know exactly when Stuartsman [?] got there, Rupert can tell you. And he will have information of the dig farther back than mine...I was born in 1911 and I was about 14 when we moved out there...And that would make it [mumbling] 1925. So there would be people that could give you information prior to 1925.
Store Owners in Hume Springs	
C.W.:	What do you remember about the people who owned the stores in that

	area? I know you talked about the Sacks a little bit. Did they live in Del Ray as well as having this store?
Gladys Lail:	Oh, no no, this was Hume Springs where that little store was?
C.W.:	I'm sorry, at Hume Springs did they...
Gladys Lail:	That store, there was a family by the name of Kyle, had that store at the time that my parents moved there.
C.W.:	K-Y-L-E?
Gladys Lail:	L-E, and they had two boys, and I can't remember, I believe one of them was Howard. Howard Kyle, I think, was one of the boys. And Peter, I believe, was the youngest son. Peter Kyle. And unless they've recently torn it down, the last time I was at Green's Dime Store, Kyle's old house was still over there in back of a bean store.
C.W.:	Really. The house that the Kyle's lived in...
Gladys Lail:	That was the house they lived in, that wasn't the store.
C.W.:	Now is that, is Kyle Store the same store...
Gladys Lail:	That was the one right where Mount Vernon and Lee run together and point.
C.W.:	And did it later become Sacks?
Gladys Lail:	It later became Sacks and then I remember the name of the later Jewish family that bought that was Wolfe. And they had one daughter, Esther.
C.W.:	Is that the same Wolfe family that had a dairy over on Rosemont or do you know? Do you remember that connection?
Gladys Lail:	I don't know where they came from before they opened that store, I don't think that was the same one. It could have been.
C.W.:	W-O-L-F-E or just O-L-F?
Gladys Lail:	I don't know how they spell that.
C.W.:	And this is a grocery store?
Gladys Lail:	Uh-huh. And I guess Esther must have been about 16 or 17 when they moved there.
C.W.:	That's Esther Wolfe?
Gladys Lail:	Uh-huh.
C.W.:	Was the daughter, was she a friend of yours?
Gladys Lail:	She was a very close friend of my sister. She was a nice kid. She had a tragic story, and I expect she's still living. She married a very nice young fellow. He had a jewelry store in Washington, D.C. And not too long many years after they were married he became ill and they found out he

	had a brain tumor. And this, they have done surgery after surgery on that man, and it's run on all these years. She had two children. Course there are grandchildren now. And the last I heard was about maybe 5 or 6 years ago, and he would be in the hospital a while and she'll have him home a while. But he's never recovered from it.
C.W.:	That's too bad. My goodness. Well, were the Sacks, the Kyles, and the Wolfes related?
Gladys Lail:	No.
C.W.:	But they were all Jewish?
Gladys Lail:	No, no, no, Kyle wasn't. Kyle was a German name. I expect they were German ancestry or at least Kyle was. But I can't say definitely.
C.W.:	Sacks were Jewish and...
Gladys Lail:	So was Wolfe.
C.W.:	And so was Wolfe. How did you know that? How did you know they were Jewish?
Gladys Lail:	Well, they lived, I lived in the house right next to their store for a while. And I don't know, how do you tell Jewish people today?
C.W.:	I don't know, that's why I'm asking. [both laugh]
Gladys Lail:	No, they have their own times when they have their own special holidays. And they celebrate those things. And if you're the right kind of person you respect them for that. And they were definitely Jewish.
C.W.:	And, after the Wolfes, do you remember if there was anyone [inaudible]
Gladys Lail:	No, because I married in [19]31, and moved away from there.
C.W.:	Ah. So you were there about 6 years?
Gladys Lail:	[inaudible] I was 20 when I married. About 6 years.
The City Water and Sewer System	
C.W.:	Was there water in that, a water system, a city water system by that time?
Gladys Lail:	Oh no, you had an outside pump.
C.W.:	So in 1925...
Gladys Lail:	There was a sink in the kitchen, and it rained outside and emptied into a ditch on your place. So, you know, you washed dishes, or just ran water for drinking or cooking or whatever. But it was, just a ditch ran through your place to carry out the water.
C.W.:	So you had an electric pump or a hand pump in your—
Gladys Lail:	Didn't have either in the house. The pump was outside, Honey. You went outside and pumped your water and carried it in.

