



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



Project Name: *Alexandria Legacies*

Title: *Interview with John Ticer*

Date of Interview: *February 5, 1997*

Location of Interview: *The Alexandria Lyceum*

Interviewer: *Unknown*

Transcriber: *Tess Christine Evans*

Abstract: John Ticer was born in 1923 in Alexandria, Virginia, and graduated from college in 1948. In this interview, he talks about his father's businesses in Alexandria in the 1930s, which included City Council member, Railroad Operator, and Mayor of Alexandria. Mr. Ticer also gives incite to his mother's genealogy as well as his father's later years.

Table of Contents/Index

Tape: *Tape 1*

Side: *Side 1*

Minute	Counter	Page	Topic
1	003	3	John Ticer's Father
5	069	4	Ordinances
15	314	8	Father as Mayor
18	378	9	Father's Background
20	401	9	Mother's Genealogy
28	582	12	Father's Responsibilities

Tape: *Tape 1*

Side: *Side 2*

Minute	Counter	Page	Topic
38	807	15	Father's Later Years
44	898	17	Father and the Railroad

John Ticer's Father	
John Ticer:	[Tape begins in middle of discussion.] His middle name is Fillmore; his father was named Millard Fillmore (for the president). So my father's middle name is Fillmore.
Interviewer:	I appreciate your help with this.
John Ticer:	I don't remember this -- when you sent it to me. I don't remember when it was published. I was working for the first time; I graduated from college in [19]48. So, I was away [when it was published]. How do you want to do this?
Interviewer:	I just had a few things I'd like to ask you.
John Ticer:	Alright.
Interviewer:	A number of significant things happened when your father was mayor and I was wondering...
John Ticer:	They had the Bicentennial on George Washington's birthday. I think that was one reason that Mr. [unclear] resigned, because they wanted to [unclear]...demand. That's what I've always understood. A rather demanding year -- 1932 being the Bicentennial of George Washington's birth. That's when they had the big parade and President Hoover came over. The governor of that time was Governor [John Garland] Pollard of Virginia. He came and they had the parade in red-top hats, took pictures and stand stills, picture book. [Unclear]...of some of those people together.
Interviewer:	Where was the grandstand at that time? Do you remember? On Washington Street?
John Ticer:	The parades in those days always went down King Street. Washington Street was just opened that year; that was the year they dedicated it. Memorial Highway [unclear] and it was a highway to Mount Vernon. They had the 'Charlie' cars that went to Mount Vernon, but there was no real ex[ensive?] road system.
Interviewer:	Obviously, you were supervising the number of functions celebrating the Bicentennial. Did you go to Alexander [unclear]? It was [19]39.
John Ticer:	It wasn't that year. The parade was the big deal and then they had, I guess, [unclear] stuff at Gadsby's, because the picture that's from Ross's book is on the steps of Gadsby's Tavern with the bunch of them.
Interviewer:	Did you attend the dedication of George Washington Masonic Memorial?
John Ticer:	I didn't. See, I was only nine years old. I was told I couldn't do

	anything and the Chief of Police took me in his car and let me go to the end of the parade with him. Johnny Arnold was the Chief of Police then.
Interviewer:	[Discussion of Chief Campbell]...
Ordinances	
Interviewer:	It's in the minutes where they accept the resignation of Chief Arnold. Here is a letter of April 30. Just curious, [what is] your reaction to a letter that was one of his first letters --or greetings-- to City Council ...This is for April 30, [unclear], talking about increasing membership of City Council...Obviously, you'd served under the old Council...
John Ticer:	Yeah, it was [unclear]. Not [unclear], the Common Council. They remember the Common Council.
Interviewer:	The State Representative went out on his own and tried to have the law changed in Richmond.
John Ticer:	Where are you reading that?
Interviewer:	A little later on. Did he [your father] have any particular feelings he ever shared with you about the benefits of Council-at-Large, as opposed to the Ward Plan? I know there was a lot of debate about that and, of course, trying to change in the [19]50s back again, I think.
John Ticer:	As I remember, when I was on, the Council tried to change it back. It was a Republican effort in more recent years to try to propose races and elect more people to City Council, basically. They wanted to stay with the Council and wanted to have Wards. We had a steady commission appointed by the Council passing as major[ity] at the time. I was on a commission, along with Bill Herb...(Bill Herb does everything in town)...George Cook and Mike Holmes, and I forget who all...findings and majority findings and the minority had a report. George Cook and Mike Holmes -- they thought they ought to adopt some of them, or something like that.
Interviewer:	Looking at May 14, [19]31, it seems like he's receiving reports of [unclear] and Chris, who was restoring the era in which the new -- I guess referring to the new high school-- Is that the Alexandria High School or George Washington in '30...?
John Ticer:	In [19]31 it was Alexandria High School. And George Mason High School, I believe, was in Del Ray. I'm not sure of that, but it was in an annex area.
Interviewer:	Also, the period on June 4th, incredible...the establishment of the Planning Commission. The first zoning law introduced in the City,

