



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



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**Title:** *Interview with Mabel Burts*

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**Location of Interview:** *Alexandria, VA*

**Interviewer:** *Phyllis Adams*

**Transcriber:** *Unknown*

**Abstract:** *Mabel Burts has fond memories of her neighborhood around St. Asaph and Franklin Streets, where she was raised by an extended family, including her grandmother who had been a slave. She worked at the torpedo factory and at Fort Belvoir's Army Hospital. She has been very active at her church, assisting in many social activities and benefit programs.*

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*Mabel Burts at home, 2002*

**Introductions**

Interviewer:	Today is March 20, 2002. This is an interview with Mrs. Mabel Burts of 426 North Fayette Street, Alexandria, Virginia. Will you please tell me what your name is?
Mabel Burts:	My name is Mabel Rebecca Ga[inaudible] Burts.
Interviewer:	And your address is?
Mabel Burts:	426 North Fayette Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.
Interviewer:	Can you tell me where you were born and when you were born?
Mabel Burts:	I was born in Woodlawn, Virginia, March 15, 1910.
Interviewer:	So you just celebrated a birthday, didn't you?
Mabel Burts:	Yes.
Interviewer:	On Friday?
Mabel Burts:	Friday.

Interviewer:	You were...?
Mabel Burts:	92 years old.
Interviewer:	Happy Birthday, belated birthday.
Mabel Burts:	Thank you.
<b>Childhood in Woodlawn and Alexandria</b>	
Interviewer:	Tell me about your household, where you lived. Tell me who lived in your household.
Mabel Burts:	When I first came to Alexandria...
Interviewer:	As a child, first.
Mabel Burts:	My grandmother, my uncle, George, who was, he was an electrician. He used to climb the poles back there and his belt broke and he fell. And that crippled him, so that stopped him from working. And he had arthritis. And he lived with us. And my Aunt Tillie. And my grandmother. And my other aunt, Ella, until she married Pondexter, then she moved uptown on North Payne Street, Robert Pondexter.
Interviewer:	And how many sisters or brothers did you have?
Mabel Burts:	I had three sisters and one brother. They are all deceased now. I'm the only one and I'm the baby.
Interviewer:	Tell me about your playmates when you were a child.
Mabel Burts:	Oh, my playmates. I had a wonderful friend—Celestine Brink Coles. We were like sisters. And Carrie Jackson, Tessie Thaxton, Lucille Alexandria. And Mary McGee used to be with us a lot. Now and then we would come uptown, up to Mary McGee's. We would go walking out to Union Station, see the trains come in. [inaudible] Speaks, Esther Speaks, her mother, she came and there used to be a group of us: Carrie, Tessie, Lucille, Mary McGee, myself, and Carrie Wilson. Every Saturday we used to go walking all through Alexandria. Pick flowers and all. And then on holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas, we would fix baskets and things and carry to the—we called it the "poor house" but now they call it the "old folks home." Back then you used to say when you went to the home, it was the "poor house." That was located across the bridge. They've torn it down now. They have a ball diamond, I understand, there now. Isn't it? That used to be a large building and it was called the "poor house," poor people that couldn't take care of themselves.
Interviewer:	Can you tell me about your neighborhood, where you lived?
Mabel Burts:	My neighborhood was very nice. First was St. Asaph and Franklin Street And old Mr. Martin, the shoe shop. He used to fix shoes. He had a shoe shop. And Mrs. Skinner, Mrs. Bertha Skinner. Mr. William Skinner. And Mrs. [inaudible]. And who else used to live on the street? The Reeds, and

