



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



Project Name: *Alexandria Legacies*

Title: *Interview with Shirley Grimm Warthen*

Date of Interview: *October 18, 2003*

Location of Interview: *Unknown*

M.B.: *Mary Baughman and Unidentified Interviewer #2*

Transcriber: *Jeanne Springmann*

Abstract: *Shirley Grimm Warthen describes her childhood growing up in the 1930's and '40's in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria. She had a special attachment to the city because her dad was one of its policemen. As the youngest of six children, she saw a larger view of life through her siblings, even experiencing World War II through the death of a brother. She describes walking to school, enjoying life at its best at the roller skating rink, going to the movies at the Palm Theater, and other common activities.*

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Introductions	
Mary Baughman:	.. The date today is October 18, 2003. My name is Mary Baumann and today I will be interviewing Shirley Frances Warthen of Alexandria, Virginia. Shirley, can you state your name please.
Shirley Warthen:	Shirley Warthen.
M.B.:	And your age?
Shirley Warthen:	70
M.B.:	You were born? When were you born?
Shirley Warthen:	April, 1933.
M.B.:	And what is (sic) your parents' names?
Shirley Warthen:	Henry and Louise Grimm.
M.B.:	And you were married to ...?
Shirley Warthen:	Bryce Warthen.
M.B.:	Can you state the names of your siblings?
Shirley Warthen:	Henry, Herbert, Ralph, Joyce, Norman Grimm
M.B.:	OK. So you had four ... four brothers?
Shirley Warthen:	Four brothers and one sister.
M.B.:	And how many children do you have?
Shirley Warthen:	Two boys.
M.B.:	Two boys. What are their names?
Shirley Warthen:	James and David.
M.B.:	Great. Got sort of the technicalities out of the way.
Childhood Neighborhood	
M.B.:	Let's start – what I would like to do with the interview is sort of move through chronologically and then we'll probably sway from that a little bit. But let's start with your childhood. You grew up in Alexandria, correct?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes.
M.B.:	What was the address?
Shirley Warthen:	409 East Howell Ave. Just (inaudible)
M.B.:	Yes, just tell me what you remember about your childhood.
Shirley Warthen:	A very happy childhood. Lots of fun. Activities in the area: lots of kids playing on the street; walking to Old Town. Our summers were spent at

	the recreation center. The parks and recreation center had an area over where it would be Simpson Stadium right now, where the ball field is. And we met there in the summertime and played in groups. Went to movies a lot, in Del Ray, the old Palm Theater.
M.B.:	Can you describe the theater?
Shirley Warthen:	Very small. Looked large then, but it was small. No, it wasn't anything that dramatic that you could describe.
M.B.:	What types of movies?
Shirley Warthen:	Oh, mostly cowboy movies. Saturday was the big cowboy day. We always had to watch cowboy movies on Saturday.
M.B.:	And was it several movies?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, but the same movie would play two or three times that day. It wasn't a different movie on the same day. It was always two or three, the same movie.
M.B.:	And you'd watch it more than once?
Shirley Warthen:	Oh, yes. You paid one fee, you went in, and you stayed, depending on what you had to do that day. If you could stay. Of course, if you went in in the middle, it didn't make any difference. They were always coming and going. And, of course, the children's movies on Saturday was [sic] quite rambunctious. There was a lot of walking around.
M.B.:	Within the theater?
Shirley Warthen:	Within the theater. But everybody had a good time.
M.B.:	Do you remember how much it cost then?
Shirley Warthen:	Ten cents.
M.B.:	Ten cents for however... ?
Shirley Warthen:	It was a nickel, as I remember, when we started. But then it went up to ten cents.
M.B.:	So you just remember being there at various ages?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, because, if you didn't go there - it was walkable from home - and if not, you had to ride a bus to go downtown to see the movie. And I think we stayed pretty much in the neighborhood. We did go downtown, you know, and shop. And went to the movies. But basically we stayed pretty much in the neighborhood.
M.B.:	When you say downtown, you are referring to?
Shirley Warthen:	Downtown Alexandria.
M.B.:	Old Town. What we call today Old Town Alexandria.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes.