	which I thought was very significant. I heard the City Manager called attention to a one-hour parking law on King Street.
John Ticer:	That's pretty good isn't it?
Interviewer:	June 4th, 1931.
John Ticer:	The Councilman Wild was Sydney Wild. Sydney was very active around town. He was very active in American Legion.
Interviewer:	Over on [Page] 196, you'll see on September, you don't have to make any comment about that, but that refers to the issues we're talking on September 17. [19]31.
John Ticer:	Communication by committee and unemployment? Page 196?
Interviewer:	September 17. That shows that [unclear].
John Ticer:	...Chief of Police...[unclear]...school system. It was Albert Brian Sr. that told him he did have the authority....[unclear]...
Interviewer:	Your father's responsible for nominating the Bicentennial Committee in October 1.
John Ticer:	That was probably due to a resolution by the Council, the Mayor would make the appointments.
Interviewer:	October 1, [19]31 Charles Collin, Hollis Smith, Liam Wools, [unclear].
John Ticer:	That's a very prominent group of people. Charlie Collin was a longtime congressman for Alexandria and he was a [unclear] for the <i>Gazette</i> . [Unclear]...rules committee. Wools was a judge, and [unclear] was represented in the legislature. [Unclear] got to be City Chairman and even City Manager at one time. George [unclear] was a banker. Pierce was a banker. Deli was a banker. Berke was a banker. Lloyd King, I don't know who that was. John Callahan -- he was a collector of revenue in the City. He was very big in the Masonic Temple. Mary Haman was with the Ice Company. Charles King was a wholesale grocery supplies -- canned goods, that sort of thing. Frank Benet, of course, was a balanced realtor.
Interviewer:	December of [19]31 -- looks like he's addressing a question of the conditions of the schools and saying [that] although they're certainly excessively congested, he's basically unwilling to go along with raising taxes -- looks like considerable taxes.
John Ticer:	You see, that was in the Depression.
Interviewer:	It said, " <i>I realized our schools are not what they should be and that release should be for our children and [unclear] to be renovated. It's much less expenditure.</i> " But pointing out the number of delinquency -- \$125,000 delinquency in taxes.
John Ticer:	Um-hum. [Unclear]. I mean, somebody has to read the numbers like an accountant.
Interviewer:	So, obviously it was a pressing issue.
John Ticer:	Like I said, it was during the Depression ...An accountant would

	have to decipher that.
Interviewer:	...It's interesting the number of receptions and things. Did you ever go to those events of June 16, 1932? You were invited by the Washington Coca-Cola Bottling Works -- An invitation to Major in Council for the pre-opening and luncheon.
John Ticer:	Let me tell you about that. I was born in [19]23, so I would not have gone to something like that. But the thing I remember most when he came home, he had a big grocery bag full of handbags that they gave him. It had a little pencil sharpener in the shape of a Coca-Cola bottle. You put the pencil in the bottom and it had a handsome piece with a Coca-Cola bottle stamped on the inside of it -- lots of little goodies they gave at that time. I do remember those two items -- the grocery bag --this big around [showing with arms]-- full of stuff. And that's where the kitchen-bath place is now on King Street. It still has the Coca-Cola thing across the top -- the logo.
Interviewer:	...This letter thanking for participating on the dedication of George Washington's Summit Memorial on May 19, [19]32. August 1 st . It seems as though they are concerned with...so many re-signings [re-zonings]. Like Council meetings taken up with enormous number of re-signings [re-zonings] from residential to commercial during this period.
John Ticer:	They just established that zoning system in [19]30, [19]31... There are still a lot of people coming to take advantage [unclear].
Interviewer:	Here is another interesting reception, November 22, 1932. Your father and Council is invited to the dedication of Fitzgerald Memorial along 1000 South Washington Street. I guess, at the cemetery. Do you have any recollection of that?
John Ticer:	Not personally, but I know where it is, I never [unclear]...who was a long time member of the church.
Interviewer:	One issue surprised me and I've had questions concerning this throughout the years. A sale. The city built a cemetery. Why Council went and sold that to a Buddhist congregation when you have thousands of Alexandrians buried out there. This is December, 1932. A Buddhist came in and decided to have a public auction in which they sold.
John Ticer:	I know exactly where that is.
Interviewer:	[Unclear].
John Ticer:	[Unclear]... there was probably a portion that was not occupied, I would guess. It'd be my assumption.
Interviewer:	I have talked to Ruth Baker, a Jewish historian in town. There was some uproar about clearing out the Christian domes and putting the Jewish domes on top of them...
John Ticer:	I know that.

