



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



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**Title:** *Interview with Mary Child*

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**Interviewer:** *Not Known*

**Transcriber:** *Jeanne Springmann*

**Abstract:** *Mary Moss Child was born in the early twentieth century and has lived in Alexandria since 1938. She volunteered for the Alexandria Boys and Girls Club and became Personnel Director for the city in 1955. The city had about 800 employees, by her estimate, at that time. At first each department offered different benefits. Mrs. Child oversaw benefit restructuring so that they were more equal across the board.*

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<b>Introductions</b>	
Interviewer:	Can you please state your full name?
Mary Child:	Mary Josephine Moss Child.
Interviewer:	Your age?
Mary Child:	85.
Interviewer:	And where you were born?
Mary Child:	Annapolis, Maryland.
Interviewer:	Your maiden name?
Mary Child:	Moss.
Interviewer:	M-O-S-S?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	As far as your parents, when were they born?
Mary Child:	My father was born where the Bay Bridge is now. His parents had a big farm over there. My mother was born in Prince George's County.
Interviewer:	What was her maiden name?
Mary Child:	Baden.
Interviewer:	Can you spell that for us?
Mary Child:	B-A-D-E-N.
Interviewer:	Did you have any brothers and sisters?
Mary Child:	I had one sister.
Interviewer:	What was her name?
Mary Child:	Margaret Turner Moss.
Interviewer:	Does she live in this area?
Mary Child:	No, she lives in New Mexico.
Interviewer:	In New Mexico. Your husband's name?
Mary Child:	Harry Patrick Child.
Interviewer:	Do you remember where he was born?
Mary Child:	Baltimore.
Interviewer:	Names of children?
Mary Child:	No children.
Interviewer:	No children. So you have lived in Alexandria for how many years?

Mary Child:	Since [19]38.
Interviewer:	1938. And in that time since 1938 have you lived in different areas within the city?
Mary Child:	Yes, we lived at the Belle Haven Apartments for some time. That's at 515 North Washington Street. And from there we bought a home on Monticello Boulevard, Russell Road and Monticello. And from there we went into an apartment. And from there here to Goodwin House.
Interviewer:	So over that period of time it has been approximately four different locations?
<b>Earliest Memories</b>	
Interviewer:	Going back to your early memories of Alexandria, can you give us some idea of what are your earliest memories?
Mary Child:	Well, I guess I had more formal contacts through my husband than anyone. He was director of the Boys Club here, which had just been opened. And it is now both the Boys and Girls Club. I put in a lot of time there. Office work and doing odd things. And then I went to work myself. I still did volunteer work there. Drove kids to football, baseball games and stuff. The manager of the Alexandria Dairy at that time would lend the Boys Club a milk truck when they had to haul kids around because they didn't have a vehicle. But we couldn't get all the kids in the milk truck. So that meant I would have to take our car and drive what was left over, and nobody wanted to ride with me. They wanted to ride in the milk truck.
Interviewer:	More fun.
Mary Child:	Going over. But coming back they were frozen to death by that time and they all wanted to ride with me.
Interviewer:	And what year are we talking about now?
Mary Child:	Around 1940.
Interviewer:	As far as entertainment was concerned in that period of time, what did you do for entertainment?
Mary Child:	I guess we did more at home entertainment. But we did belong to the Boat Club. Let's see what else we did. Well, my husband had a lot of friends here. He had not only been in the Boys Club here. He had been in the Boys Club in Washington, D.C. And so we had quite a few personal contacts. We got to know people in our apartment house.
Interviewer:	A lot of that occurred in the summertime. What about the wintertime? Did you do any activities in the wintertime?
Mary Child:	About the same.
Interviewer:	About the same?
Mary Child:	The athletics were different.