C.W.:	So all those houses had wells, the houses, your house and...
Gladys Lail:	Except one house, and I don't know that Hume owned that. I imagine he did because it was down there by his property. And that was on Reed Avenue. And Hume owned all those little houses on that street except this one and I'm not sure who owned that. And there was a family by the name of Jacksons lived in that and that was a late-built house. And it did have a bathroom.
C.W.:	But, if there was no city water system, where did that house get its water from? Do you see what I'm saying?
Gladys Lail:	There may have been, I expect it was an electric company, because my uncle that lived down there where the Mount Vernon Theater is now, they had a bath in their house. But it was an electric pump. Well, I remember when city water was put in that house that my parents lived in.
C.W.:	Was that while you were still living there?
Gladys Lail:	Oh no, I had married and moved away.
C.W.:	What about the sewer system then?
Gladys Lail:	Well, until city water came in there wasn't any sewer system.
C.W.:	So did folks use an outhouse?
Gladys Lail:	We did on our place and everybody else except the real late houses that came in there. But all of Hume's property except for the house where [the] Jacksons lived in (I'm not certain who built that house), they had back houses. Nobody thought anything of it. You used a slop jar in the house at night and carried it out the next morning. And you didn't even pay any attention to the neighbors when they carried them out because that was the thing you did.
C.W.:	Course not. And you call them back houses? Is that what you just called them? Back houses for what I would say is an outhouse.
Gladys Lail:	Back house or toilet.
C.W.:	And chamber pots at night.
Gladys Lail:	[laughs] Slop jars what everybody called them because that's what they were. That was the name for them at that time.
C.W.:	Right. Slop jars.
Gladys Lail:	Well, they had come to the place that was more modern, then they were enamel and had a cover and a handle like a water pail would have. In the old days, I'm sure you've seen them, they had the big water pitcher that matched the big water basin, that was made of crockery. They had a soap dish that matched it, and they had the big china slop jar with a lid on it.
C.W.:	Was there a hardware store in Hume Springs where those things were

	bought?
Gladys Lail:	I can't even remember. I could be wrong, there may have been one there, but I can't even remember a hardware store in Del Ray. Now the old one, the last I heard when I was in Alexandria about 3 years ago, the oldest hardware store, I expect it was there, was right on the corner of King Street and about two blocks coming this way from Murphy's store.
C.W.:	Murphy's store. Is that the Hull Fish, the Hull Fish hardware store?
Gladys Lail:	I don't remember what the name of it was.
Going Into Alexandria	
C.W.:	How often did people go into Alexandria, the city of Alexandria, from Hume Springs?
Gladys Lail:	Whenever you wanted to. There was a trolley and [inaudible] bus for ten cents each way.
C.W.:	Where did people do most of their shopping in Hume Springs?
Gladys Lail:	In Hume Springs you didn't have anything there but the little old grocery store.
C.W.:	So did they go into Alexandria?
Gladys Lail:	If there was anything else some of them sometimes went into Washington [D.C.] and shopped.
C.W.:	What did you do? Did you take a trolley into Alexandria and shop?
Gladys Lail:	Well by the time that I married, see, I moved away from there, and I lived in Washington, D.C. But at the time that I lived with my parents, if my mother needed anything she'd just give me the money and say, "Dani, take the bus and go get me so-n-so." And it was nice in Alexandria then. You could walk King Street from one end to the other. Nobody was ever going to bother you. [J.C.] Penney's have never done the business, I don't think, since they've moved into that new store on Washington Street that they ever did in the old store on King Street. You know they were old-time stores. They were old-time people. There was a Mike's Hardware Store there on King Street.
C.W.:	Oh wow. That's where we are now. Our offices are on the second and third floor.
Gladys Lail:	Well all of those places there, but that other hardware store that I am speaking of, I know they have been there a long, long time.
C.W.:	Its not Hull Fish, huh?
Gladys Lail:	That name might come back to me.
C.W.:	Do you remember a grocery store by the name of Nugent on King Street? It might have been on the 15th block.