Interviewer:	I was just curious if -- I know that the cemetery didn't build up.
John Ticer:	It had been filled?
Interviewer:	Yes.
John Ticer:	Maybe not. [Unclear]...famous cemetery. That's the next piece... [unclear].
Interviewer:	June [19]33, 29 th - an interesting ordinance passed to prevent profane swearing and public drunkenness. That law comes in the books. I guess it's a misdemeanor. Problems with a lot of drunks?
John Ticer:	Yeah, there was. Relatively speaking.
Interviewer:	Understand I've seen [unclear] referred to that.
John Ticer:	It lasted a long -- Well, when I was in high school, there was a police man busting alcoholics by the wall out there by King Street, killed himself.
Interviewer:	September. Obviously, Mayor Ticer was going to bat for the offices in children in [unclear] countries, school board and false legislation gave access to public schools in Alexandria and a resolution [unclear]...September 26 [19]33.
John Ticer:	Was it Fort [unclear] at that time?
Interviewer:	It was. Its' name changed. Looks like in October 10th again, " <i>Mayor Tice, proponent of business,</i> "...a big complement to the Ford Motor Company. An important aspect securing jobs for Alexandria during the Depression. [Did] he ever mention that? Or, if you have any comments...
John Ticer:	I can't [recall]. You see, at my age, my memory is not that good. I was ten at that time.
Interviewer:	Looks like March 20 [19]34 going over the plans of the new high school with State Board of Education.
John Ticer:	That was the George Washington High School.
Interviewer:	It was in [19]34? That was George Washington... That high school opened in [19]36. A brother of mine was a senior and was in the first class and I was in the first class at Hammond in [19]36. I have to chat a little bit about the entry on July 24th, 1934. " <i>On the motion of Mayor Ticer would be it a resolve of the sum of \$325 as maybe necessary hereby...purchase of the memory graph machine.</i> " I imagine that was one of the first reproductive machines they had in City Hall.
John Ticer:	That's right. This is really quite a good thing you've done here.
Interviewer:	Focus?
John Ticer:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Some more general questions. You have any feeling in describing your Dad's management style and working relationship with Council and City Manager? Was he a hands-on person?

John Ticer:	No, he was really sold on the City Manager form of government. Which he expressed.
Interviewer:	I guess at this time, Westie was City Attorney, Lawrence.
John Ticer:	Lawrence, right. Was he the first City Manager?
Interviewer:	Ronald Rich.
John Ticer:	Rich. Yeah.
Father as Mayor	
Interviewer:	In [19]22. What is your feeling -- if you care to comment -- what [do] you think were significant pieces of legislation [were] offered to pass? What facets of the job as Mayor do you think your dad enjoyed the most? Did he like the P.R., the receptions and things, or did he enjoy passing legislation?
John Ticer:	He was more concerned with the financial...[unclear]...condition of the City. His tenure.
Interviewer:	What do you think was the most difficult issue he had to deal with while Mayor?
John Ticer:	I'd have to review that...
Interviewer:	Do you feel that lobbyists throughout the organizations had an influence [on] decision[s] as Mayor in the [19]30s? I know it's a tough one. To say it's long ago, but obviously the day that we got Chamber of Commerce will come...Civic Historic Alexandria Foundation...
John Ticer:	He had two influential organizations. They are now combined -- the Chamber of Commerce and the Detail Merchant Association.
Interviewer:	Have you had an opportunity to read the recent piece by Peter Smith ...on the development of the preservation in Alexandria from 1900 to the present?
John Ticer:	No. I haven't seen that. The last thing I've seen was on the cannons or something. Wasn't that the same publication?
Interviewer:	That's <i>Historic Alexandria Quarterly</i> . This is the <i>Alexandria Chronicle</i> , of the historical society.
John Ticer:	I don't belong to all of these organizations. My father was active in that preservation. I don't know how much credit he [Smith] gave my father, but my father was one of the members of the city government that encouraged the original preservation, as Ms. Moore said. Ms. Moore is quoted as saying that.
Interviewer:	What motivational factors do you think may have spurred your father to run for public office? Here he was -- a long time employee of Southern Railroad, [with a] really secure [job]. Was he always basically [a] civic minded person?
John Ticer:	You see, Alexandria, at that time, was a railroad town. The [unclear] Railroad ran to the Potomac Yards and Rail Express ran