M.B.:	So, when you were growing up, you referred to it as “downtown?”
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, as going downtown.
M.B.:	Now you are saying, “We went here and there.” Who (sic) do you see around you? Your siblings, or your friends, or ... ?
Shirley Warthen:	Siblings and friends, both. It seems as if in that era when we were all from large families. So if you had one brother with you, there might be a brother from another family that was the same age. There was a lot of interaction between the families. If I wanted to go along, the older ones would take you, you know. They would put up with you. The younger ones were drug behind the older ones.
M.B.:	So where do you fall in your siblings?
Shirley Warthen:	I’m the youngest, of the six.
M.B.:	The youngest.
Shirley Warthen:	And so the baby pretty well got spoiled.
M.B.:	Oh yes! And how many years older is your oldest sibling?
Shirley Warthen:	He was nine years older.
M.B.:	So there is a range of nine years among the six?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes. My mother was busy.
M.B.:	That’s for sure. Interesting.
Local Schools	
M.B.:	Tell me what school you went to.
Shirley Warthen:	I went to Mt. Vernon Grade School. Matter of fact, my father went to Mt. Vernon Grade School.
M.B.:	Where is that?
Shirley Warthen:	On Mt. Vernon Ave. And my two sons later went to Mt. Vernon Grade School.
M.B.:	The same building?
Shirley Warthen:	No, the building that my dad went to, and that I started to, has been torn down. But they enlarged the school when I was going there. One part of the area was one big school. Fairly good sized. Then Dewitt Ave. ran in between, and on the other side they built another school, a two-story school that was more modern. And then, I don’t know when but I’d say in the sixties, they tore the original school down. And they closed that street, the Mt. Ida, or, yes, I think it was Mt. Ida. There was a street in between the two buildings. And they closed that street off.
M.B.:	Right, it’s no longer there.

Shirley Warthen:	No. Well, I think, it may pick up on either side. It's on either side, down closer to Commonwealth. My father went there and then I went there. I did go to the original old one. And then And of course, at that time there was only eleven year school system in Virginia. So you went just to the seventh grade. And then you went to GW, to George Washington High School for your freshman year and only went there four years before graduation.
M.B.:	But it would have been eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh?
Shirley Warthen:	No, yes.
M.B.:	And where is George Washington High School?
Shirley Warthen:	It's at the other end of Mt. Vernon Ave. I think - I started there in '47 - and I think the 1948 or '49 is when they went to a twelve year school system. The first graduating class, I think, was in 1953 for the twelve year school system. Because my sister-in-law
M.B.:	You just missed it.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes. In fact, we were kind of worried. Were we going to have to go back and do this? My sister-in-law was just here for the fiftieth reunion, for the 1953 graduation class. And they have added on to that school quite a bit. In fact, I rode down there last week and they've got another whole section that they're adding on to. So it has grown quite a bit. It's a middle school also now. Yes, it's a middle school now.
The Walk to School	
M.B.:	Did you always walk to school?
Shirley Warthen:	Oh, yes, always walked. Our family didn't own a car. And we ... , I don't remember. There was [sic] busses, but we never took the busses because we were close enough to walk. We used to get in groups. The kids in the neighborhood would all meet. Or somebody would come by the house, and then you'd go pick up somebody else. And you would just walk to school.
M.B.:	And can you describe your walk to school? Like what you saw. What you remember about it?
Shirley Warthen:	Down the Avenue?
M.B.:	Yes.
Shirley Warthen:	There was [sic] some houses on the Avenue, and some businesses. The drugstore and The one thing that we always used to stop at There was a little place called the Mighty Midget. And, I'm trying to remember what street It was on Mt. Vernon Ave. right on the way to school. And it was one of these little metal, about, I'd say about twice or three times as big as a telephone booth. And it was a metal housing thing. And they made hamburgers and hot dogs, and they had potato chips, and

	peanuts, and candy bars. It must have been awfully hot in the summertime in that thing because I don't think there was any
M.B.:	So small!
Shirley Warthen:	Yes. And we would stop at the Mighty Midget and either get something to drink coming back from school or we'd pick up a cupcake or something going to school. But, the Mighty Midget! I don't know when they moved it away but I don't think ...
M.B.:	It was a favorite.
Shirley Warthen:	... (inaudible) too many years. Yes.
M.B.:	So this was a structure that was on the street in front of the buildings, or ...?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, it was set right on the corner. You couldn't miss it. I mean very close to the street.
M.B.:	And it didn't move over night or anything
Shirley Warthen:	No. Nothing moved.
M.B.:	Nobody packed it up and took it home?
Shirley Warthen:	No.
M.B.:	It stood there.
Shirley Warthen:	In fact, we laughed about it. I wonder what they found under there when they finally dug the ground up under that thing. Because I know it was there for years.
M.B.:	The Mighty Midget.
Shirley Warthen:	The Mighty Midget. Yes, I just thought about that.
M.B.:	Great.
Shirley Warthen:	It was a one man outfit. That's all you could get in there at one time. On the other There was a filling station on the corner, Mt. Vernon and Commonwealth, I mean Monroe. And then you would go up further to There was a Well, there used to be a Manny, Mo, and Mack's. That was a car outfit. Before that, I'm trying to remember. There was a drug store there. There was a grocery store on the left. There was a Safeway on the left hand side going up the Avenue towards the school. And then houses, which are still there. And houses are still there now. And a lot of vacant lots too. I remember when the telephone company was built there. There is a telephone business office, I guess you would call it, there right now. And has been there for years as best I can remember. And houses. And of course, the railroad came in the back of the school, which is now the Metro stop back there.
M.B.:	Braddock?