Gladys Lail:	The name is familiar, but it doesn't ring a bell...when Murphy's opened up there, oh, everybody thought they had it made.
C.W.:	On King Street?
Gladys Lail:	Yeah, and Murphy's was a really nice store then. And of course when they sold the George Mason Hotel, part of Murphy's store was taken away from them. So they had to squeeze it in and close that wall in.
The George Mason Hotel	
C.W.:	Now, where is the George Mason Hotel? Is it still there?
Gladys Lail:	No, Honey, they did away with that several years back, and it's a big building there now with office buildings.
C.W.:	Where was the George Mason Hotel?
Gladys Lail:	It was just a, say half a block down the street from Murphy's.
C.W.:	On Washington [Street]?
Gladys Lail:	Yeah. Close to where the Confederate soldier sits there in the middle of the street. But George Mason Hotel, it finally got so run down, and it was pitiful because they still serve you, the table linens were patched, the third floor had caught fire so that they had to close that floor off. But when you went in there it was like stepping back in time. The food had gotten so it wasn't really good anymore. But I loved to go in there just because it did carry you back in time. You know as long as they could keep it up, and I've always been sorry that it closed down.
C.W.:	Who owned it?
Gladys Lail:	I don't know. It wasn't really that old. It was only about 50-some years old when it was sold, and they closed it out. And because I did hate to see it go I've got a tray, big [unintelligible] tray that they used to serve at the tables with that I gave a dollar for. I've got a dozen, I guess, linen napkins and some of them still have George Mason stamped on them. I've got two gravy boats.
C.W.:	And where did you get those?
Gladys Lail:	I went to the auction sale, Honey, when they closed it out. I thought, well, if it's going, I at least want a part of it. I've got, and you can see my desk here, and I have a photo of it if you want it. And that chair is old. And I gave 3 dollars for that and paid a man to haul it.
C.W.:	This chair? [both rustling around inspecting the chair] You can still sit in it. And that came from the George Mason Hotel. Isn't that nice?
Gladys Lail:	The man told me when I bought it that he would try to find me, you know they had some sort of little brass plaque on it that said George Mason. So there's no telling how long that thing...you won't find any made like it

	anymore.
C.W.:	I'll say.
Gladys Lail:	But I gave 3 dollars for it and the man brought it home to me for a dollar.
C.W.:	Oh. Great.
Gladys Lail:	And then I, oh, I can't imagine what it looked like. I thought I'd never get through the dirt on that thing. And of course I covered this.
C.W.:	Did a good job.
Gladys Lail:	Well the inside, the "stuffins" was coming out [laughs].
C.W.:	Oh, dear.
Gladys Lail:	[unintelligible], and I'll show you the gravy boats. I don't ever use but one of them anymore.
C.W.:	Well is George Mason, the George Mason Hotel, was this a place where people spent a lot of time, was it more where the wealthy spent a lot of time?
Gladys Lail:	That's one of the gravy boats, I'll give it to you.
C.W.:	Oh, are you sure?
Gladys Lail:	Yes. My son bought every one of them that night.
C.W.:	That's wonderful.
Gladys Lail:	See they're two different kinds.
C.W.:	Oh, aren't they lovely.
Gladys Lail:	But he still has a few left...[inaudible]...was a man at the sale, and he kept outbidding my son. And it made my son angry.
C.W.:	Sure. I can understand that.
Gladys Lail:	And he jumped the bid way up they said on all of them. And he bought every one of them. So I carried a few to work with me the next day and I showed them to the girls up there. And I sold them off at 5 dollars apiece.
C.W.:	And made a killing [laughs].
Gladys Lail:	He still has about half of them. Just what I sold to the few people that I work with. I more than cleared what he paid for them, and he's still got about half of them. [laughs]
C.W.:	Oh my goodness. So what year was that auction? Do you remember?
Gladys Lail:	Let's see [mumbling to herself] 9-10 years ago. That's an approximation...It would be between 8 and 10 years ago.
C.W.:	That the auction took place.
Gladys Lail:	This is the tray I gave my dollar for.

C.W.:	Oh my goodness, that's a great tray. That's a wonderful tray.
Gladys Lail:	They sold off all their televisions. They sold everything. And after they did that, they took the most beautiful drapings. They'd been silk, but they were still in good condition. The rugs off the floor and just threw them in the alley and they rotted there. That's when they were rebuilding...[inaudible]
The Progress of Alexandria	
C.W.:	Now what about this community that was Hume Springs when you lived there, was there anything like a newspaper?
Gladys Lail:	The <i>Old Alexandria Gazette</i> . You buy a <i>Gazette</i> today and it's no more like the <i>Old Alexandria Gazette</i> than night is like day.
C.W.:	Well, how is it different?
Gladys Lail:	Oh, Honey, it had the columns in there. You go back and check the files. I suppose they've kept records of it. There was a little country gossip columns. It wasn't meant to be gossip. I was just letting you know if this neighbor was ill, or if this neighbor had a new baby, or this person died. It was just an old country newspaper. 'cause that was country village then. Alexandria wasn't all that great then. That was a nice place to live.
C.W.:	Why do you think it changed?
Gladys Lail:	Honey, they call it progress. Progress to a certain degree is a good thing. But when you wipe out history, that's a bad thing.
C.W.:	Well in what ways? Can you give me a specific example of bad progression?
Gladys Lail:	Well, I can give you a specific example when they did away with Hume Springs. That should never have been removed from that road. That was a landmark.
C.W.:	Who did away with it?
Gladys Lail:	Don't ask me, Honey. How did the place get the name of Arlandria?
C.W.:	I don't know.
Gladys Lail:	At the time Arlandria was named, the lower part of Mount Vernon Avenue where Beeton store is, there used to be a big department, I believe the name was Charles Department Store, came in there. One of those old department stores is still down there, they [have] baby clothes, I think, and women's clothes. Little bit of jewelry, baby cribs, stuff like that. But with what they call progress today, its always a later generation or people who do not care anything about history. They want that money. So if you give it a new name and fancy it up some, the old is wiped out. And Hume Springs should never, that was a landmark. And it should never have been wiped out of there. That old school in Del Ray should never have been