	refrigeration systems with the refrigeration cars on Duke Street, and then the Southern Railway had those big freight trains for the rod operation in town. It was in the interest of his company to have someone active in the city government. This sort of thing kind of happens today, in a way. Donnelly. I'm sure Crestar Bank is very happy to have him. My father was always considered an impersonal [unclear??] sort of fellow. He quit school in the seventh grade so he had to work hard to support his family and...
Father's Background	
Interviewer:	Where was he born? Where did he go to school originally? He is a native of Alexandria?
John Ticer:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	He attended the old Washington school?
John Ticer:	That's right. I've got his report cards. I don't have them here, but I've got them in a folder at home. Just like we're finding out on some of this other stuff you're doing for me on family, is they spelled names a half dozen different ways in the old days, as you know. This Tennison that you've been working off and on for me, the ones that finally turned up were T-E-N-N-I-S-O-N and then the others would spell it T-E-N-N-Y-S-O-N. My mother spelled it T-E-N-N-E-S-S-O-N. They're all the same people. But anyway, these report cards had his first name as Edward, E-D-W-A-R-D, on the report cards for the Washington School. Carl Pickett wasn't too careful about names, I guess. Carl Pickett's name is on the bottom of his report card, but the signature on them... That's where he went to school.
Mother's Genealogy	
Interviewer:	Did he meet your mother in Alexandria? Was she resident? Obviously, the Tennisons were running the hotel and...
John Ticer:	Well, they weren't when my mother was...I don't have that all worked out yet... You see, there were two Tennisons. I figured this out -- one at the Roger's Tavern [who] was my mother's uncle, I've decided. The census that you've sent me shows two Tennisons, both of which are in the hotel business. My mothers' grandfather was shown in your census as a hotel person also.
Interviewer:	Yes.
John Ticer:	This is the one that had Roger's Tavern; we have records that were brought to me over the years.
Interviewer:	So, you think [that's] your mother's uncle?
John Ticer:	Yeah, I think this is my mother's grandfather because my mother's

	father was named Jamie.
Interviewer:	That makes sense. I'm just wondering if they both ran the same hotel together.
John Ticer:	Well, this was his hotel keeper. I don't know what all these numbers mean.
Interviewer:	These are personal estates and real estate...forms. They are beside each other on the census. That's why they would be in the same place, but they are in different places in the census.
John Ticer:	I know this is my mother's grandfather because he was [unclear]...because my brother's middle name is James Mitchell.
Interviewer:	I see.
John Ticer:	Aunt Laura...two Laura's in here. Alana Moore is a hundred and three years old and is my mother's cousin. She's down at Paul Springs and she's one of the ones I keep telling people they ought to go to talk to her because...the last I heard she's still pretty lucid.
Interviewer:	Alana Moore? L-E-N-A...
John Ticer:	Her real name is H-E-L-E-N-A.
Interviewer:	And she's at Paul Springs?
John Ticer:	That's my understanding. Here's a letter on her hundredth birthday. I think she's moved from Mount Vernon to...well, I don't know. I understand that when St. Mary's was doing that, they did a two hundredth anniversary?
Interviewer:	An excellent new book...
John Ticer:	I know they had a celebration down there. I don't know about the book. But they did a thing with her, I'm told, with that [celebration] because she was big time in St. Mary's Church. But that was church-orientated, not City- orientated.
Interviewer:	Very nice, they were entered within the time frame. They sell it over with [unclear] about ten dollars.
John Ticer:	Oh, really?
Interviewer:	Very inexpensive.
John Ticer:	I've just gotten in the mail the <i>Directory of the Residence of the Lawns at the University of Virginia</i> from 1880, I think, to 1995. The lawns at the University of Virginia were original and had what was called 'arrangements' behind them. I'd look at the arrangements. [Unclear]. They better say something about Helena in here. They better say something about Helena, [19]57 to [19]81. It was so unique that the governor of Virginia, Andrew J. Minor, that's [unclear] grandfather, great grandfather. And in 1904, they