Shirley Warthen:	Yes.
M.B.:	Metro. King St?
Interviewer2:	Which one? Braddock or King?
Shirley Warthen:	Braddock.
M.B.:	Braddock.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, it's Braddock. Then we used to walk the same distance from Howell where my grandmother lived on Alexandria Ave, where John and Mary that you talked to. Somebody went there every day. There was always one of us kids going to Grandma's. In fact, that was a given. You knew that you were going to get a good snack when you got there. I'm trying to think what else
School Life	
M.B.:	What do you remember about school?
Shirley Warthen:	School? School was lots of fun. I had very good teachers. I enjoyed school a lot. I wasn't the greatest student in the world, but I had fun. That probably was part of my problem. I remember I had I can't remember the names of a lot of the early ones. I know my seventh grade teacher was Miss Stump. That was a good year. Of course, looking forward to going to high school. We played the ordinary games. Tag and baseball and a lot of activities on the playground. I think our studies ... I thought the studies then were hard and terrible, and the teachers were mean at times. But now that I look back on it, it was pretty good. And the old traditional graham crackers and milk in the middle of the morning, when you were in the early grades. And always the Valentine Day parties, in the early grades, in the first, second, and third grades. No kindergarten. Virginia didn't (inaudible) kindergarten.
M.B.:	What did you do for the parties?
Shirley Warthen:	Oh, we always had Valentines for everybody. And everybody counted each one to see who got the most. And Halloween parties. Always wore some kind of a costume, hand-me-downs or make-your-own. I just had a good time.
My Dad, the Policeman	
M.B.:	Great. What do you remember about your parents? You said your father was
Shirley Warthen:	My father was a policeman. He was lots of fun. He loved children. He loved children. And my mother was very, very busy trying to take care of six kids. It seems like to me there was always washing and ironing going on with four boys in the house. As the boys got to be older, they ... one brother worked, two brothers worked at Potomac Yards while they went to school. It seems to me we were ever hanging up clothes on the line.

	<p>Everybody wore dress shirts in those days and they all had to be ironed. But in my early days with my dad, Dad would ride – he rode a motorcycle for fourteen years, when he first went on the force. And he worked shift work - either 4 to 12, 12 to 8, or 8 to 4. And dinner was always when he got off at four o'clock, if he was on that shift. And I used to go out and stand and wait for him to see him come across the bridge at the Monroe St. bridge that goes over Potomac Yards. Well, that's not the original one, because think that's about the third one they built. I used to wait for Dad to come up across the bridge and up US 1. He would come up Howell Ave. from US 1, which we called River Rd. at that time. We called it River Rd. And he would always bring his motorcycle and park it. And sometimes when he would come to lunch, before I went to school, he would park it. And I would He would say "Go outside and you stand by the motorcycle and you listen for any calls for me." And I was dumb enough to believe that I was going to really (laughing) The radio was going, you know, all the time. You could hear all this static and talking going on. And I was</p>
<p>M.B.:</p>	<p>You thought you were working for the police! (Laughing)</p>
<p>Shirley Warthen:</p>	<p>(Inaudible) (Laughing) And I That was a monster of a motorcycle. That was a big Harley-Davidson. I tell you! Then you got tempted enough that you could touch it. So then my brother decided one day we would touch it. And we did! It turned over and scared us to death.</p>
<p>M.B.:</p>	<p>Oh, my goodness!</p>
<p>Shirley Warthen:</p>	<p>Because it was entirely too heavy for us to get up, which Daddy was very He'd come out, put it back up and said, "Don't ever touch it again."</p>
<p>M.B.:</p>	<p>How old were you when this happened?</p>
<p>Shirley Warthen:</p>	<p>Oh, I must have been, probably seven, and no more than nine.</p>
<p>M.B.:</p>	<p>Lucky you didn't get hurt!</p>
<p>Shirley Warthen:</p>	<p>And one day he came home in the motorcycle with a sidecar. And that was a real treat. That was fun. The sidecar was very fascinating.</p>
<p>M.B.:</p>	<p>Did you go for a ride?</p>
<p>Shirley Warthen:</p>	<p>No, he would never No, he never took us. No, never took us for a ride. But I sat in it when he wasn't looking. (laughing) No, he wouldn't mind me sitting in it. But no, he never took us for a ride. I remember the first puppy dog; no, the second, puppy dog we had (inaudible) over where we used to go to the ... where Simpson Stadium is. And the recreation center had activities for us in the summertime. That used to be the original, what we called "dog pound" at that time, which is now the Animal Shelter. But it was the "dog pound" then. And my daddy would Of course, they would bring the stray dogs there. I got to know ... Kids would go over and play with the dogs. My daddy knew the man that took care of the kennel. We were always going over to see the dogs. We</p>