	<p>Slaughters, one time, before they moved uptown. Mrs. Matt Slaughter, they used to live on St. Asaph Street And Mabel Washington. What was the fellow's name that married [inaudible]? Milton, Milton Washington, and his mother—they used to live on St. Asaph Street, in the 600 block. Then we moved to Gibbon and St. Asaph. There I went to school. I graduated from Parker-Gray. While I was in Parker-Gray and all, that's where I lived—at 603 Gibbon Street.</p>
Interviewer:	<p>I want to ask you a question about your neighborhood. What kind of relationship was there between the families? Maybe your friends' families and your family? What kind of relationship was there between those families?</p>
Mabel Burts:	<p>All families together were just the same as one family. They'd visit one another and took care of each other's children. That's the way Alexandria was at the time when we were coming up. People looked after us, and my grandmother, she would look after other children. That's the way—fed them. That's the way we lived.</p>
Interviewer:	<p>So it was a close-knit community?</p>
Mabel Burts:	<p>It was a close neighborhood. Yes.</p>
Interviewer:	<p>Were there any African American-owned businesses that you remember?</p>
Mabel Burts:	<p>The only one that I knew was Mr. Martin. He owned his own shoe shop. And up on the corner was Mr. Wallace. He had a barbershop on St. Asaph and Gibbon Street. Back in those days, it was very few people that owned, owned things. The baker now, they had Mr. Jackson, he had a bakery. And they had a colored hotel—that was run by the Jackson, family Jackson. That was at King and Peyton Street. The tornado we had in 1927 tore it down, down to the ground. They say they wanted to put George Mason Hotel there, but he wouldn't sell it. So they had to put George Mason Hotel at Prince and Washington Streets. And after the tornado struck it, I think he sold it [inaudible] and they had the Coca-Cola plant. I guess you remember the Coca-Cola plant? [Comment from a third person: "Yes, I do, watching the bottles go through."] And on Henry Street we used to have a vinegar factory here. On North Henry Street, right up, two blocks down from here. And they had delicious apples. All those apples were so nice. And as they went on, ran on the conveyor, they'd fall off and we used to go get them. But they sent word to the school that if they catch us over there again they were going to put us in jail. [Laughing] My grandmother said, "Don't you ever go over there!" But the children'd still go, but I didn't go because they said they're going to put you in jail if they catch you, so we didn't go. It was nice. And our church owned that building where the Demaine Funeral Home is now, Roberts Memorial. It was Roberts Chapel then. They bought that building. And they had movies in there. We had go over there and used to play games and everything. Because we wasn't allowed</p>

	to play...go to the theater, the white theater. We had to go clean to Washington if we want to see a movie. And they had movies in there for us when we were coming up.
Interviewer:	What kind of transportation did you use?
Mabel Burts:	We had the trolley, streetcar. Streetcar ran from, came up Royal Street, Royal Street to King. Down King Street to Columbus. Out Columbus Street to Cameron. Down Cameron to Russell Rd. Out Russell Rd, went all through Arlington on to Washington.
Interviewer:	How much did it cost to ride the trolley?
Mabel Burts:	I think it was 25 cents then. 25 cents. We used to have to sit in the back. They had just two seats on each side for the colored to sit.
<b>Education</b>	
Interviewer:	All right, let's talk a little bit about, about your education, when you went to elementary school or Parker-Gray. Just tell me about your school years.
Mabel Burts:	Well I started at the Hallowell in the second grade. I was eight years old when my grandmother take me. Miss Susie Penn was my...I went in the second grade. Miss Susie Penn was my teacher. And went to the third grade. Miss Lucille Gray was my teacher, third grade. And then from third grade they built Parker-Gray. 1920 we went into Parker-Gray. I went into the fourth grade, Miss [inaudible] Thorton, fourth grade in Parker-Gray. Then I stayed until the eighth grade and then went to Armstrong.
Interviewer:	Describe the school building, the grounds of the school.
Mabel Burts:	What do you mean by that?
Interviewer:	How many rooms were in the school, and...
Mabel Burts:	Let's see. At Hallowell it was like a house. At Hallowell School they had rooms downstairs and upstairs. They had different rooms. But in Parker-Gray, we had, it went up to, we had first, second,...I don't know exactly. Went to the eighth grade and each room had a teacher. Some of the teachers taught two classes, the fourth and fifth. Miss Mamie Anderson, she had the fourth and fifth grade. And Reverend Atkins taught the fifth grade for a while when I went to fifth grade. His wife taught first, Mrs. Atkins. She left because she became pregnant and she left. He came and taught. Reverend Atkins didn't teach the whole year because he said that he could teach...he had degrees to teach a higher grade, the eighth grade. That's when they put the eighth grade into Parker-Gray—when Reverend Atkins started teaching the eighth grade. That's why I went to the eighth grade at Parker-Gray. That was in 1920, 1923 [that] Reverend Atkins came to Parker-Gray.