	<p>asked to see the building, the Lyceum building on Duke Street. And apparently, four young school girls summoned by Father Cutler to be unofficial hostesses: William[?] Hill, Helen Nugent, Helena Moore, and Rose Champion. Each presented flowers to the governor on the steps of the Lyceum. That's not this building; it's <i>their</i> Lyceum down there on the 300 block of Duke Street, across from the Rectory.</p> <p>She was my mother's first cousin. Her mother was my mother's aunt (who married a Mr. Moore who was a Roman Catholic and she can't be [unclear] his church). I think she still got a lot of those law books, at least I'm told she does. Moore approaching a hundred and one years in 1994. It calls for many decades of ... it had to do with that letter. I've never wrote that before.</p>
Interviewer:	Has your family always been attendees of St. Paul's?
John Ticer:	My father's family went to Grace, when it was up here on Patrick's Street.
Interviewer:	So, he was a member of Grace.
John Ticer:	He was baptized in Grace's Church.
Interviewer:	Your mother was Episcopalian?
John Ticer:	Yes, St. Paul's, and her mother before her.
Interviewer:	Where did your mother go to school? Arlington Institute or...?
John Ticer:	She went to one of these little...ladies teaching girls in those days. I think it was a lady by the name of Roach, something Roach.
Interviewer:	I never had the opportunity to interview your mother...She'd be an encyclopedia.
John Ticer:	Helena would be the same way. Helena Moore, her cousin.
Interviewer:	[Unclear]...coming over to talk to with your mother on the side porch...
John Ticer:	That's right.
Interviewer:	...and your mother had given one of us a glider.
John Ticer:	A glider! She talked to me about it the other day. I went over there yesterday with Langstaph; he sat right down and played that song on the piano.
Interviewer:	How did he sound?
John Ticer:	Great. He's going to record it and he said he could get somebody to sing it, so he's gonna do a tape for me.
Interviewer:	Maybe that'll be a possibility for you.
John Ticer:	It's got one hiccup in it. This person wants to return to the area of the James. I think that would have to be somewhat modified.
Interviewer:	Modified. I've taken that down, that's a good thing. It's 811 Tisdale Drive.
John Ticer:	And I'm not sure she's still there because somebody in Paul

	Springs...Autumn Hills...
Father's Responsibilities	
Interviewer:	How many hours a week do you think your father devoted to mayoral activities; meetings and things? ...What really surprised me [was that] City Council meetings were three o'clock in the afternoon. How did they ever pull that off?
John Ticer:	They wouldn't pull it off.
Interviewer:	You'd think everybody would be at work until six or seven o'clock, in the 1930s.
John Ticer:	<p>When you look at people...and I just told you, most of them were in the home business. Either millers or operator businesses like bankers, two or three bankers, so they all could set their own schedules. My father was the only one who was employed [unclear], employed by somebody else at that time.</p> <p>But because of what I told you earlier, the companies interested in having people involved in city government, they would encourage it. ...I can remember he was on the telephone at home. Every night he was on the telephone before he went to bed, telling people where to put cars and to switch engines. Then they'd have an accident and somebody would get on the tracks and the train would run over them, they'd call him and he'd have to go out there. They used to have a cattle pin out on Duke Street where [unclear] is now. In the old days, when they were transferring live-stock, they'd take them off every once in a while and water them and feed them when they were being transferred to a certain distance. The law said they had to do that. He had a couple cars that would come in any time and sometimes they'd break lose and get out and get on the street and get around the animals, and of course he had to get out to see what was happening.</p> <p>There was a railroad strike, and I don't know when that was. Well... that was around World War I or when[ever], and although he was in the administration, when the people went out on a strike, the managers went out to operate as best they could. The trains would keep going.</p> <p>And as I recall, it seems to me, like I've seen something somewhere, where the railroad rewarded the employees for doing that. I think they gave them a share of stock or something like that, as a reward for helping carry the rail through the strike area. I think they were allowed to carry a gun.</p>
Interviewer:	As mayor?
John Ticer:	At that time [during] the strike situation.