<b>Education</b>	
Interviewer:	Where did you go to school?
Mary Child:	Well I went to public school in Annapolis. And then I went to Blue Ridge College. And I had some courses at American University and George Washington.
Interviewer:	Did you complete any degrees at those universities?
Mary Child:	No, the first school that I went to was a two-year college.
Interviewer:	Looking back over the period of time of those earlier days, do you think as far as the public schools were concerned that the students were respectful of the teachers?
Mary Child:	Yes, yes I do.
Interviewer:	Why do you think that was the case? Was it out of fear? Or disrespect?
Mary Child:	No, but I don't remember any bad incidents happening because of the teacher. Just can't think of it.
Interviewer:	So you would say that the schools were a safe place to be then?
Mary Child:	I think so. I think everybody talks [inaudible].
<b>Work Experience</b>	
Interviewer:	After you finished your schooling, what was your first job as far as outside the home?
Mary Child:	Worked for the Labor Department in the Employment Service Office.
Interviewer:	And how long were you there?
Mary Child:	I think about three years.
Interviewer:	And the work conditions there?
Mary Child:	I worked in Annapolis for a short period of time and then got transferred to Baltimore. And all together I guess I was there about three years. And of course in Annapolis it was a one-girl office and I was there by myself most of the time.
Interviewer:	So you were the girl?
Mary Child:	And in Baltimore it was quite a large office because it served not only the city, but the counties around it.
Interviewer:	Moving to your work experience in the City of Alexandria, some of the background research that I did indicates that you took the personnel director position in January of 1955. Is that correct?
Mary Child:	That's right.
Interviewer:	Could you basically describe your position there?

Mary Child:	Well, we did all the recruiting and hiring, the training. We didn't do all the training but we did it jointly with departments. We had Workman's Compensation. We had all the fringe benefits. And they had nothing when we started out. And every department operated on its own. They hired their own people. They disciplined them however they thought they should be. Fired them anytime. Nobody questioned them.
Interviewer:	At that period of time, how many city employees were there?
Mary Child:	I imagine about 800. That doesn't count school. Mostly just what was under the city manager.
Interviewer:	And you were in that position for 25 years?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	In that period of time, did you help restructure, say, like the cost of living rates for city employees?
Mary Child:	We took that into consideration every year when we considered pay raises.
Interviewer:	So you had a direct impact on that as far as...
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Can you describe the benefits when you first arrived there and how they evolved as far as health care, etc.?
Mary Child:	I think a few individual departments had certain things. Like in the police and fire departments, I think it was the associations who promoted the Blue Cross or Blue Shield or whatever they had. And the health department, the health director was right on the ball and he had some benefits just for the health department employees. And the fire department was about the same as police.
Interviewer:	So there wasn't really any across-the-board benefits for any city employee?
Mary Child:	Yes, you worked in this office and they gave you two weeks vacation. If you worked across the hall, if you got one weeks vacation you were lucky.
Interviewer:	Can you tell us when it evolved into across-the-board type situation as far as benefits for every city employee? Do you remember?
Mary Child:	I don't remember the exact date but I would say in about three years after I was there.
Interviewer:	1958 or so?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	As far as the hiring practices for blacks and other minorities, over your period of time as personnel director, how did that change? Were you directly involved...?
Mary Child:	Yes, with the Public Works Department. Nobody ever came to City Hall. They were hired out on the street. And I doubt if any background checks or

	anything were made. But we hired everybody. We conducted background checks before they were confirmed. The laboring people were treated just the same as the whites.
Interviewer:	So there wasn't a real distinction made as far as hiring practices were concerned?
Mary Child:	No.
Interviewer:	What do you feel in that 25-year period of time that you were personnel director was one of or several of your greatest contributions to the position?
Mary Child:	I don't feel that I did anything that somebody else couldn't have done. I was just in the right place at the right time, I think. I enjoyed every moment of it. I made a lot of good friends. And it was one of my nicest experiences.
Interviewer:	So do you feel that at least your dedication was remembered and appreciated?
Mary Child:	I think so. I got a phone call the other day from somebody. I think he was down to your place, Tim. And he said, "Mary Child? Are you the Mary Child who was at City Hall? My God you hired me thirty nine years ago."
Interviewer:	Is that right?
Interviewer 2:	Was he looking for a paycheck?
Mary Child:	[inaudible]
<b>Family Life</b>	
Interviewer:	Getting back to your family life, I know radio and the newspapers were big in that period of time. Was it true in your family as well? Did you read newspapers a lot and listen to the radio, different radio broadcasts?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Is there any in particular as far as radio broadcasts that you listened to on a regular basis? I know that Sunday evenings they used to have...?
Mary Child:	Yes, good programs. It seemed to me that as soon as I got up in the morning, there was radio at that time, you turned the radio on and it was usually news at that time in the morning. And likewise around dinner time at night. We had certain programs that we listened to.
Interviewer:	And what were some of the bigger radio stations, do you recall?
Mary Child:	No, I don't.
Interviewer:	What about your family life as far as chores were concerned when you were a child? Was there a division of labor there? Was one person responsible for a certain daily chore?
Mary Child:	Well, I don't think we had any real responsibility. However, our front yard and backyard was chopped in half. My sister had one side and I had the other. She planted roses and I planted something else. And in the backyard it was the same way. At one time we had a few chickens in the backyard. We had to