	<p>torn down. That was a landmark. It had been there some time because the floors were like this and they squeaked and groaned when the kids walked across them. So it had some age on it. Well, it's been—I would have been married 51 years this past February, and that school was there when I went there. And I don't know how long before that, so of course by now that would have been an important landmark. And it should, that it was just an old country school but the time that they built it, it was brick. Why, it was just great. Because people weren't accustomed to anything that fine. But when progress comes along and they just start wiping everything out like they did on King Street, that's an error. Because Old Town does not look like Old Town to me.</p>
C.W.:	How is it different?
Gladys Lail:	Honey, they were great big old buildings and people lived upstairs over top of them.
C.W.:	So there were a lot of apartments?
Gladys Lail:	Called them flats. People furnished their own heat.
C.W.:	How did they do that?
Gladys Lail:	Lug it up the stairs.
C.W.:	Oh, coal you mean?
Gladys Lail:	Coal, wood, gas, whatever they were using. And had huge, those apartments, those flats, had huge rooms to them.
C.W.:	Did you ever go in any?
Gladys Lail:	I used to work with a woman when I worked in electronics, and she had a flat there, and I was in her apartment one time. And those really were large. You went up, I mean a long flight of stairs, which means they also had very high ceilings.
C.W.:	I have another question for you. You say progress, what about the people who live or lived in Alexandria when all these changes were taking place? What changes have you seen in the people who live in Alexandria? Are they responsible for the progress?
Gladys Lail:	No. Don't ask me, Honey, who decides what is progress and what isn't. I suppose it would go through the Alexandria Council of something or other because I'm not familiar with that. But I know that it would have to be decided on by some kind of a board in Alexandria. And I should have thought that it would have been lots cheaper to have restored those buildings and kept it really Old Town, than to tear down and rebuild.
C.W.:	Well, besides the buildings, have you seen changes in organizations or changes in neighborhoods and networks of people?

<p>Gladys Lail:</p>	<p>Not as far as organizations, because I’m not a joiner of anything. I was born without an ego, Honey, so I don’t need that. But, I see the difference. Of course, I was away from Alexandria for, oh, 25 years or more. I see the difference when you walk down King Street, and you’re carrying your purse like this and looking back over your shoulder all the time. But you’re going to find that any place you go today. The old ones die off, the new ones come in. Its so close to the Maryland border, or the Washington, D.C., border. They can come in from anywhere, so we could be getting a lot of crime today from other places. But, it wasn’t like that back then. I told you, we could walk from Hume Springs, and because people used foot power in those days, and you thought nothing of it, and of course I was young then, I could do it. I couldn’t now.</p> <p>And we thought nothing of walking from Hume Springs into Alexandria proper and walking back home. I remember one Halloween night my sister and I, Halloween used to be a ball on King Street. I don’t know that they have anything on Halloween anymore. Everybody dressed up and went in on King Street. And my parents said we could go, my sister and I and two girls that lived across the road from us. Well we caught the bus and went in. And everybody’s having a good time you know so you forget about time. And the local bus quit running at midnight.</p> <p>So we decided, streets were thinning out then, must have been about one o’clock in the morning, we decided we’d walk. And catch the bus, the next bus that came along. But we weren’t at the bus stop when the next bus came along and we missed it. And we walked some more. And I broke, I had on high heels, and I broke off a heal. And I was going hippity-hop until my feet started to kill me so we finally sat right down on the sidewalk, you know where the cannon is? There’s that one part goes across the road. Well we set down on the curb stone there to rest my feet.</p> <p>And we were kidding and cutting up, and here comes this real dowdy guy, tuxedo, swinging a cane; he had a high hat. And they didn’t wear high hats in those days except for evening wear. And one of the girls said. “I dare you, Dani, to knock his hat off,” cause I was walking with a cane. So he came along and I held the cane up. I said, “Mister, would you like your hat knocked off?” I was about 17 years old. A smarty. And I never thought the man would stop, he scared the “begebers” out of all of us. There was no harm in him. He was just giving tit for tat. But he went a few, a little way and he came back and he said, “Would you like to try it, Miss?” I jumped up and we went hobbling down that street [laughs]. But we walked all the way home. But there was no harm in the man. He was just giving me as good as I sent [laughs]. But you could walk anyplace and nobody’d bother you. There weren’t break-ins; there weren’t no robberies. There wasn’t crime; there wasn’t drugs. It was just a nice place to live.</p>
<p>C.W.:</p>	<p>What about down by the wharf? Down by the Potomac? What do</p>