Interviewer:	At that time. Did your father, so many organizations, did he have any hobbies? Just seemed to be almost involved in all these different organizations. George Mason Hotel...
John Ticer:	You see [every] one of those things, one meeting a month, bank meetings every week, [unclear]...
Interviewer:	Here he is, Director of Alexandria Hospital.
John Ticer:	You know the director of the hospital --they have a large group of people that just comes to an annual meeting once a year, or something like that. He may have been more involved because I remember Robert Whitney ran the hospital on Duke Street. Him and my father used to discuss hospital problems then, so maybe the directors were more active, but the corporations would have an annual meeting...I don't know it was all that demanding...
Interviewer:	Certainly, an important responsibility in town is being the member of the Draft Board and sending young men off to war. Did your father ever speak of that?
John Ticer:	In a way... because that's the reason I joined the enlisted reserves. See, I was in college at that time. I joined the enlisted reserves to defend any kind of conflict.
Interviewer:	Looking at his sons I'm sure...
John Ticer:	He had no reason to live with his sons; he was sitting in the chamber before...once he joined the reserves [unclear]. It would have been the same time.
Interviewer:	He had the ceremony up in the lodge, I guess, in November, you mentioned. Fifty years a member of the Alexandria Washington Lodge. That's phenomenal. Was he a 33° Mason, or...?
John Ticer:	No. He belonged to what they call the 'Blue Lodge,' which I think is about 7°, I'm not sure.
Interviewer:	What is the Chairman of the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority?
John Ticer:	He would run their projects.
Interviewer:	That early.
John Ticer:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And that one down on...
John Ticer:	North Fairfax Street. They didn't have that building then.
Interviewer:	That was the [19]30s? One of the first constructed...
John Ticer:	The original public housing project, the original one in Alexandria was a national demonstration project. There were others in the country at that same time, but Alexandria was one of the demonstration projects.
Interviewer:	I'd heard that Eleanor Roosevelt came over to do that. Is that true?

John Ticer:	She could've. I don't remember.
Interviewer:	What was his role in the Chamber of Commerce?
John Ticer:	It was just like it is today. He was never president. He may have been on the board.
Interviewer:	Did the chamber exercise what degree of influence...I hear in the [19]50s that a lot of times people were serving as mayor were really involved with chamber of commerce policy, as opposed to more frequently...
John Ticer:	...to afford the time to participate in city government primarily with people who were in business with themselves, or running a business. So, bankers like we talked about, the member of the 1932-31 council, whenever it was. They were the kind of people who belonged to the chamber of commerce. Influence or not, they had the time and the interest to help run and operate the city.
Interviewer:	Looking back now on more than, it's been sixty some years, almost sixty-two years, what would you consider, as his son, as his greatest contribution to the city; legislatively or other wise, what he should be remembered for?
John Ticer:	There's one thing that comes up, which I thought about in recent days since we've been doing this. Somebody ought to look into the business when the city sold the gas company, because that was an early privatization effort. I think he had a lot to do with [it]. A big effort of his was a change in the government from bicameral form to the city management form of government.
Interviewer:	I didn't see where the old governor was that effective and obviously people wouldn't have...
John Ticer:	Well, there was a lot of people, too. It was pretty unyielding. There were a lot of people in the common council and the board of Baltimore, I think may have had two from each ward, I don't know... I'm just talking from your book because I don't remember myself. They have eight people in Baltimore now, two or three from each ward.
Interviewer:	Sixteen. Two from each ward, and there are four wards, that's an incredible number.
John Ticer:	I think there were two older from each group. So, there was probably a movement. City management form of government, I've always been told, was invented in Stanton, Virginia. Actually, I guess being able to observe its effectiveness this close at hand, because we are not that far from Stanton, they have also had some influence over the city born into that. Now, all that happened, when...[19]22?
Interviewer:	[19]22.
John Ticer:	See, I was not born yet when they did that. I remember Mr. Lawrence. Every once in a while some people would come down to

	the house and visit with my father when they had merits they wanted to discuss. I remember Wallace Lawrence, I don't remember Mr. Rich.
Interviewer:	Your father built that house on South Fairfax about 1915, or something like that?
John Ticer:	Something like that. I don't remember exactly when it was.
Father's Later Years	
Interviewer:	How about your father's later years? Here, he's so involved and active in numbers and numbers of organizations. Did he remain active politically, or did he tire from the political scene?
John Ticer:	See, he went on the housing authority after he went off the council. Then the draft board...went on the bank board. I don't think he went on the bank board when he was the mayor. He went on the bank board in [19]30--I guess he was the mayor, but he had probably been defeated. He went on the bank board after the bank holiday which was in [19]33. The Roosevelt Bank holiday.
Interviewer:	What is the Alexandria Charter Commission? That's the [19]40s.
John Ticer:	Well, you might see some [in the future]. The Charter Commission is whenever you want to make some changes to the city charter. Point of permission. My father and brother-in-law both were on that commission together at the same time.
Interviewer:	Who was running against your father when he lost by three votes, what in 19[...]?
John Ticer:	There were five of them. Was it five or seven? I think it was a five-man council. Nobody was running against anybody. They were all running at-large, like we do now, except it was all within the Democratic party. It didn't happen with the Republicans in those days, except for Mr. Don Philips.
Interviewer:	Oh he was...
John Ticer:	He was a Republican.
Interviewer:	An attorney wasn't he?
John Ticer:	Yeah. Clint Knight, of the Knight family, for some reason...Clint never owned up to it. Clint was a Post Master and was appointed by Hoover and later on, elected city council when I was on city council as a republican. As an Independent, it took him a long time to admit they were Republicans.
Interviewer:	Finally, just a couple of last questions. What do you think was probably some of the most memorable events that you remember as your dad was mayor? Some of these things we related to and talked about obviously, like dedications and things, but what sticks in your mind?
John Ticer:	I don't remember the event all that well myself, but the celebration of the George Washington birthday Bicentennial was the most