	go out and feed and water them every day. We took turns doing that. And, I guess it wasn't work, but we both took piano lessons. We had to practice an hour when you got home from school. That always annoyed me because all the other kids on the street were out playing and I had to be in there banging on that thing.
Interviewer:	You appreciate that now, don't you?
Mary Child:	No, I don't.
Interviewer:	You don't?
<b>Community Life</b>	
Interviewer:	As far as...let's move on to community life. Did you know everyone in your community?
Mary Child:	You mean here?
Interviewer:	Yes, in Alexandria.
Mary Child:	Well I knew just about all the people on the board of the Boys Club. And I'll say this. The Boys Club had not been in existence that long and they had the most prominent people in the city on the board. And so that was very nice. We got to know a lot of nice people in a hurry. And many of them entertained us; had us down to their summer places and things like that. It was real nice.
Interviewer:	So I mean you would consider that a close-knit group?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	What about your neighbors as far as your neighbors around your house there? Was there close relationships with them?
Mary Child:	Well, when I lived in the apartment house, I knew everybody in the apartment house. I had a speaking acquaintance with them but I can't say I had a close relationship with other than one or two families maybe.
Interviewer:	What about...was there a sense of community pride as far as the apartment complex that you were in? I mean people didn't trash the place or anything?
Mary Child:	No, they never did. And it always looked very nice.
Interviewer:	So you would say there was a sense of pride there?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	As far as entertainment and business is concerned, did you spend a lot of time in Washington, D.C.?
Mary Child:	No. We had friends in Washington but only on a personal basis.
Interviewer:	I mean you didn't go downtown to the museums?
Mary Child:	Oh, yes, well I had done that growing up because living in Annapolis being so close by. Every summer we did something and in between time we would come over.

<b>Landmarks</b>	
Interviewer:	Here's a few landmarks that I have also researched. Let's see if you remember any of these. The Jones Point Lighthouse—do you remember that?
Mary Child:	Well, I have been down there many times, but it hasn't been in operation. I had some friends here in Alexandria and they had a distant cousin who I think was one of the last lighthouse keepers there. This man had a daughter who was reared with these girls that I knew, her two cousins. So, I would hear them talking about the lighthouse and that sort of thing, but I had no personal experience there. It's all locked up the last few times I've ever been down that way.
Interviewer:	Let's go down, take a little ride down say to King Street and see if you remember any of these locations here. The old Ramsey House at one point turned into the Hershey's Restaurant and Grill. Do you remember that?
Mary Child:	I don't remember the name Hershey's, but my first job in Alexandria was directly across the street at the State Employment Office. And so I was very much aware of the building across the street and the changes that was going on there.
Interviewer:	At 1104 King Street there was a Kahn's clothing store. Do you recall that?
Mary Child:	Kleins.
Interviewer:	Kleins? Was it Klein's?
Mary Child:	I don't know. 1100 block. That would be on the other side of Washington Street, wouldn't it? I think so. I remember there a couple of other women's wear about the 700 and 800 blocks. And then Hayman's was always there.
Interviewer:	And where was that located?
Mary Child:	That was on the other side of the street at St. Asaph.
Interviewer:	Moving on to Queen Street. There was a grocery store named George Woo's. Do you remember that?
Mary Child:	No.
Interviewer:	You don't remember that?
Mary Child:	We were about three blocks away from that, and there was a grocery store about a half block away from us. We bought little groceries as we [inaudible]
Interviewer:	What was the name of that?
Mary Child:	Joe Koffler.
Interviewer:	Joe Koffler. And that was a complete grocer?
Mary Child:	No, it was just a little hole in the wall. And most of his customers were black. But he would buy special things for us. And he would tell us. Sometimes we would ask him and sometimes we wouldn't. "I have got something I would