	remember about that area?
Gladys Lail:	I can't remember much about that because I've never liked water. [laughs] So I couldn't give you much on that.
C.W.:	Did you ever take the ferry that left at the bottom of King Street over to D.C.?
Gladys Lail:	No, Ma'am, I never rode a ferry but once in my life and I got violently ill from that.
C.W.:	Oh, I'm terribly sorry about that [both laugh]. What about the canal? Do you remember anything about the canal that used to be?
Gladys Lail:	No. See that's why I'm trying to locate the people older than I am that would have been up there at an earlier date. And of course they may have recollections, that, there are people that had lived there for a long time, had passed on. Again, if you go to Lloyd's House you'll find the information.
C.W.:	Well some of it, yes. But these little vignettes, and personal interpretations aren't likely, and that's why you've been so valuable.
Gladys Lail:	Well, again, when it comes to history, it all depends, too, on who writes that history. I take what I'm doing, records, I'll use anything for a lead. But you better believe that I'll start hunting the legal record. 'cause that record has to be somewhere. And it's worth the time I'm there for, too.
C.W.:	Do you know a woman by the name of Alameda Park? Or Parks? She's lived in Fayette Street many, many, many years.
Gladys Lail:	No, because I wasn't familiar. Honey, you've got to remember back in those days, parents were very strict with their children. So we more or less stayed right in that whole area. We made friends, we had to bring them home and our parents had to get to know them before we could go out with them. When we got to the age where we could date, it was the same thing. You bring that young man, and they look him over. If they didn't like the looks of him, that was too bad, Honey. He was out. You go out on a date, our time limit was 10:30 at night.
Neighbors	
C.W.:	What about your neighbors? Did you know your neighbors well?
Gladys Lail:	Oh sure, right in that area.
C.W.:	What kind of activities did you do with your neighbors?

Gladys Lail:	<p>We made our own fun, Honey. Its like I told you. We went in groups. We went sleigh riding. Some of them went skating. I never could skate. I never could ride a bicycle; I never could ride a horse. You get me two inches off the ground and I'm gonna come off it. Like on Sunday afternoons, a whole group of us. Maybe be girls and boys together; maybe just be girls. And the boys would have their own activities. And we would go walking. Sometimes we would walk from Hume Springs up in what they called Oak Crest then. And that was woods back in there. And we'd just tramp through the woods. It was raining, grab a [unintelligible] and shake the water in somebody's neck and maybe they'd like it and maybe they'd get angry. But it was fun. You see ,if you've never had any of today's modern entertainments, you don't miss what you've never had. And we didn't have it. We would go to each other's houses. Maybe we would play games of a kind, you know, cards or whatever.</p> <p>We'd make candy. I was born with two left feet so I could never dance, but the others did. Sometimes we'd play the old, what they call a gramophone, or Victrola. And dance around in the kitchen. I guess we drove our parents up the wall. They never complained.</p>
C.W.:	What about the parents? Did they get together? Did they do things together?
Gladys Lail:	They were neighborly, but they weren't what you could call close. You know it was like, I guess that's what's wrong with the world today. They stayed and minded their own business. In time of trouble or need, if they could help they did. But it wasn't sticking your nose in, and like this country is doing this very thing to this day. And when you stick your nose in other people's business, Honey, you're going to end up in soup. You're asking for trouble.
C.W.:	Well, who were the good friends of your parents? Who did they rely on?
Gladys Lail:	Well, of course my mother's brother lived right there in the area [unintelligible] and they were always very close.
C.W.:	So relatives were often closer?
Gladys Lail:	Yeah.
The Hospital	
C.W.:	What about hospitals and things like that?
Gladys Lail:	Old Alexandria Hospital on Duke Street, and that was another one they tore down that should have never been torn down.
C.W.:	When did they tear that down?
Gladys Lail:	Let me see. They tore that down after they built the new one. And I can't give you the date on that one. I know my daughter was a patient in there right after they built the new one, but to give you a date right off hand I