	significant community event that occurred and he was involved with very briefly as mayor.
Interviewer:	With your father being mayor, did it put any pressure on his sons, obviously, sometimes it can. I mean, the President's children feel a certain degree of pressure because there are little eyes everywhere; you can't get away with anything. Being a kid, you know.
John Ticer:	No. We didn't seem to have that problem.
Interviewer:	I appreciate you coming by and I'm going to write out this sketch and let you go over it again, if you would please.
John Ticer:	Sure.
Interviewer:	Make sure I get it right.
John Ticer:	Sure.
Interviewer:	I've been looking over the council minutes and I appreciate having the opportunity to talk with you and gaining some insight into your dad's term.
John Ticer:	I want to show you...[unclear]...organizations he belonged to and I was going to show you...
Interviewer:	Edmond Clice is a life member of the Relief Truck and Engine Company.
John Ticer:	I don't know the date of that.
Interviewer:	Truck...and...
John Ticer:	See, that's the one down here on Prince Street. The volunteer activity, this was a volunteer, they weren't trained like the volunteers are trained now.
Interviewer:	I guess you know the Smith plan.
John Ticer:	I know the Smith.
Interviewer:	Is he still living?
John Ticer:	I don't know if he is or not. Everybody knew my father.
Interviewer:	Here's a question I want to ask you. All the time we are searching high and low. What happened to the papers of your father as mayor of Alexandria? I have a Ph.D. candidate that walks through the front door of the mall [and says], "I want to do a Ph.D. dissertation with Edmond F. Tyson." Where should I go to look for papers?
John Ticer:	Well, he didn't have any at home.
Interviewer:	We've got council minutes. We've got, hopefully, things they kept on Payne Street.
John Ticer:	I would guess...in the city archives.
Interviewer:	Archives.
John Ticer:	I've never personally been exposed to the city archives.
Interviewer:	Obviously, personal papers are different than depositories now. I know your wife has told me she had planned to send some of hers to college and a large number at the city archives now of tapes and things. It's a question I'm frequently asked...

John Ticer:	They were a lot less formal in those days. There was a lot less hand written correspondence, with the [unclear] machine they bought in whenever, 1930?
Interviewer:	Yeah.
John Ticer:	I don't recall a bunch of city papers being around the house.
Interviewer:	I didn't know if he kept files or trunks, or somebody inherited them, you know your brothers, or sisters.
John Ticer:	No. I'm quite certain they didn't. I think I would know.
Interviewer:	Did your father entertain much?
John Ticer:	No. He wasn't able to and he couldn't afford to.
Interviewer:	Well, thank you very much, Mr. Ticer.
John Ticer:	Sure. You want to talk about Mrs. Ticer any?
Interviewer:	I do. ...I had some questions, I just wasn't...
Father and the Railroad	
John Ticer:	...Princess and Fairfax Street and also around the terminal for watching over the railroad.
Interviewer:	Even Civil War wasn't it?
John Ticer:	No. It ran since the Civil War.
Interviewer:	Princess and Fairfax?
John Ticer:	I don't know when they stopped. They ran to Rosslyn, and the trains ran up the blue mountain and places like that. Rosslyn was a man. They were separate from the trolley line. The Railway used to run the terminal and the offices down there; it had a regular waiting room. I remember long benches like a railroad waiting room.
Interviewer:	Oh, really?
John Ticer:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	How long ago did they raise that building? Seven [years]?
John Ticer:	It's been longer than seven years; they had to build all those new houses down there. They had to take up the railroad only; they had to take up tracks and everything. They essentially ran out of the transfer the trucks and all that business and went out of business and they moved him out of his office and he was what they called a Rod Master, and a Rod Master had to do with the cars over the Potomac yards and pick them up and bring them to Alexandria and run the train through the tunnel down Union Street to service Robinson terminal and the fertilizer factory and all those people.
Interviewer:	So, they offset the Potomac Yards?
John Ticer:	No, not the Potomac Yards, but the trains, the big train railroad were laying stuff in the Potomac Yard and his engine would pick it up and drag it over here for stuff that needed to be circulated in this part of the country.