	like to share with you. [inaudible] cook it for me.”
Interviewer:	But you were regular customers of his?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	I hope you remember this one. This was on 905 North Washington Street, which was the Hot Shoppes restaurant.
Mary Child:	Oh sure. Oh, for years I had breakfast there every morning.
Interviewer:	We found one.
Mary Child:	You haven't found any [inaudible]
Interviewer:	No, we found a place that you are familiar with is what I am saying. And you ate breakfast there every morning. How was the food? Did you consider it good?
Mary Child:	It was great. They treated us fine. It ended up—none of us knew each other before going there—but ended up with about ten or twelve people, and we had breakfast just about every day, but we couldn't all get to the counter so they saved special tables for us, you know. They went all out. They were real good to us.
Interviewer:	And how about as far as the staff there? They had long-time staff there? I guess the turnover rate wasn't quite as high as it is nowadays? Do you think?
Mary Child:	Yes, probably not; I don't know. They always seemed to have a crowd there. I never understood why they couldn't have made it. I guess it was just it was lot less than they were making in other restaurants. I don't know.
<b>The Great Depression</b>	
Interviewer:	I am going to move on to the period of time around the depression and ask you how do you feel the depression impacted your family?
Mary Child:	Well, my father was a federal employee and so it did not affect him other than pay decreases. And so that was the income of the family. And my husband, of course, stayed with the Boys Club. He never made any money there in the first place. And then I worked at Garfinkel's.
Interviewer:	So it wasn't too bad of a time. You had an income with your husband.
Mary Child:	I guess comparing it with other people, we did fairly well.
Interviewer:	Generally speaking, explain people's spirits. What did they do during that period of time to get their minds off of tough times?
Mary Child:	Well I guess they did a lot of bad things and a lot of good things. I can't really answer that.
Interviewer:	As far as continuing on that question, do you think the music and the art of the time reflected the depression?
Mary Child:	Somewhat. I can think of certain artists. I know I went to classes at the “Y”

	and a couple other places during that period. People were serious and I imagine that it had an effect.
Interviewer:	As far as the Depression is concerned, did you think it would be over soon, and what made you think so?
Mary Child:	I don't think anybody knew. You might have had a lot of thoughts but nobody was convinced that such and such was going to happen.
Interviewer:	So confidence wasn't there that we know it's going to be over soon? Or this is going to go on for the next 10 or 20 years?
Mary Child:	I guess my greatest reaction was I hope things stay the same as they are for us.
Interviewer:	As far as politically was concerned, did people blame Hoover basically for the Depression? Was the blame put directly back on to the President?
Mary Child:	I doubt that. I think it was a combination of a lot of things.
Interviewer:	So people weren't calling for him to leave office or anything?
Mary Child:	I don't recall that they did. I mean maybe some individuals.
<b>The 1940s and World War II</b>	
Interviewer:	Okay, we'll move on to the [19]40s and World War II period of time. With the early newspaper reports and radio broadcasts, did you feel personally and did your family feel that the United States would personally get involved with the war? This was before Pearl Harbor.
Mary Child:	I think everybody felt that it was going to happen. Looking back I can't recall any hard feelings about that, that it worried me to death or anything. I just took for granted that things were going to go on like they were, but as we got involved...I just don't have a good answer.
Interviewer:	As far as Hitler was concerned and things—that didn't concern you?
Mary Child:	Oh, it concerned everybody—the things that he was doing.
Interviewer:	Can you elaborate on that?
Mary Child:	No.
Interviewer:	And what were your feelings when the Japanese actually attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7?
Mary Child:	Terrible. I had friends over there. In fact we have several people living in Goodwin House that were there at the time.
Interviewer:	Who were at Pearl Harbor?
Mary Child:	Yes. Not only friends there, but we had friends who had children there. Talking with them was just terrible.
Interviewer:	So that incident impacted you more so than hearing the news before this incident happened?

Mary Child:	I think so.
Interviewer:	As far as Roosevelt coming into power and him being in term when the war was going on, did you think he was a competent person to lead us to victory?
Mary Child:	Yes, yes.
Interviewer:	Did your husband serve in the military? Or any of his brothers?
Mary Child:	My husband was blind in one eye and couldn't get in. But he was in something the Red Cross ran. What was it? He was stationed out at an army camp. They did everything to help the people who got in trouble and had to go home and needed money to get home, emergencies, and all that bit. He hated every moment of it.
Respondent 2	Social Service.
Mary Child:	They had a special name for it. I've forgotten what it was.
Interviewer:	Did you have any, any of your friends—you mentioned a large group of friends—were any of those particular people drafted into the war effort?
Mary Child:	Sure.
Interviewer:	And they were stationed in both theaters—in Japan as well as Europe?
Mary Child:	I'm sure they were.
Interviewer:	As far as the war situation was concerned, do you think that Roosevelt kept in touch with the American public in reporting the progress of the war efforts through his fireside chats?
Mary Child:	Well, I don't really know, but my opinion would be that he did.
Interviewer:	And during that period of time as well, did you think the newspapers reported the war fairly, or were they biased in one way or another?
Mary Child:	I just couldn't...I don't know.
<b>After World War II</b>	
Interviewer:	We are going to go to the late [19]40s and after the war period. Do you feel there was a renewed pride in the country after that, during that time?
Mary Child:	Well I think the average American was quite proud of everything. Glad it was over but the results were good.
Interviewer:	At that time, do you consider the U.S. was in a position to be called a world power?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	They proved their strength?
Mary Child:	I think so.
Interviewer:	Was there any concern about the Russians and what they were doing at that time?