	can't. But old Alexandria, of course, they needed more space, but the thing of it was, the Old Duke Street Hospital was where it was needed badly.
C.W.:	Why is that?
Gladys Lail:	Well, at that time, and Alexandria I expect still does, has a lot of people in the poor class. They had a cracker jack emergency room. I tell you it was far superior to the new hospital, 'cause I've been both places. And they did wonders with what they had. And it's a pity that they didn't restore that place, and keep it there, if nothing [else], for an outpatient clinic. Because it was needed in that area. You know anything that happens, say right outside going south of Alexandria, and anything that happens in that particular area in an emergency, you've got to go all the way out here to the new hospital. And they needed something right there in Alexandria proper. And now they don't have it.
Class Structure in Alexandria	
C.W.:	What do you remember about these poor folks? Do you always remember that as part of Alexandria?
Gladys Lail:	Well, you see, it was different in those days. You really didn't have the wealthy and the middle-class and the poor. You had people, and you respected them as such. So there were a lot of what today is considered poor people because their income isn't huge. They were good people. But they weren't that well off. And back in those days, most people had a deep pride. If they needed something, they usually went out and earned it, or went without it and kept their mouths shut. Or at least the ones that I came in contact with did. And you know no one, there wasn't that much social class. People didn't care. If you were poor and they liked you and you were a nice person, you were accepted. If you were wealthy and you weren't a nice person, you still weren't accepted.
C.W.:	Accepted how?
Gladys Lail:	Well, like I said, parents were far stricter with their children, and more careful with their children than they are now. They saw to it that you more or less got into what they termed the right class people. And believe me you always had to pass that scrutiny with your friends, because they knew that we were young. We had been reared differently than they are now. Now, I don't mean that there aren't good people today, and that there aren't good children. But times have changed. We didn't have—radio was a new thing. I can remember when they used cat's ears. 'cause my father had a set. They didn't have television. Young people today didn't have cars like they do now. Its not unusual for maybe five kids in a family to each have a car. If the head of the household in those days had a car then you were lucky. It was an entirely different way of living. And I like it.
C.W.:	Would a child from a poor family be accepted as a friend to a child in a

	wealthier family?
Gladys Lail:	You've always had snobs, Honey. You'll always have them. But the ones, the people that I knew, we only judged people for what they personally were, and not for what they had. Material things have never meant anything to me. They're not going to buy you health; they're not going to buy you happiness. And who knows, this child might be the poorest thing on earth today. But who knows, it may be the wealthiest thing when it's grown. So I never judged people by what they have or don't have. And my parents didn't.
Politics and Government	
C.W.:	What do you remember about city politics, or government? Interesting personalities that stand out?
Gladys Lail:	I don't remember any, because I've never messed with politics. I know there are things that I like and things that I don't like. There are people I care for and people I don't. I don't not like people because they don't agree with me. There has to be something that particularly turns me off of a person. You know maybe they aren't just as honest as they should be or just as truthful as they should be. Because as a rule I like everybody. And I don't think that I am difficult to make friends with. But for politics. I still think politics is a dirty business [laughs].
C.W.:	There are a lot of people who would agree with you.
Gladys Lail:	When it comes to politics, I'd like to scratch them all out and start over [laughs]. Well, and in doing that you could lose a lot of good ones.
Banking	
C.W.:	True. What about banking and financial organizations, things like that?
Gladys Lail:	I can't tell you on that either, because my mother banked in Washington, D.C.
C.W.:	While she lived in Hume Springs?
Gladys Lail:	Uh-huh. She had always banked at that. Because when she and my father were first married we lived in Old Georgetown for years. And it was the bank, it was the old Key Bank. On Wisconsin Avenue and Elm Street. And because she had banked there all her grown years, she just stayed with it. And then because, of course, things were bad during the Depression, for everybody. But people just didn't go around crying the blues. Now, of course, during the Depression there were plenty of people who lost the shirt off their back, jumped out of windows, committed suicide, and did everything else. But not my kind of people. Not my parents' kind of people. Or the neighbors that we had. So what the heck. If the Depression came along and knocked you flat, you dusted yourself off and did the best you could until things straightened out. But you didn't go around crying the blues about it. Yeah, I can only speak personally for