	<p>had had a dog. We had a big, white Eskimo Spitz that died. We kept begging Daddy for another dog. So he said, "No." And finally, one day, he drove up in the motorcycle. My brother Norman and I went out to greet him. And when we got there we saw this, right at his uniform jacket where it went together, this little teeny head of this puppy. He had gone by and gotten us a puppy and brought it home. Named Tiny Tim. She wasn't a very big dog. Just a Heinz 57, which we thoroughly enjoyed. I don't even know what happened to Tiny Tim when I think about it. I had a cat. I remember I had a white cat called Snowball. But it died. And I think Tiny Tim, as I remember, disappeared one night and never came back. We had her about eight or nine years. But she disappeared and never came back. I don't think, I think either something happened to her. Because dogs ran lose then. She was inside. We brought her in. We kept her in. She stayed in the yard, a fenced yard. At night she would come in the house. But she would get out because us kids would leave the gate open.</p>
<p>M.B.:</p>	<p>So, she knew how to get home?</p>
<p>Shirley Warthen:</p>	<p>Oh, yes, she knew how to get home. Something probably happened. She got hit by a car.</p>
<p>M.B.:</p>	<p>Something probably happened.</p>
<p>Shirley Warthen:</p>	<p>But I remember he brought the puppy home. We all enjoyed that very much.</p>
<p>My Dad, A Friend to Youth</p>	
<p>Shirley Warthen:</p>	<p>But my father absolutely loved children. Later in his police work, that's what he did was he was in charge of the Safety Patrols at all the schools. And eventually, he always wanted a boys camp. And he got the city, or the Police Department, bought (a) boys camp and he ran that.</p>
<p>M.B.:</p>	<p>Oh, that's wonderful. That's wonderful. Do they still do that now?</p>
<p>Shirley Warthen:</p>	<p>The camp is still owned by the police and they still have it. When Dad started out, I went with him to Mom and I went with him many times to look for the land. I think my father aggravated everybody in the city for so many years, until they said, "OK, you find the land and we'll see what we can do." So my father was riding all over the place trying to find land. And he did find 100 acres down in Kilmarnock, Virginia, down in Northern Neck. I don't know all the particulars but he approached them whatever the house (inaudible). But it was purchased. And then, Daddy It had a little house on it. He wanted this camp to be open to every – well, he was boys, so it was a different generation, boys camp. He said, "I want every boy in the city to be able to get away. Whether he can afford it or not. It's not for the underprivileged. It's not for the wealthy. It's not for troubled kids. It's just to give the children a place to get out of the city and play and have a good time in the summertime when school was out." The first year he opened with 25 boys in the old house. And a cook, a</p>

	<p>couple counselors. And my husband, by this time, had gone off to college and come back a year. And they wanted a recreation director. And the city said they would give him a recreation director. And that's where my husband worked the first summer home from college. But I had known him in high school. I had already known him before. It was happy times. So every summer Mom packed up and went to camp. And I had to go too because I was too young. They wouldn't leave me at home by myself. So, I was raised going there in the summertime. There was [sic] a lot of boys and one girl.</p>
<p>Community Life</p>	
M.B.:	<p>Let's talk about the community a little bit, while we are still in your youth.</p>
Shirley Warthen:	<p>Went to church at the Del Ray Methodist Church, which is still there on Windsor Ave. In fact, I think it is over 100 years old, as best I remember. A letter I got not too long ago, is still very active.</p>
M.B.:	<p>Do you remember some of your schoolmates' names?</p>
Shirley Warthen:	<p>You know, I was trying to think of that. I don't remember some of them's [sic] last names. I remember the first names and I can visualize them. I don't even know where they are now. I don't I don't remember I only know one boy, or two, maybe two or three, that I went to school with, that I started first grade with, that still lives here. And one of them I had seen a couple years ago in town. And another one - the high school has a luncheon once a month that we all get together. And one of them comes to the luncheon. Him [sic] and I see each other.</p>
M.B.:	<p>Reminisce?</p>
Shirley Warthen:	<p>Yes.</p>
M.B.:	<p>What were their names?</p>
Shirley Warthen:	<p>One is Freddy Thomas, and the other one is John Tyler. I can remember more of my sister's friends, who, she was four years older than I am.</p>
M.B.:	<p>That's amazing!</p>
Shirley Warthen:	<p>Yes, because I think I ran around with that age group too.</p>
M.B.:	<p>Well, because you were with your sister.</p>
Shirley Warthen:	<p>Yes. Well, she wasn't too happy about it sometimes, particularly as she got older.</p>
M.B.:	<p>When you were in school, were they the same people in the community pretty much as you went through school?</p>
Shirley Warthen:	<p>Yes. Yes, it was pretty much the same families. I don't remember people moving. They didn't move that much. I think in Del Ray, all the families stayed pretty, pretty much put. And, I don't know Rarely did we have</p>