Interviewer:	And your favorite subjects in school were?
Mabel Burts:	My favorite subject was arithmetic, math. I loved math.
Interviewer:	Who were your favorite teachers?
Mabel Burts:	Let's see. I don't know. They all used to [inaudible] me. [inaudible] They said I talked too much. But my favorite teacher was Reverend Atkins. I loved Reverend Atkins. [inaudible] I loved Reverend Atkins.
Interviewer:	Well, I don't know if you talk too much but you do have a wonderful memory.
Mabel Burts:	And they used to do things. They used to be all...when they would do something, I would get up and holler. And the boys were very [inaudible] that was the first time Parker-Gray (I went in the fourth grade) that the girls and boys went to school together. They would take the lead out of the pencils and put a stick pin in it and stick your leg. And of course you're going to holler. My leg [inaudible] sit behind and they'd stick you. And I'd holler. She said, "You acted so fresh. You wanted to show off in front of the boys." Miss Hattie Thorton. Oh, she was something. She was about the worst. Her and Reverend Mr. Lyles. They were the two worst teachers I think that you went under because they would just whip you for nothing. The least little thing they had the stick and whip your hands. My hands, I guess that's why I have arthritis. "Hold out your hand." Reverend Lyles was something. He was. Don't care how much you knew, you always dumb as a goat with Reverend Mr. Lyles. He didn't care if you made A's every day in every subject. To him you were dumb as a goat. Call you all kind of names: jackass, and one thing or another. And if you missed, if you was reading, you mispronounced a word [inaudible]. And then he had three or four on the floor, trying to read the same thing, because we wouldn't sit down; we wanted finish reading. And he'd take your name, from 12:30 to 1:30 you stay in there, wouldn't have no lunch. He was something, yes he was. But I think his mind was bad. He commit suicide. He was a smart man though, he knew. They offered him the principal, being the principal, take Mr. White's place. He said "Was there any more money in it?" They told him, "No, your pride, your honor." "I can't live off honor." He wouldn't take it. He was a smart man though. He was smart. Mr. Lyles' room, you knew you worked, yes.
<b>Church Life</b>	
Interviewer:	Let's talk about your church and your religious beliefs.
Mabel Burts:	Our church—it was wonderful, different pastors. We used to go on camp meetings, go visit churches. They call it "homecoming" now. But our homecoming—we used to go visit other churches down in Woodlawn. We used to go down there and have a wonderful time. All out in the lawn around the church, they'd have all kinds of food, tables were out. They

	fixed food, cook everything. I joined the church under Reverend Haynes. I was twelve years old when I joined the church under him. My church life. And I've been at Roberts Memorial ever since. [It's a] wonderful life.
Interviewer:	Now how long were your church services?
Mabel Burts:	We went to church twice on Sunday. They used to have eleven o'clock service and then you went back seven o'clock, six o'clock service. But now they just have one service. But when we were coming up, you went back to church in the morning and in the evening.
Interviewer:	What did you enjoy most about church?
Mabel Burts:	I like the singing, service, different organizations I were in. We fixed different things. It was a pleasure, a wonderful life—join the bazaar, making different things, crocheting. They had a bazaar on different days of the year. It was wonderful.
Interviewer:	What activities are you involved in your church now?
Mabel Burts:	Well, I used to be, now, still, a Busy Bee. I belong to the bazaar and decorating club. And I used to be on the Communion stewardess. And appointing committee. They used to call it the pastor's aide then. Now they call it the PPR. We used to—pastors that come—we used to go to the parsonage and clean the parsonage, and have the food ready when they—to receive them. Helped the other pastors to get ready to be removed. And it's entirely different now than what it used to be; entirely different.
Interviewer:	Tell me about the Busy Bees.
Mabel Burts:	The Busy Bees. We were Busy Bees. We gave affairs, we would, like have stay-at-home teas; we'd go on trips. And the money we raised we would turn it over to the church. We did a lot of things for the church. We bought stoves, refrigerators, freezers. We put in, helped put in, air conditioning. Everything in the church we helped to do.
<b>Entertainment</b>	
Interviewer:	Let's talk about entertainment in Alexandria.
Mabel Burts:	Entertainment in Alexandria. Dove, Julian Dove, [when] we were coming up—he used to have all the bands here. The Orioles, and Ray Charles, and Little Richard. Oh that Little Richard—he was a pretty little thing. When he used to come and perform at the theater at Henry and Queen Street. They had a theater there. Little Richard used to come to that theater. Dove, Julian Dove had him there. Ray Charles used to come to the Elks Home. And the Orioles. And we used to go to Washington, at the Herald Theater they used to have all the entertainment. Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne and all—I saw all of them at the Herald Theater.