Mary Child:	Well they have always been sort of hovering over in the background it seems like. But so far it has been okay. I hope it goes on that way.
Interviewer:	As far as—going back to the community again after the war—what are some the major social and community changes that you think happened after the war?
Mary Child:	Well I think everything was much more open to everybody. I think most of it was real good.
Interviewer:	So it was a positive impact as far as that was concerned? I have a question here that may not be a positive thing, or you may not have any comment on it at all. As far as when the soldiers and gentlemen came home after the war, you know a lot of the women were taking the jobs here during that period of time, and when the men came back, they were more or less displaced. How do you feel about that?
Mary Child:	Well, of course I think it was very unfortunate for the women, but on the other hand, a lot of those women, it was their husbands and brothers who were coming back. Something had to give. So, it probably worked out pretty good. And especially in this area where we had plenty of jobs anyway. If they had to leave one job, they could usually pick up something else.
Interviewer:	So the job market was pretty good as far as that's concerned?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Now we have the 250th anniversary of Alexandria coming up pretty soon. The bicentennial of the city was in 1949. Do you recall any of the festivities that were going on at the period of time?
Mary Child:	I don't recall them in detail, but I recall that were activities here, parades and so forth. Alexandria was always having a lot of parades. I don't think they have as many now as they used to have.
Respondent 2:	They had a bicentennial ball.
Mary Child:	Yes, that's true.
Respondent 2:	Gadsby's. Bicentennial.
Mary Child:	And I'm sure they had something at Mount Vernon.
Respondent 2:	People all got out their old antique clothes and things. Made costumes—a big to do. I have a booklet they got out that year. An exhibit of antiques.
<b>The 1950s</b>	
Interviewer:	I am going to move on to the 1950s. As far as your feelings are concerned, do you think things were generally better off in the 1950s, or before the war, World War II? It's an open-ended question, I know.
Mary Child:	Well, the only way I could answer this is how would it affect me, and I can't see that it made any difference as far as I was concerned.

Interviewer:	The 1950s were considered, were regarded as “happy days”. Do you agree with that?
Mary Child:	I would think so.
Interviewer:	I am going to get back into political things here. What were your feelings about Truman taking over after FDR passed away? Do you believe he did a good job as President?
Mary Child:	I think he did.
Interviewer:	And he made right decisions as far as...
Mary Child:	I think so. Largely.
Interviewer:	And what about Eisenhower?
Mary Child:	I think he also was a good president.
<b>The 1960s</b>	
Interviewer:	If we could describe the 1950s as “happy days”, how would you best describe the 1960s?
Mary Child:	I can’t look back and figure different things that happened those two times. I just can’t say.
Interviewer:	As far as the 1960s are concerned in the City of Alexandria, as far as businesses and community relations, were there a lot of new businesses coming in during that period of time?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	I mean you had new businesses coming in and old ones going out?
Mary Child:	Well, I think both. There were some that enlarged themselves and got new places, and so forth. A lot of moving around.
Interviewer:	Was this a big time of large grocery stores coming in to the city and displacing some of the smaller operations that were there for years?
Mary Child:	I cannot recall. It seems to me that all of the major grocery stores that are here now were there then too.
Interviewer:	How about as far as transportation and traffic are concerned in the 1960s, did you see a big uprise in traffic problems and congestion in the area?
Mary Child:	Well there was, but my husband usually drove me to work in the morning or I drove myself. And so I didn’t have a problem with the bus. I rode the bus every once in a while and would get a dose of it.
Interviewer:	So you were happy that your husband drove you to work?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	As far as the 1960s are concerned, it is my understanding that this was a big period of time for urban renewal, especially in the Old Town area. What is