	that many new students come in that I remember. It was the same ones that had lived all around us there in Del Ray.
M.B.:	And were they, were most families in the area, typically like a young couple with children?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, yes. As I said, four and five kids, or six kids. We intermingled. My brother would be friends with two or three families that had boys that age. And they had sisters my age. And, you know, there was just a mixture of the families intermingling.
M.B.:	And the community, when you were younger, do you remember, was it very diverse?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, it was. I thought about that. I thought, you know, it was sort of like a melting pot when I was growing up.
M.B.:	And how so?
Shirley Warthen:	There was every There was Jewish, Italian, Mexican, Polish. I can think, you know, all the different nationalities there.
M.B.:	Religious and ethnic?
Shirley Warthen:	Religious
M.B.:	And ethnic.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes.
M.B.:	And everybody got along?
Shirley Warthen:	And everybody got along just fine.
Del Ray and the Railroad Community	
M.B.:	That's wonderful. And, also let's talk about, you mentioned that this is a railroad community a couple of times. We'll go and continue with that as soon as I flip the tape over. So we'll still talk about your youth, but let's talk about the railroad community specifically. [5 minute gap in the tape from 379 to 484] OK, Shirley, we've flipped the tape over. I was thinking about the Del Ray area and specifically the community known as a railroad community. Can you tell me what you remember about the railroad, Potomac Yards?
Shirley Warthen:	I think, what I remember is, a lot of the fathers of the children that I ran around with, their fathers worked at the ... [end of side 1] [Side 2] My grandfather, who was dead before I was born, I know worked for the RF&P Railroad, which came through. There was [sic] a lot of various cars. And what they call Fruit Growers Express. I had an uncle that worked there. I don't understand that part of it. And my two brothers worked part-time when they were in high school at the railroad. One was, to me, like counting certain cars that came by. I don't know what his job was. The other one - I don't know exactly what he did at the

	railroad, but they worked late in the evenings. They would go to work late in the evenings. I road the train, like to Culpepper and Madison, and stuff like that, but I never was much down into the railroad area. The boys all went down there, because the boys went down more to the river. They would go through the railroad yards to get down to the river. So I wasn't
M.B.:	What did they do?
Shirley Warthen:	They would take a canoe, or boat, or they would go down and play in the water. Or, if somebody had a canoe, they would carry it down. Unfortunately, I'll tell you the story. Nothing happened to them, but they would walk the trestle over There was a big trestle over US 1. And they would - oh, how stupid!
M.B.:	This was when they were in high school?
Shirley Warthen:	They would walk across that trestle carrying the canoe. If another train had come
M.B.:	Yes, there's nowhere to go. They were lucky they didn't get hurt.
Shirley Warthen:	We did a lot of stupid things. So when I look at my kids now,
M.B.:	(Laughing) You have that perspective.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes.
Community Identity	
M.B.:	So do you remember, in terms of the community identity, being closely related to the fact that a lot of people worked for the railroad?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, worked for the railroad. And also there was the DuFresne There was a beer distributor on the Avenue. I remember there was ... he had a daughter that I went to school with. I'm trying to think of what her name was. I can't remember.
M.B.:	They employed many people, as well, in the community?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes. Of course I mostly knew a lot of the policemen growing up. And wherever the boys went to play ball, I went where they went, and did boy things.
M.B.:	Four brothers.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, four brothers. Did boy things.
M.B.:	Now I have heard about the volunteer fire department being a big part of the community.
Shirley Warthen:	Oh, that was a very big part. My brothers were on the volunteer fire ... were volunteer firemen. And that brings up something else. When I was about, I guess, eleven, around that area, the Red Cross, that would be during the war, the Red Cross had, where the firehouse was on Windsor,

	or is, on Windsor Ave., upstairs there, the Red Cross would come, like one day a week, and roll bandages, and fold things, and sew, and make quilts and things for the service people. I remember one summer, mother would pack my lunch, and Kitty Demaine, who was well known in town, worked for the Red Cross. And I went over and I remember because I was sewing on a treadle sewing machine. We cut out squares. Somebody else, sort of like assembly line, they cut out the squares. Somebody would sit and sew two squares together, then four. Then you'd lay it aside. Somebody else would pick it up and add something on to it. And we made quilts for the soldiers during the war.
M.B.:	Making your contribution to the war effort.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes. And a lot of Red Cross ladies were folding bandages and things like that. And, but they also had ... the fire department was volunteer. As I said, my brother, two brothers at that time, and stayed doing volunteer for a long time. And we went ... all of us as a gang would go to the firehouse. That was either one or two of the paid there or the volunteers were there. We knew most of the men there. We'd go over and they'd be playing ball and we watched the ball game or And they used to have dances, which I didn't go to when I was young, and then when I was older, I wasn't over there. They had dances, upstairs over the firehouse. And Bingo.
M.B.:	Lots of community things.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes. But I forgot about that. I remember that I sewed on a treadle sewing machine.
A Child's View of World War II	
M.B.:	Speaking of contributing to the war effort, what do you remember about when Pearl Harbor was attacked and that kind of thing?
Shirley Warthen:	I just remember vaguely, that when Pearl Harbor was attacked, I really ...
M.B.:	You would have been what? Eight or nine?
Shirley Warthen:	Nine, yes. And you know, the other thing, I don't think as children that age in that era that we didn't become aware. We didn't worry about things. We were very free and we didn't have a lot of worries. It was a very carefree time. However, it did affect our lives quite a bit. I remember, as the war went on, the rationing - of food, of dairy products, meat, shoes, no nylons. Of course, I wasn't old enough to wear them anyway. But I stood in line at JC Penny's in Old Town to get hose for my mother and my sister. And I remember it just bringing them home and so proud. I went with my sister because she was four years older and wanted nylons for Easter. And I stood in line with her and I got extra. I could get some. And my father accidentally picked them up and threw them in the coal stove that heated our house. He thought the bag was empty.