Interviewer:	Were there restaurants you used to go to?
Mabel Burts:	No, the only restaurant we went to was Mr. Elmo and Traymore. They used to be on the 200 block of Payne Street. Mr. Elmo used to have pig feet and chitlins, and pig ears. And Traymore used to have fish, used to have fried fish, Traymore. And the whole block, 200 block of Payne Street, if you go in that block, you knew you had been uptown because you smelled just as fishy. We used to steal, come up town. Grandma didn't know where we'd gone. We'd say, "Had to walk uptown—come uptown." [And when you] go back home, she'd say, "You've been up near that fishy place? Your clothes are fishy. Smell of fish." The 200 block of Payne Street.
Interviewer:	What was it like growing up as a girl in Alexandria?
Mabel Burts:	As a girl? What [do] you mean, "As a girl?"
Interviewer:	What kinds of things were girls allowed to do, or not allowed to do?
Mabel Burts:	We used to skate and sleigh ride. We were allowed, but you couldn't...say, for instance, they used to block off...one time they used to block off for skating, on West Street they used to block that off, from Queen to Cameron Street, had that block, we could go and skate. That kept you away from the white children. As a rule the colored and the white got along pretty good together in Alexandria. Sleigh ride. We don't have the winters like we used to have when we were coming up. The Potomac River used to freeze over. We used to get on a sleigh, [inaudible] get on the back of the boys and we'd go way up from Lee Street, down that hill coming to the Potomac River. Sleigh riding. And sometimes, we'd come uptown and go up King Street hill, where you see now, you go by Union Station, we used to walk all up that hill, get on that sleigh, come down on that sleigh, and come all the way down that hill, and come all the way down King Street. I used to love to sleigh ride. When I got married, my husband said every time the snow would come, I'd walk, and he'd say "Mabel, don't you get on it. Don't you get on it." We used to love to sleigh ride. Up Queen Street they used to block, they used to have some snow here in the winter. They used to sleigh ride all up Queen Street. When my children were small, a lady, Mrs. Bain, gave me a sleigh. It was long as this table here. It was about...it could hold...she had three children. She gave me that sleigh. I used to put out a box, I used to put [inaudible] in a box [inaudible] and I used to pull that sleigh, I used to go up from my house, 216 North Payne Street, all the way out to 414 South Royal to my friend Celestine Cole. People used to say, "There goes Mabel and her children. There she goes with her children." I used to pull them from uptown on the hill on that sleigh.
<b>Family Life</b>	
Interviewer:	Tell me about your parents. What were they like?