	your feelings about this displacement of the poor people and the renewal of these row houses and townhouses that became very expensive, and they displaced these people?
Mary Child:	Well I think it had to happen. And I think there were agencies here in town who helped those people to get located. And gave them every assistance that they could.
Interviewer:	So you believe there was a coordinated plan...
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	...as far as that was concerned to take care of these people? They weren't just thrown out?
Mary Child:	Well maybe some of them were unfortunate but I think the majority of them were taken care of, or helped.
Interviewer:	One of the big issues during this period of time was the Vietnam War. What are your feelings towards the Vietnam War?
Mary Child:	Well I had nobody connected with me involved in that, so I guess I was just open-minded about that.
Interviewer:	I mean did you think it was the right thing that we were doing as far as supporting them?
Mary Child:	I thought so.
Interviewer:	You thought so. What were your feelings about John F. Kennedy?
Mary Child:	Liked him very much. Thought he was a good President.
Interviewer:	Did you ever have a chance to actually go to any events to see any of these Presidents?
Mary Child:	No.
Interviewer:	What were your feelings on the day that he was assassinated?
Mary Child:	Terrible, just terrible.
Interviewer:	Were you at work that day?
Mary Child:	Yes, and the mail boy came into my office and told me about it. Sometime in the afternoon.
Interviewer:	Was everybody released to go home after that? Do you recall?
Mary Child:	No, I don't think so. I don't recall.
Interviewer:	As far as the civil rights and Martin Luther King, I know you had his famous speech right here in DC. Was there any impact on the City of Alexandria at that time?
Mary Child:	I can't remember, but probably there was some.
Interviewer:	I'm going to continue on with the Presidents here. President Johnson took

	office after President Kennedy was assassinated. Do you feel that he did a good job?
Mary Child:	Well I don't think he was, that he did the job that Kennedy did.
Interviewer:	As far as what?
Mary Child:	Well, I mean, he didn't have the personality or anything that went with it as Kennedy did. And I don't think that the people had reacted to him as well as they did to Kennedy.
Interviewer:	Wasn't it true though that he was trying to enact or keep in place a lot of the programs that Kennedy had started?
Mary Child:	Probably.
Interviewer:	But he just didn't come across the same way you're saying?
Mary Child:	I can't answer. I don't know that.
Interviewer:	And what about your feelings about President Nixon?
Mary Child:	Well, I'm a Democrat and he's a Republican. What else can I say?
Interviewer:	Is that all you have to say about that?
Mary Child:	Yes.
<b>The 1970s</b>	
Interviewer:	I am going to move on to the 1970s and talk about some of the Cold War issues. We had spoke about Russia earlier. [In] the 1970s this came to more of a problem. Did you ever really have a fear that maybe we would get involved in nuclear war with Russia?
Mary Child:	I know that everybody was concerned about it. I don't know that they had any personal fear at any point that as I can remember.
Interviewer:	So there wasn't anything in place as far as your position here as personnel director, as far as evacuations or anything like that?
Mary Child:	No.
Interviewer:	We had the gas shortages too in the 1970s as far as the OPEC producing countries. Did that affect you in any way?
Mary Child:	No.
Interviewer:	What about crime and drugs that occurred in that period of time in Alexandria? What are your feelings about that? Why do you think those occurred?
Mary Child:	I can't say that we had more than our share. I don't know about that. I didn't come in contact with that. I don't recall having any employees involved in anything like that.
Interviewer:	What about—this was a period of time too for gay rights and women's

	rights—would you consider yourself a supporter of those?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Is that because of your background as a personnel director or are those more personal feelings?
Mary Child:	Well being a woman, and, everything.
Interviewer:	As far as the 1970s are concerned, how would you best describe the 1970s?
Mary Child:	I can't quite locate the beginning and the end of the [19]70s, just what happened when, but it seems to me that they were good, healthy years for most people here in this area.
Interviewer:	And I am sure that you remember 1976 with the bicentennial of the United States. Can you tell us of any activities that were here in Old Town as far as to celebrate that?
Mary Child:	Well I'm sure that there were plenty of activities to celebrate that both at the Lyceum and other government places. But I don't remember individually just what they were.
Interviewer:	So you didn't attend any of these?
Mary Child:	I probably did, yes.
<b>The 1980s and 1990s</b>	
Interviewer:	I'm going to move on to the 1980s and 1990s. Living in this period of time, do you feel that the overall quality of life has increased or decreased over the years since you have been in town?
Mary Child:	I think it has increased.
Interviewer:	Can you give us some examples of why you think that?
Mary Child:	Well I think employment is good and we have a lot more agencies and people giving assistance to other people. And I think people are very people conscious.
Interviewer:	Do you feel like the City of Alexandria has kept up with the times, and what I mean by that, as far as social change, political change, morality?
Mary Child:	I don't have a good answer for that either, but I assume they have.
<b>Best Memories</b>	
Interviewer:	Looking back over the years in your time living here in Alexandria, what are some of your better memories?
Mary Child:	I enjoy being part of the city. And I liked all of the people that I worked with. That was a very gratifying time and I was there a long time. Then I went down to the Lyceum for a while on a part-time basis. I always enjoyed that.
Interviewer:	That's not because Jim is sitting here?