M.B.:	Oh, wow!
Shirley Warthen:	Boy, that was not a very happy time.
M.B.:	A catastrophe.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, it was. I will say that we actually ... the rationing didn't hit us too hard. There was [sic], of course, eight people in the house. And I will say that probably we had more tickets to buy things than we had money. So it wasn't a real problem as far as But I do remember the lack of butter, sugar, that, those sort of things that cut down. And Mother saving tin cans, like we recycle today, but we were saving And, I'm trying to think what else.
M.B.:	Was civil defense in the schools very much?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes. And my father was an air raid warden, where they And of course we had dark shades. When the sirens would blow
M.B.:	Blackout.
Shirley Warthen:	And we had the black out. Our shades were either a very dark green, or you put things over the windows. No light was to be showing. And, of course, the lights were all turned off when the sirens went on. And Daddy would gather his helmet and his equipment. And he had an area to walk. And in school we were the typical We had the practices where we all went to the hall and, you know, put our heads down, put our arms around our knees. Stayed there until we could go back to the classrooms again. Come to think of it we weren't frightened though. We weren't
M.B.:	I think it's, like you said, it's a matter of experiencing a time at an age. (inaudible)
Shirley Warthen:	Yes. But I think today, of course, we didn't have the television. We had a radio. We listened to the President and we knew what was going on. But I think children were a lot more carefree, felt more protected or something, that we
M.B.:	Did you sense fear from adults, do you remember?
Shirley Warthen:	I know my mother and father were worried. And then of course, both of my brothers went off to war and only one came back. I'll never ... I won't forget that. And, of course, in those They both left within months of each other. And they stayed together in the service. That was before the Sullivan Act and they stayed together. They did their training and they went overseas together. Of course, they came home a couple times before they went. And, then they were ... they landed on Iwo Jima and my brother was killed. One brother was killed. It was hard on us but my brother that was with him, it was very, very hard.
M.B.:	I imagine.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes. It is something he lived with all of his life.

Interviewer2:	The one who died was older?
Shirley Warthen:	Younger. He was nineteen. The older one was, would have been almost, close to twenty-one. Herbert was killed the day of the landing. That was in the nineteenth of February in 1945. In those days, we didn't know it until March, late March. My mother – we didn't know it as children – but my mother had a sense that something was very wrong because a letter was returned. One letter was returned. There were certain things that you learned in those days that meant
M.B.:	Right, signs.
Shirley Warthen:	And one letter had been returned. I was not home. A friend of my mother's, where my mother went to the beauty shop, I used to go there after school. It was across from Mt. Vernon Grade School. It might have been that ... well, it's called Potomac in here, but that's not what it was when I went there. And I would go over and pick up hairpins and take hairpins out of people's hair and do things like that. Little odd jobs and she would pay me some change. I hadn't gone home, but I met my I started home and my uncle, about a block from my house, asked me had I been home. And I said, "No." He said, "You must go, right now. You must go home." And, when I arrived home, my sister greeted me and told me that my brother had been killed. But I know that the message was delivered by a car with a chaplain to my mother. A chaplain and a marine – they were in the marines – come [sic] to the door. She was sitting across the street at a neighbor's house and she said, "I know something is very wrong." And she went over and they called my dad home. But I remember when the telegram came, which was two weeks later. I have the telegram that informs you that your son's been killed.
Interviewer2:	Do you still have that telegram?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes.
M.B.:	Did you brother stay, your other brother?
Shirley Warthen:	He stayed there until he came home. Yes, he stayed. He stayed and fought the war. He got home, I would say, in October or November.
Interviewer2:	19?
M.B.:	45
Shirley Warthen:	Forty ... [inaudible discussion in the background] What I remember, too, is Vivian Riley, and I don't remember the other kid's name, because you figure it was spring. There was about four or five little kids that had cut apple blossoms off of a tree and knocked at the door and said, "Here, we're sorry" And for little kids
M.B.:	Young – how old would you say?
Shirley Warthen:	I must have been nine, ten, and they were eight, nine, ten.