Mabel Burts:	My parents. Of course my mother died when I was eight years old, so I don't know too much about my mother and my father. They separated when I was small and he went away and I've never known him to come back. But they say he passed. We never knew him to come back. My other sisters and brothers knew him real well, but I didn't know him well. But with my grandmother, my Uncle Albert, and my Uncle George, my Uncle Robert—they were like a father to me. And my aunts. My home life was wonderful. My sisters, Claire and Frances—they used to buy...especially Claire. She married George Wilson. They were the same as a mother and father. They bought my clothes so that I had everything for school. And my brother Isaac, he helped me. They always wanted me to go away to school. But I didn't want to go. So that's why, I imagine, I didn't finish my education. I stayed and wouldn't go away, and I went to Armstrong and I stopped. My grandmother died in September and I got married in October, 1927. I was seventeen years old.
Interviewer:	What kind of values did your parents feel were important? Like honesty, or—
Mabel Burts:	They believed in honesty. Help one another. What you could get out of it. From your heart. You helped people that needed it. My children used to always have the house full of children. I never could say I feed my child and didn't feed the ones that came. I always fed them. If they brought five or six children here, I'd find something. Sometimes I would give them bacon and eggs, but I would feed them. I was taught to always help somebody if you can.
<b>Working Life</b>	
Interviewer:	Tell me about the work that you did.
Mabel Burts:	The work I did. I started out, Mrs. Lynch, I used to go to the store for her in the morning and the afternoon, before I went to school. My mother didn't, grandma didn't want it. I said, "I want to do it. She says I don't have to do no hard work or anything." So she said, "Well I'm going to let you try." I used to go to school. After I go in the morning, go to school, the store; the store was right there on the corner of Gibbon and Washington Streets, Mr. Wells. She was always looking for something for me to do. She'd say, "Go get me a loaf of bread." She would fix my lunch. She would...she treated me just like I was her child. They used to say that was my white mama. "Mabel has a white mama." Because Christmastime, her and Mr. Lynch, they used to put a dollar a week in the bank for me. And at Christmastime, they used to give me that \$52. And they'd say, "Mabel, take this and buy whatever you want for Christmas. Buy your friends, or whatever you want." And I had \$52 every year. I knew I was going to get that to buy whatever I wanted, toys and...and that's the way she was. And clean up until I got married, she still did for me and my children. Luther, my oldest child, she had a

	<p>beauty salon on Patrick and King Street. I used to take Luther there after I got older, married, when Luther was born. She used to take Luther, rolled Luther down King Street, take her money to the bank. White people be looking, she'd be rolling...I guess they'd be saying "Why's that white woman rolling that colored...?" You know what they called. She didn't say colored! She loved my children, and me. She did. She crocheted two little beautiful bonnets. I had the bonnet kept but it got burned up when she was a baby.</p> <p>My childhood was wonderful. It was. Wonderful childhood. We were more than, more closer, you know, like the people then, when I was coming up, were more closer to one another than they are now. Nellie, Bertie, and Margaret Carter and all, we just, once a week we'd go around to one another's houses. We just had...what they called give teas, on Saturday night, teas. We'd go and we used to play cards. We just, you know, we just .. fun. It was fun. We didn't sit around, and stealing and robbing—we didn't have any of that. No.</p>
Interviewer:	Tell me about the next job you had.
Mabel Burts:	The next job I had was working, let's see, [inaudible] torpedo plant. I grew up and came to live in the 200 block of Payne Street. I went to the torpedo plant. That's when the war [inaudible]. I was down on Fairfax. Where is that torpedo plant? On the river, way down on the riverfront. I resigned from that, and then I worked for Shapiro. And in 1950, Shapiro, they sold the store. Mr. Shapiro passed. And she sold the store.
Interviewer:	So Shapiro was a grocery store?
Mabel Burts:	Yes, that was on Queen and Payne Street. That was the time of the Depression. I didn't have to worry about anything. My children were fed. Everybody in the 200 block—she saw that they had food, they had stamps to get the food, whether they had stamps or not, ration off food, she saw that they had food. And then I went to Fort Belvoir Army Hospital. And that's when I retired, from there. In 1950.
Interviewer:	If you could give any advice to young women who live in Alexandria now, what would that advice be, based upon the life that you've lived and all that you've learned?
Mabel Burts:	I would give them advice: "Always try to help somebody. And whatever you have, try to share it if you can, if you see someone in need. And don't take nothing that don't belong to you." Our children that now are coming up, they go and rob and steal. "If you know it don't belong to you, don't take it. If you need something, ask for it."
<b>Remembering Grandmother</b>	
Interviewer:	Do you have a story about your grandmother and your family, some of your family members, being in slavery?