	<p>the way I was reared. And that's what I was taught. If you get slapped down, you just brush yourself off, get up and keep going. If you make a mistake, you admit it and you do better. But as far as banking and politics, that's two things that I never fooled with. Because, of course, later, I have bank accounts now because I live in Virginia. But at the time I lived in Washington, I did all my shopping, all my banking, everything was where I lived, and most people too. So I couldn't help you much on that.</p>
<p>Life Around the Neighborhood</p>	
C.W.:	<p>What about women working? Any women hold jobs?</p>
Gladys Lail:	<p>Some did.</p>
C.W.:	<p>In Hume Springs, or do you remember?</p>
Gladys Lail:	<p>Oh yes, I had a sister that worked, and she enjoyed working. I guess I'm old-fashioned. And I wish the world would go back. People today believe, because they make stupendous salaries that there were those better off. But you compare that with the Depression when we paid fifteen and twenty dollars a month rent out there in Hume Springs.</p>
C.W.:	<p>That your parents paid?</p>
Gladys Lail:	<p>Mama paid twenty-five because we had a larger house. And there was already a room built in that house for the bathroom, and we used it for a big closet because there wasn't any closets in any of the other rooms. I don't know how Mama managed after they put the bathroom in. She must have had Dad build closets or something. There wasn't a single closet. None of those old houses had closets. You know back in the real early days they used what they call wardrobes. Nobody thought anything of that. Because if you go back to the early days, really early, they had pegs on the wall to hang their clothes on. Long as they weren't throwing them in the middle of the floor I guess we thought it was all right [laughs]. You deal with what you have, in any period.</p>
C.W.:	<p>What do you remember about the street face? The street that you lived on, was it Old Glebe? It was Old Glebe Road, wasn't it? What's your first impression when you think back on that street with the houses?</p>
Gladys Lail:	<p>Honey, I was so glad to move from the city. I'm a country person at heart, and I never liked city living. And I was so glad to get out of the city. If I had waded in mud up to my knees I would have liked it.</p>
C.W.:	<p>Were there sidewalks?</p>
Gladys Lail:	<p>Not in Hume Springs.</p>
C.W.:	<p>Was the rode paved at all?</p>
Gladys Lail:	<p>Mount Vernon Avenue was and I can't remember whether Glebe Road was or not.</p>

C.W.:	But Mount Vernon was?
Gladys Lail:	Mount Vernon was. I don't think Reed Avenue was.
C.W.:	Did many people on your block have cars, have automobiles?
Gladys Lail:	I don't think [unintelligible] next door to us had a car at all. He worked at Potomac Yards. And I think he walked back and forth to work. I can't say definitely. Across the road from us had a car and my father had a car cause he worked in Washington. And I can't remember whether Carters—and Smiths was the next family—I don't remember whether they had cars or not. See, these things, they weren't important. And what isn't important to you and you don't remember when you're young; it isn't there when you're old. Some of them had cars; some of them didn't. You know none of these things meant anything to anybody. If this neighbor had it, so what. If they, others, if they wanted one and they could afford it, then they got it. Otherwise you didn't think anything of it.
Backyards and Gardens	
C.W.:	What about the backyards? Where there large backyards that went with these houses?
Gladys Lail:	The place that my parents rented. There was a good piece of land between our house and Purdie's [?]. And when Spring came on, my mother wanted to put in a garden. Well, where our line had been pointed out to us this other land all on the other side. And Purdie's didn't use that land either. And I remember the day, it was Alan Hume, it was Alan Hume's son. And he used to come out there often. And he was in the neighborhood that day, and I saw him and I called him. And I told him Mama wanted to put in a garden that was on this land. Could she have the use of it? And he said, “Well, when she rented she wasn't paying for that much land.” I was about fourteen, fifteen years old then, and I said, “But you're not using it.” And to him I was just a kid, you know, and he ruffled my head like this and he says, “Oh, well, ‘kiddo,’ tell her yes, she can have it.” Well then my mother fenced in, you know, everything because one time we had a dog and my mother was walking down to the bus stop and anybody happen to walk close to my mother, that dog just tore the seat right out of their clothes. So my mother fenced the place to keep the dog in.
C.W.:	And that included that part of land where she grew her garden?
Gladys Lail:	Uh-huh.
C.W.:	It wasn't rented but Mr. Hume said she could use it for her garden? Were there a lot of gardens, back little gardens?
Gladys Lail:	Well, it was a little country place. Lots of people raised their own vegetables then and canned, preserved. And I remember my mother, right shortly say, February or March, she would make her fruit cakes for the next Christmas. Because if you make a fruit cake properly, you do make it