Interviewer2:	Were they friends of yours?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes. They were just on the street, that lived on the street, that we played. And I can still see them coming to that door.
M.B.:	Vividly.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, with these little apple blossoms.
M.B.:	Because it was spring.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes. But Henry came home. Got married. Had his family. But it was a hard life. It's something he lived with all his life. I don't think he ever ... I think, one thing, it's always "Why me?" The two of you side by side, you know, why him, not me.
Interviewer2:	He witnessed his brother's ... ?
Shirley Warthen:	Oh, yes. But we had the satisfaction, the guarantee of knowing that my brother was put together and shipped back to where he.... He was buried on Iwo Jima. Because he did this. He, he did this. Then in, I guess it was in 19.... I will have to look up the date. This is not Del Ray, but what happened is they were going to move him from Iwo Jima to Guam, because there is a national cemetery on Guam. And at that time they gave us a choice of bringing him home or moving him to Guam. And my mother said, "If your going to move him, you bring him home." So, he's in Arlington.
M.B.:	Right, so now he's in Arlington.
Shirley Warthen:	Had they not moved him, mother said, "Daddy and I plan to go someday to Iwo Jima to his gravesite." But they brought ... It was one of the first big burials where they brought a large number, I mean a couple hundred of them, home from Iwo Jima rather than go to Guam.
M.B.:	So they don't have any of them on Iwo Jima?
Shirley Warthen:	I don't know what the situation now on Iwo Jima. Whether they have any, whether they still have ... No, they wouldn't. They didn't keep a national cemetery there. They were going to take them all to Guam.
M.B.:	To Guam
Honoring Alexandria's Soldiers	
Shirley Warthen:	And there's a monument down there at George Washington High School. In fact, we saw it when we went last week, of all the boys that were killed from Alexandria.
M.B.:	Your brother's name is on it?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, his name is on it.
Interviewer2:	Was there in fact a monument in Arlington, in Alexandria to the World War II victims?

Shirley Warthen:	I don't know. Just other than that monument in front of the
M.B.:	Just the marines
Shirley Warthen:	In front of the GW where all the boys from Alexandria
M.B.:	The high school, right.
Shirley Warthen:	Let me stop and think. And, of course, we just always, there's the Iwo Jima memorial.
M.B.:	In Arlington.
Shirley Warthen:	In Arlington. And I just always think of that. And there's a street named in Kingstown after my brother. Pam found that for me. I didn't know it. Pam told me about it. She kept talking about
Interviewer2:	This was the brother that was killed?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, named after my brother that was killed. I thought ... I didn't know it, because I was used to Cameron Station being where I shop for groceries and all that. And then, when it was sold, they built the town, townhouses and homes over there, and a school. I guess I just didn't keep up with it. When we were talking to Pam, about Chinquapin and all the other things. And then she found my maiden name. And she said something about a street and I had assumed it was probably something after my father. So she found out for me and come [sic] back and told me no, it was named after my brother. A lot of those streets in that particular area was [sic] named after boys that were killed in World War II.
M.B.:	Right. That's a nice tribute for the community.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, it was very nice. And I wasn't aware that ... Because I have always wondered how they named streets in the City of Alexandria.
M.B.:	It's nice that they give thought to
Shirley Warthen:	She explained that one to me that, I guess, they meet, some board meets and they have a list of names, apparently from the men that were killed in World War II. And then they decided which ones they wanted to use. Because I look at Taney Ave. and Polk, and you know where some of them came from.
M.B.:	Yes, you certainly know.
Shirley Warthen:	I've never really known how they did, how they named the streets. How
Interviewer2:	Was your mother alive when the naming happened?
Shirley Warthen:	Oh, yes.
Interviewer2:	She must have been very proud of that.
Shirley Warthen:	Oh, very proud. My mother lived to be 90. She died in six, it must have been eight years ago, Yes, she lived to be ninety, so she was well, she was

	She didn't know about the street. She knew about the memorial at GW
M.B.:	At the high school.
Shirley Warthen:	... at the high school. I'm trying to think of some of the other ... Tull, Joe Tull was my oldest brother's buddy. And he was killed. But not on Iwo Jima. I forget where he was killed. But I don't even know how many's [sic] on that. In fact, I thought at one time there was a monument, but I don't know if that was for World War II, or jus the men that were killed, down in front of Union Station. On this end at the station there used to be a tank that set there. And a monument, I thought.
M.B.:	Really?
Changes In the Community and Alexandria's Businesses	
Shirley Warthen:	Across from the Masonic Temple. Now that's a big change. The Masonic Temple was so bare when I was growing up. And I go past there now and all the add-ons that have taken place since I've grown up.
M.B.:	What other, speaking of changes in the community ...?
Shirley Warthen:	The torpedo plant. My husband's father worked at the torpedo plant. I remember that as a child going downtown. And the funny thing, in traveling, people don't really believe. They'll say, "Did they make torpedoes?" "Yes, they did make torpedoes." That end of town has changed a lot. Because I wasn't allowed to go down to that end of town. There was a lot of I would say rowdy beer joints in that end. The women just weren't allowed to go down to that part of town.
M.B.:	Closer to the river?
Shirley Warthen	Yes, closer to the river. Of course, a lot of the stores are not here, like Murphy's, old dime store that was in the middle of the block. Hayman's, which was a clothing store, which was a family thing. Rosenthal's, Rosenberg's, which was a family owned business.
Interviewer2:	These were all in Old Town?
Shirley Warthen	All down in Old Town. And, of course, Penny's was in the middle of King St. where - I'm trying to think what's down there now - where jewelry store, where Kay's, down in that area. Then on the corner of King and Washington, on one side was the old Knight's Hardware, which if you could find it you could buy it. You've heard of that one?
M.B.:	Yes.
Shirley Warthen:	On the other side directly was a Waylan's. The earliest I remember was a Waylan's grocery, drugstore, which burnt down. And I remember when that burnt down.
Interviewer2:	What year?