Mabel Burts:	Well my grandmother was in slavery. She was a slave. She used to tell me about different things, how they had to do. But her slavery life as she told me, wasn't as bad as, you know, life as they called it. Their masters were kind of good to them. She told me when soldiers when they started, taking the slaves...what do you call them? The Yankees and, what's that? The Yankees was the ones that had the slavery wasn't it? [Another person responds "No, it was the Union and the Confederates."] And when they had the law that they had to give up the slaves, they had to see the master. The head man come and they had to see the master give up. He used to always hide. He'd go in the barn and hide and stack hay on him. She was telling me he wasn't bad [inaudible].
Mabel Burts:	My grandmother's sister, Aunt Lou (she said her name was Louise), she was out there digging—they used to have to plant garden and all. And she'd be digging, she'd be singing "Stick, take the stickfork and dig way down. Take they stickfork and dig down." Like she was singing a hymn. So two or three days they would come back and looked like, Grandma said, looked like they caught on to her singing the same song. They paid attention to what she was saying. And they went and got the pitchfork and stuck that in the hay, and stuck it, and they caught him. They had to give him up. When she was free, they carried him to the slave house, they went to the slave pen (that's the one that stayed on Duke Street) They were laying in the bed, she said, "Laura," (my aunt's name, my grandmother's name was Laura), she said, "Who told on the master?" I often wondered, "Who did tell on the master? Somebody had to tell." She said, "It was me, but I didn't tell you all because I knew you [inaudible] all candy and all, I knew you all would tell on me and I'd never be free. It was me that I told them. I sang that song "Stick that pitchfork down in that hay. He's in there." They did it. They finally caught on to what I was saying. But they said that life wasn't too bad like some that were whipped and one thing or another.
Interviewer:	Do you have any other tales about your grandmother?
Mabel Burts:	She was a midwife. She brought all of us into this world. She brought the Jackson triplets into this world. Jacksons, you know, Marie and them. First she had twins. Next she had triplets. That was rare for triplets to be born in Alexandria. All my aunts and all, [inaudible] helped Miss Mariah dress them all up pretty. Put things on them and clean them. Everybody in Alexandria was coming to see the triplets. My aunt told her, "Mariah, I guess they going to give you plenty of money." But don't you know they didn't give them no money. They just came and looked at them. Said it was all right. That was a rare thing for triplets to be born.
Interviewer:	And your grandmother's name was Louise?
Mabel Burts:	Laura, Laura Wood.
Interviewer:	Laura Wood.

Mabel Burts:	She used to...mostly all her patients were white. She used to go and stay with them until...say two weeks that they were up on their feet and all, that she was coming back. And Reverend Haynes while he was here, he had a boy. She brought his boy into the world. And Reverend King, Reverend King, she brought all of his children. Because he was her pastor down in Woodlawn before he came to Roberts Chapel. She knew him from Woodlawn Methodist Church. Reverend King.
Interviewer:	Do you have any objects in your family that were passed down through generations that you consider to be important?
Mabel Burts:	Yes, I have my grandmother's bowl in there in the china closet. And I have my mother-in-law's punch bowl. And I have the chamber set, that you call the washbowl and the pitcher and all from Lewis's family, her mother's family.
Interviewer:	Do you think we can take pictures of those things?
Mabel Burts:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Do you have any other photographs that are, that you cherish, that you can tell us about, and maybe you would let us copy them?
Mabel Burts:	Yes, I have photographs of...I've got to look for them though...my grandmother. I still have a picture of my father's mother, grandmother. And I had my grandmother's picture but I don't know what happened to it. When I had the fire I lost a lot of things that I had that I was going to keep. I have pictures of Lewis's mother, grandmother. I have pictures of my mother. When I had [inaudible] remodeled, I took all the pictures down and put them in boxes. I still haven't got them all out [inaudible] old pictures that I have of Nellie, and all of us, we went on a trip to Disney World, one thing or another. The other day I was showing them different pictures.
Interviewer:	I want to ask you, do you remember any medicinal recipes that your grandmother used to fix for you when you were sick?
Mabel Burts:	I tell you I never was what you call, never was sickly. I never was a sickly child. Ella now, my Aunt Ella, she used to do mostly all the cooking in the house when I was coming up. We used to have hot rolls every Sunday. And for breakfast we used to have fish, and hot rolls, hominy grits. And for dinner, we used to have greens, cabbage, string beans, and always had fried chicken, for dinner. That's the way it was. Fish for breakfast Sunday morning; hot rolls and fish, hominy grits was our Sunday morning. Fried potatoes. Onions and fried potatoes. But as I say, all my cooking, what I learned to do was from Mrs. Lynch. She learned me how to crochet, knit. Everything I do, she just took me under her wing and used to show me everything that I know. Cooking and one thing or another—she taught me.