Mary Child:	Oh no.
<b>The Future and the New Millennium</b>	
Interviewer:	We have the new millennium coming up, the year 2000. What do you think are some of the important issues that are facing Alexandria as well as society for this new millennium?
Mary Child:	I just got to think about the newspaper and what I've been reading in the paper about all the problems. I can't say what the most important is, but they've got some problems here.
Interviewer:	As far as being a part of the Alexandria community for many years, do you feel that you personally made an impact on the city?
Mary Child:	I never considered thinking about that. I don't know. I just did my job, that's all.
Interviewer:	I mean you have made friends, you have talked about a lot of friends that you have had, I mean you have impact on those people, right?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer:	I would assume that's for the better, don't you think?
Mary Child:	I would think so.
Interviewer 2:	You haven't been a bad influence on anybody?
Mary Child:	Not that I can think of at the moment.
<b>Growing up in Annapolis</b>	
Interviewer:	I'd like to close today if I can with an open-ended question as far as do you have any other thoughts or comments that you would like to personally put into the interview here that I didn't cover?
Mary Child:	Well, what are you going to use this for?
Interviewer:	It's going to be transcribed.
Interviewer 2:	All kinds of things. What we want is kind of like the library here. We are just trying to build up a recorded collection of people's memories, of raw material, things that people remember from their lives here in town. And depending on what the comments are on, we plan to do interviews with a lot of other former government workers, people from any part of Alexandria, any experience that they had, so that we have a good variety of material that we can draw on when we are doing an exhibit or doing maybe do some kind of recorded history program or something where people could come into a museum and press a button to hear someone's memories about this subject or that subject. And of course there is crossover. Older residents that lived through the Depression or World War II here in town, we might group them that way. We might put people's recollections about World War II together, or put the Depression together, or put the growth of the...

Mary Child:	You know we didn't talk really the last time we met. I didn't know what you were going to do; just what kind of information you wanted. But the things that I thought of that you might want, you never [inaudible].
Interviewer:	This is the time now for you to ask questions.
Interviewer 2:	[inaudible] got to the end of his questions, but I had jotted down a couple things as you were talking that I just wanted to ask you a little bit more about to see if you remembered. And one of them was your memories of growing up in Annapolis. What kind of things stick in your mind about growing up in Annapolis, being over there by the water?
Mary Child:	Well, we lived right on the water. We had a boat. We were on the city side. My grandparents had property on the other side, the countryside. In warm weather, we just couldn't wait for my dad to get home. We were all at the bottom of the street waiting for him to get home to take us swimming. This was when we were real little. Of course when we was going on our own. That was a big part of it. And the Naval Academy also was a big part of it. They had all the major athletes, athletics, played all the best teams in the country, so every weekend there was always something going on there. Baseball, football, and so forth; and gymnastic and swimming so forth. So that was always very interesting.
Interviewer 2:	Was your father a big person to be in and around the water? Did he show you how to crab?
Mary Child:	Oh yes.
Interviewer 2:	Fishing?
Mary Child:	Yes. My grandparents on the other side of the creek where it wasn't developed. They had a beach and they had a pier. They had boats.
Respondent 2:	Did they have skipjacks?
Mary Child:	Well they had them down there, but they didn't have one of those.
Interviewer 2:	They weren't in the oyster business?
Mary Child:	No.
<b>Changes in Alexandria Over the Years</b>	
Interviewer 2:	How did you, since your background was kind of Annapolis and that side of the river, how did you end up in Alexandria? Were you following your husband's job here? What made you come over here?
Mary Child:	My husband was a ball player. And he, as a kid, had been shot in the eye by another kid with a rifle. And they didn't operate on him at the time. But anyway, he was first with Los Angeles and Philadelphia Athletics, and ended up with Washington .
Interviewer 2:	A professional baseball player?