Shirley Warthen	No, I can't remember. But I remember (inaudible)
M.B.:	So, going to Alexandria, downtown, was shopping, for shopping mainly?
Shirley Warthen	Yes, groceries. I remember my mother shopped at Fagelson's Grocery Store, which was further up towards where the old Reed Theater was. (inaudible)
M.B.:	Where was that? What street was that on?
Shirley Warthen	I'm trying to think. See I didn't know street names. You didn't know street names. You just went. You just went. You knew where everything was. And the old swimming pool was on Cameron St., which is still there. And that was a treat. We'd walk over and go to the swimming pool. Everybody went to Cameron St. pool.
Interviewer2:	How long would it take you to walk from where you lived?
Shirley Warthen	Not long. When you were kids, it didn't make any difference either. Because when you think of Del Ray, and I lived on Howell Ave., if you go right out to US 1, which is two blocks down, you go over the bridge and you come in to what we, what was Pendleton, and I don't know what it is now. And just go up that way and
M.B.:	Not that far.
Shirley Warthen:	... and you were there. And, of course, we walked from the house to ... there was a (inaudible) Barbecue place. That was a good place. On Washington St. And, oh, the skating rink. In my teenage years, I lived at the skating rink.
M.B.:	That was downtown?
Shirley Warthen	I loved to skate. No, it's over where the, is it the Royal Restaurant?
Interviewer2:	There is a Royal Restaurant.
Shirley Warthen:	Yes, in there, where the – I'm trying to think – over on Fairfax, in that area was the big I don't think it's there anymore. Lived at the roller skating rink. Oh, yes, that was big time. During the war and all the soldiers!
Interviewer2:	Do you remember how much it cost?
Shirley Warthen:	I don't remember.
M.B.:	But that was the place to go?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes. And I walked there from Howell, or Oxford, after we moved there. We'd walk across the We'd usually walk up Mt. Vernon Ave. and go across the Monroe St. Bridge. And then right over, because there was a Hot Shoppes and a Howard Johnson there. We'd ride the bus home at night, because a girl friend I had lived further away and I didn't want to walk. I wasn't scared but I didn't want to walk by myself back. So you'd

	ride the bus back.
Interviewer2:	Do you remember how much the bus cost?
Shirley Warthen:	I think it was ten cents.
M.B.:	Can you describe the roller skating rink?
Shirley Warthen:	It was big. It was big. And, of course, at that time, I just a big square barnish type. And it had a snack bar where you could get eats. And very loud music. But it wasn't particularly decorative. None of the things were, when I stop to think about it. Not particularly decorative. But that was a real hangout.
M.B.:	What type of music did they play?
Shirley Warthen:	Of course, all organ music. Canned music, is what I call it now. It was all organ music. Then they would have contests for dancing, skate dancing and stuff like that.
M.B.:	Did you ever win in the contests?
Shirley Warthen:	No, but I was a good skater. I would say that.
Visiting Washington, D.C.	
M.B.:	Did you ever go, venture into the D.C. area?
Shirley Warthen:	Yes. Going to Washington. I remember very young, the big treat was when you were old enough to ride the bus to Washington to the old Woodward and Lothrop's. At that time there was Kann's and Landsburgh's, and what have you. And the big treat: mother would take me on the bus to Washington several times. And by the time I was ten years old, you rode the bus yourself to Washington. And that was the big day when mom said you can go by yourself. So I rode the bus to Washington and would shop in the stores. And later in teenage years, we'd go to the movies. In fact, we were known to cut school occasionally because the Capital Theater had the movies plus a stage show. And the movie stars would come for the stage show, or the entertainers, which you wouldn't even know who these people are when I tell you.
M.B.:	Go ahead.
Shirley Warthen:	Vaughn Monroe, and, - I'm trying to think of who else came. There was [sic] different ones in our era that would come, you know, to entertain. So we would go see the stage show and the movies.
M.B.:	Did you do sightseeing, or was that just, once you saw it ... ?
Shirley Warthen:	Other than in with the school groups and things like that
M.B.:	Or when you had people in from out of town?
Shirley Warthen:	You never went to see it. And then when I married and left the city, I was so embarrassed, because I went to Europe to live for three years. And

	<p>everybody said, “Oh, you’ve been to the White House. You’ve been to this.” “No.” “And you’ve done this.” “No.” So when we came back in 1956, the first thing my husband and I did – we went to Washington and spent three days sightseeing because we were too embarrassed to tell people we lived there all our life and we hadn’t I mean we’d seen it, but so what, you know, you live with it.</p>
M.B.:	<p>Right, really soak it up, yes. OK. I think our tape has about run out so we’ll stop here and hopefully we can talk to you again about raising your children. (Shirley is talking excitedly in the background.) You have wonderful stories so hopefully we can continue with a second interview. That would be great. Thank you. [End]</p>