Interviewer:	You're a good cook, aren't you?
Mabel Burts:	They say I am. I don't cook as good as I used to, but I used to cook, when we were coming up, the children—I used to make bread on Saturday. We'd have hot rolls. But I used to have puffs for them. I used to cook puffs.
Interviewer:	What are puffs?
Mabel Burts:	Bread would rise and then you roll it out and you cut them in different shapes and fry them in deep fat. Like croutons, they call them now. You buy them in the lunchroom. I used to fix them. I used to make them donuts. I used to...I never was, I never I never was a lunch room...eat out in a lunch room. I don't like to go out. They say, "Leave home to go out and eat." I like to eat, fix my own food.
Interviewer:	When we came in, you were telling me that there was something that you wanted to remember to tell me. You told me if I didn't, you'd tell me anyway. Do you know what I'm talking about it? Somebody told you to remember to tell us.
Mabel Burts:	Oh, Ferdinand, Ferdinand Day! He said, "Mabel, tell about my Aunt Tillie. She loved the Days. We lived on St. Asaph and Gibbon Street. They lived on St. Asaph. That's right across. Where you see the Demaine's Funeral parking lot is now, that was a big house on the corner there; that was where we lived. And down below there, that was Miss Katherine [inaudible] (she was a member of our church), the Gaines, and the Days and Lyles. They used to live in the houses that they tore down. And Ferdinand, he was little, and he my Aunt Tillie. She loved Ferdinand. She used to always come and get Ferdinand, take him and sit him on the cellar door step. We had a cellar—you could open the door from the outside and go down in the basement. That was under the lunchroom on Gibbon and St. Asaph Street. She used to always have, she used to always bring Ferdinand something, cookies and all. She loved Ferdinand Day. So he told me, "Tell them about Tillie, on the cellar step." Old families, the Days and all, all our lives we've been together. People, they're not friendly now, your neighbors and all. Billy, he's very close, I'm very close to him. Mr. Harris next door. But as a rule, they're not friendly. Now you read in the paper where they break in and they clean a person's house out. People come home. You know, it's terrible. Now I watch everybody. If I know they're gone, I look out. Now, the family that lived in Ferdinand Day's house...what was the family that lived in Ferdinand Day's house? And I knew that they...Mitchell, the last name was Mitchell, Joanne and Mitchell. And I knew they worked. And they had a car parked in the yard. I happen to look out the window and I saw these two boys looking at the car. They're trying to get in and couldn't get in. I just looked out the window. They're trying to steal Mitchell's car! I raised the window up and I said, "Get away from that

	<p>car. Get right away from that car.” They looked around; they didn’t know where the voice was coming [from]. “I’m looking at you. Now get away from it. If you don’t I’m going to call the police.” They looked around. One said something to the other one. They got in and went on and left the car alone. So that night when Mitchell and Mary came home. He called me and said, “Mabel, I’m glad you’re looking out. I had sold the car. [laughing] I had sold the car to the people and they came to look at it!” I said, “Well I’m sorry, I thought they were trying to steal it; I was going to call the police.” He said, “They didn’t have the keys to get in the car.” “I glad the way you look out for me.” [inaudible] I guess that’s why I got so many people [inaudible].</p>
Interviewer:	<p>Mrs. Burts, we’ve enjoyed interviewing you. We’d like to know if you will allow us to come back again?</p>
Mabel Burts:	<p>Yes.</p>
Interviewer:	<p>Thank you so much for your recollections about Alexandria. This is Phyllis Adams, signing off. [End]</p>