	They would be coming from [unclear]; well, they used to get automobiles in boxcars from Ford Motor Company come in here. It was always a big deal because they do it at night time; they'd unload those cars that had four automobiles in a boxcar. There was a rack you could put two more of them on and the rack would go up and you put two more under them. They always did that at night time because they wasn't ready to let people see the new models until a certain time.
Interviewer:	Was the Ford Plant operating to the conversion, and you could tell me was that distribution or assembly also?
John Ticer:	Just distribution.
Interviewer:	Just distribution.
John Ticer:	And parts.
Interviewer:	Parts.
John Ticer:	In the [19]30s, it may have been [19]36, the Shriners[?] had a big national convention in Washington. They got that Shriner's handrail on Payne Street between 14 and 13. They made that whole block to look like Egypt...colonnades and things to hold...The Ford Motor Company provided a convertible sedan for every one of the [unclear] from all over the state, all over the country that were going to that convention. They hired a bunch a young people around town to drive those cars. My brother Edmond was one of them that drove one of those cars. They were neat convertible sedans. When the thing was over, they had the seal painted on the door and all of that for the Shriners. That's when they repainted them and sold [them] as demonstrators, I guess as used cars.
Interviewer:	Right there.
John Ticer:	Yeah. There was the operation down there.
Interviewer:	I'd say, even during your father's time there was a movement to clean up the water front in town.
John Ticer:	Well, they needed it in those days.
Interviewer:	They were trying to plan, I guess, to the federal government to remove the piles. Even then.
John Ticer:	Um-hum.
Interviewer:	When George Washington birthday parade took place, where was your father viewing from? On King Street?
John Ticer:	Well, you asked me that. I don't recall.
Interviewer:	You don't recall.
John Ticer:	No. They came down from the Masonic Temple and all these big wheels walked, they didn't ride. Hoover and my father walked.
Interviewer:	I remember you were talking three summers ago, he didn't own an automobile, is that right?

John Ticer:	He did not. Never owned an automobile. Put a crimp on a guy's car, "You can't borrow your dad's car." My oldest sister and brother bought a car jointly. She was teaching school in; maybe it was church, her first teaching job. There's a Murphy house right there.
Interviewer:	Oh, over there, that's Prince Street at 302.
John Ticer:	It sure is. He's an ex-con. Murphy house had two stolen on the same side on it.
Interviewer:	Didn't he do some drug clearing for Dr. Milt or something, somebody said?
John Ticer:	Dr. DeMilt was and my brother...
Interviewer:	Oh, it was your brother that did it?
John Ticer:	...worked, I used to deliver for him.
Interviewer:	When I first came to Alexandria they told me that you did when I lived there seven years for a living...[unclear]...murdered.
John Ticer:	You lived there?
Interviewer:	Yeah, I lived there from 1977 to 1984.
John Ticer:	Really?
Interviewer:	I'd still probably be there if she hadn't have been killed, but I enjoyed living there.
John Ticer:	She owned that building?
Interviewer:	She owned it, yeah. She had her realtor company there. She bought it in [19]59.
John Ticer:	Uh-huh.
Interviewer:	[Unclear] had its place, which sold the real estate in Mount Vernon. Then 302 Prince Street corporation for a while, then they separated the...
John Ticer:	Back building was [unclear] drugstore before DeMilt. They had [unclear] grew up in a town in King Street. And then when...
Interviewer:	Edgar's brother George, before 19-[19]30s was turned into a ...?
John Ticer:	Yeah, well, no, DeMilt was the last drug store.
Interviewer:	He was?
John Ticer:	Yeah. He took it from the drug dealers.
Interviewer:	I know the colonel had it 1867 to 1970s.
John Ticer:	That would have been on King Street.
Interviewer:	His son had, Edgar Jr. had King and Pitt? Is that right?
John Ticer:	King and Pitt is where the confederate colonel had his.
Interviewer:	I see.
John Ticer:	Edgar. What was his son's name? He had two sons.
Interviewer:	Ashby?
John Ticer:	Ashby. Ashby ran it. Cortland is the other brother.
Interviewer:	Cortland.
John Ticer:	Mr. Arthur worked the [unclear]. One of them was in the bank; George [unclear] was in the bank. First National Bank.

Interviewer:	Right.
John Ticer:	They both live in the same block we lived in, on Fairfax Street. There's a couple doors from it, 218 or 220 wasn't it?
Interviewer:	Um-hum. Well, thank you again, I appreciate it...[End of Interview]