Mary Child:	Yes. So they talked the owner of the team to have Harry's eye operated on because when he was a child they weren't performing any operation. So he did have his eye operated on. While he was in the hospital, both eyes got infected, so he was there for months. But, it did not give him any additional sight. But it did improve his appearance because it was like a skim over his eye. So he got into Boys Club work in Washington and also with the Police Boys Club. And then, when this opened up over here, he came over here. So we got married when he came over here.
Interviewer 2:	So he took the job over here and you moved from—you were living in Baltimore then?
Mary Child:	In Annapolis.
Interviewer 2:	In Annapolis.
Interviewer 2:	What kind of things, just general things, do you remember about Alexandria during the war? Do you remember scrap drives and that kind of stuff? People having victory gardens?
Mary Child:	Oh no. We had—getting to, transportation was a big problem all the time, unless you had your own car. And did sometime, and sometime not. So that was always, getting to and from work was something. People would get out on the street corner and wave [inaudible]. They are still doing that out there in the suburbs. I guess it was kind of limited in many ways about the entertainment and that sort of thing. I know the Boat Club was still open.
Interviewer 2:	Was there a USO or anything here?
Mary Child:	Oh yes, USO.
Respondent 2:	Garden Club was active.
Mary Child:	Yes, they have always been.
Respondent 2:	DAR was active
Interviewer 2:	Trying to take people's mind off of things?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer 2:	Did any of your friends lose any boys overseas?
Mary Child:	Several, yes.
Interviewer 2:	And they put their little flags in the windows?
Mary Child:	Yes, terrible.
Interviewer 2:	This actually kind of has to do with growing up in Annapolis too. When you were in school and in college, what was your major? What kind of career interest did you have? Before you got married, what did you envision yourself doing maybe as a career?
Mary Child:	Something in employment.

Interviewer 2:	Really?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer 2:	You had an interest then in human resources kinds of things?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer 2:	Does anything stick out in your mind about the growth of Alexandria during your lifetime? It has obviously come a long way.
Mary Child:	It is very, very different. Just driving in on North Washington Street, more so that driving out. There's been a lot of building and development. A lot from here over to the airport on the other side of the road. In between here and Potomac Yards.
Interviewer 2:	That north end of town.
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer 2:	Do you remember when you were first living here in the [19]30s and then during the war, were there certain neighborhoods that are much different today? Were there certain parts of town where you didn't go that today are not bad? As neighborhoods changed?
Mary Child:	Well I think a lot of the neighborhoods have changed. There have been a lot of additions in every direction. I think the downtown section stayed pretty much as it was.
Interviewer 2:	I have heard from other people that certain parts of Old Town, kind of around where Gadsby's are and down toward the waterfront, which today is very attractive, nice part of town, was kind of run down because that was the old, industrial part of town.
Mary Child:	That's right.
Interviewer 2:	Do you remember that?
Mary Child:	And a lot of new places have gone in there.
Interviewer 2:	Condos and such.
Mary Child:	It is much better kept than it was then.
Interviewer 2:	Do you remember it being run down in the [19]30s?
Mary Child:	Yes. There was a place down there, on the corner of King and the last block down, on the right. Seaport Inn. Most everybody, wherever they go, they almost always end up there for a beer at night.
Interviewer 2:	Oh really, that was the local watering hole. It's been there a long time. I guess it is an 18th-century building.
Mary Child:	The Boat Club, they had regular dances. They had something going on all the time. Always people hanging around there.
Interviewer 2:	The torpedo plant—did you know any people who worked down there during

	the war?
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer 2:	That was I guess a pretty bustling place.
Mary Child:	Yes.
Interviewer 2:	...you worked for the city, are there any other city employees that you worked with or worked for that kind of stick out in your mind?
Mary Child:	Harold Willard was the city manager when I came here. He was a tremendous person. A good personality and highly regarded. So when he left here there was a lot of regrets.
Interviewer 2:	Big shoes to fill. Who was his successor? We can check on that.
Mary Child:	Ed Ewald, and I'm not sure if he came in then or later. He may have followed Mr. Ewald.
Interviewer 2:	But Willard sticks out as somebody who did a lot for city government or did a lot for city employees? City residents I should say.
Mary Child:	Yes, he had good background and good experience.
Interviewer 2:	Great. We'll get back in touch with you if there are things we want to follow up on or questions we might need to clarify we can just call you on the phone and double-check something. Again, if there are any things that you recall in the next few days or weeks or whatever that you want to make part of the record, we can certainly add it in. Essentially what we are doing is we are collecting raw material. We just want to have any thoughts and memories you have of being around Alexandria all these years. The kinds of things that you remember.
Mary Child:	Well this has been completely different from what I told you it was going to be.
Respondent 2:	Is this a city project or...?
Interviewer 2:	Yes
Respondent 2:	or government project?
Interviewer 2:	No. The city government, so yes. [End]