	early, and you put it down in these big lard cans. And she baked it in those, you don't find these big black baking pans anymore. They were about that long and about that wide. And she had a huge, old-fashioned cook stove. And she put in that and baked it till it was done. And if it started to brown too fast on top she'd just take an old paper bag, brown paper bag, and grease it a little. Back in those days it was lard. You didn't have shortening and oil and all that gook. You used what you had. And she butchered her own hogs while we lived there.
Dealing with the Hogs	
C.W.:	She did? How did she do that? Can you remember the process of how she butchered them?
Gladys Lail:	Well, sure. The pen was way back close to the railroad track that ran in back of our place. And...she always fed her hogs midlins.
C.W.:	She always what?
Gladys Lail:	Midlins. M-I-D-L-I-N-S. And that was the good hog food. You didn't have all this junk that they have for feed today.
C.W.:	So midlins is a food that they...?
Gladys Lail:	That was a dry food. They mixed it with water. And she always fed them plenty of it. Because when you butcher you also want lard. And you get your lard from the hog fat. And then, I can't remember exactly how long before, they did it to harden the fleshed meat. They fed them corn. They still got midlins, but they also fed them plenty of corn to harden the meat.
C.W.:	And did she butcher them herself?
Gladys Lail:	No. You couldn't have got Mama to kill anything for no amount of money.
C.W.:	Well, who did? Who butchered them?
Gladys Lail:	Our father, and probably my uncle helped him. 'cause it always two to handle the hogs. They're big.
C.W.:	Did you ever see them do it?
Gladys Lail:	No, but I could hear those pigs squeal. My mother had a butcher knife. And it was a real butcher knife; it was about that long. And the blade was about that wide. And it runs down to a point. And they would stick the pigs right in here.
C.W.:	In the throat.
Gladys Lail:	Yeah. That's to let them bleed good, see. If you shoot them you're going to have blood coagulating inside. If you stick them they'll bleed freely. But they also squeal and run around till they drop. And I didn't want to be anywhere near that. Then there was this huge...it was big enough to take a full-grown hog. And they would build a fire, they had a killin' pigs. Out

	in the yard, and build it up real hot, and fill this cast iron kettle with water until it boiled. Because you gotta have it that hot. You gotta move quick once you butcher a hog. And they would put it on the sled thing and drag it from the pen when they were thoroughly dead. And drag it down to this big kettle and put the pig in that.
C.W.:	So, the kettle was big enough to hold the pig?
Gladys Lail:	Sure. And the man at the front and the man at the back, and they dumped it right down in that big thing you know like this, up and down, three times. Because then you're going to scrape the hair off of them. That is the only way you'll get it off. You can't shave them [laughs].
C.W.:	So what was the next step? Do you remember? After the hair was taken off?
Gladys Lail:	Well after you scald them, you scrape them. And it was called scraping. And then the next step is what they call gutting. And that's the expression that was used then. And you start at the throat and you go straight down, all the way down.
C.W.:	Where was the pig when they gutted it?
Gladys Lail:	They had a great big old table out there that they kept year after year, big strong table. And slapped the pig up on top of it. And then they had tubs setting around to put the intestines and entrails in, because of course you saved the heart and the liver. My mother never saved the chitlins, or the brain, or any of that. She said that was part of the intestines and she wouldn't eat it. But the liver we did save, and the heart. We had to clean the head out, and take the teeth out because that was used for head cheese.
C.W.:	Teeth?
Gladys Lail:	Sure. Honey, you can't eat teeth. They made head cheese out of the head.
C.W.:	They put cheese in the head?
Gladys Lail:	No. They grind the-the meat is all ground up after its cooked. You've got to, now you saved the feet, you know, up to about the knee, and they saved the ears. And the feet were pickled. I still like pickled pig's feet. Yeah, just skin them and take the hoof and everything off of it. And the ears were...I believe the ears went in mincemeat. I can't really remember what they did with the ear anymore than I know they saved them. You had to scrape all the hair out of the ears and skin them. 'course the eyes, brain, everything had to come out of the head. And then that was cooked, and then it was ground up. And they used that for head cheese.
C.W.:	So the head cheese is all the parts of the head ground up together?
Gladys Lail:	Uh-huh. They called it souse. S-O-U-S-E. And you can still find that in the stores. And I like it.
C.W.:	Head cheese, another word for souse. Did you sell these products?

Gladys Lail:	No, Honey, my mother and father had eight children. You didn't sell anything [laughs]. After you got all the intestines out, the bladders were always saved for the children. Because they'd blow up like footballs. [end]
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