THE ALEXANDRIA ORAL HISTORY CENTER
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CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

Oral History Interview with Janice Howard

Interviewers: Francesco De Salvatore and Stephanie Johnson

Narrator: Janice Howard

Location of Interview: 2207 Fort Ward Place, Alexandria, Virginia

Date of Interview: March 11, 2026

Transcriber: Elizabeth Owen

Summary:

Retired lawyer, Janice Howard discusses the history of her family's rooming house, bakery, and other businesses at 1022 Pendleton Street. She recalls Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad staying at the Pendleton Rooming House during segregation, and explains its current role serving low-income city residents. She details her family's civil-rights activism, which led to her meeting activist-performer Harry Belafonte. She emphasizes her family's commitment to entrepreneurship and education, and recounts her own decision to become a lawyer. Lastly, she shares her vision for how 1022 Pendleton Street, now undergoing city-funded restoration, can continue giving back to the community.

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General	African American Business People; African American Business Enterprises; African American History; African Americans – Civil Rights; Catholic Schools - [Alexandria, VA and Baltimore, MD]; Colored Rosemont; Discrimination; Education; Family Life; Historic Buildings—Conservation and Restoration; Lawyers - Virginia; Low-Income Housing; NAACP; Nation of Islam; Public School Teachers; Segregation; Systemic Racism
People	Belafonte, Harry; Calloway, Cab; Dixon, Corinne J.; Dixon, Urquhart; Howard, Robert; Jackson Corinne ; Jackson, DeLoss; Jackson Malyssa; Jackson, John W.; Johnson, William; Lee, Jr., Emmett Cornelius; Lee, Martha; Lee, Signora; Miller, Martha; Miller, Melvin; Muhammad, Elijah; Raphael, Frances; Raphael-Howell, Frances; Silas, Wardlaw, Damon; Wardlaw, Denise
Places	Africa; Alexandria; Alexandria Home Bakery; Arlington; Atlantic City; Baltimore; Charles Houston Elementary School; District of Columbia Teachers College; Douglas MacArthur

	Elementary School; Ford Ward Place; Freedmen's Hospital; Garnet-Patterson Junior High School; Henry Street; Howard University; Jamaica; Lee's Cafe; Nigeria; North Columbus Street; Parkfairfax; Payne Street; Pendleton Rooming House; Pendleton Street; Princess Street; Saint Frances Academy; St. Francis de Sales High School; Saint Joseph's School; Shirlington; T.C. Williams High School; Woods Place

Janice Howard [00:00:01] I have to remember, I am now being recorded (*chuckling*). Janice Howard. Today is March 11, 2026. Location is 2207 Fort Ward Place, Alexandria, Virginia. My home.

Stephanie Johnson [00:00:24] Stephanie Johnson. Today's date is March the 11th, 2026. And I am in the home of Ms. Janice Howard, doing this oral interview.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:00:40] OK. And my name is Francesco De Salvatore, and today is March 11, 2026, and we're in Ms. Howard's home today. All right, well, thank you for being here with us today. We're really, really excited to hear your memories about your childhood and Pendleton Street. So, let's just start maybe with your childhood. And can you tell us what are some memories that stick out to you about your childhood?

Janice Howard [00:01:05] Yes, some of my memories are going to ballet class. And that was every day in Washington, D.C. My mother would drive me there. My brother and I.

If I look at pictures, I can remember playing on Henry Street with my best girlfriend, Frances Raphael. And she always talks about Henry Street, and how wonderful it was living there, how wonderful my Aunt Malyssa, my mother's sister, and my mother, how good they were to her. How my aunt made her clothes, and how we would run and play. One day, she ran into a barbed wire fence. And that's what she talks about when you ask her about Henry Street — that we were running. And maybe I was chasing her. I'm not sure.

I remember mostly the birthday cakes that my grandfather [John W. Jackson] made. He made wedding cakes and huge, three, four, five-level cakes that were ordered. I remember, most of all, my aunt making me birthday cakes, and she would make two and three-level birthday cakes with surprises inside. And my friends had to guess what's in the cake, and, for guessing correctly, they would win a prize. That was a lot of fun.

My second biggest memory about my childhood is going to Atlantic City. I couldn't remember why we didn't stay in the big, pretty hotels on the water. We would rent rooms — or two or three rooms — and walk to the boardwalk, which was about a couple of blocks away. That was a lot of fun playing in the ocean, playing in the Atlantic Ocean, and being on the boardwalk. Watching my aunt and my grandmother [Martha Lee]. Everybody went.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:03:42] I see you have some photos from that time. Would you mind maybe — ?

Janice Howard [00:03:47] No, here's a birthday cake.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:03:49] Oh, that's the birthday cake.

Janice Howard [00:03:51] Some of them are taller.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:03:52] That's great.

Janice Howard [00:03:53] And here's taking ballet and practicing in my home —

Francesco De Salvatore [00:03:58] That's great.

Janice Howard [00:03:58] in front of my father's car.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:04:00] Can you describe what we're seeing here with the birthday cake?

Janice Howard [00:04:05] OK.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:04:06] Can you describe what the photo is showing us?

Janice Howard [00:04:07] Yeah, this is a clear one. So, I have no idea what that is on top. I only can show it to you, and this is a picture at the birthday party. And, evidently, they dressed me before, but I have others with friends, and a lot of the friends are from Alexandria. In fact, all of them are except one.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:04:38] How, how — ?

Janice Howard [00:04:39] But, see, that wasn't clear. See, that's a two-layer birthday cake. My friends are blowing out the candles, and let's see — My cousins and friends at the birthday party. I don't know if you can see that.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:05:01] Yeah, yeah.

Janice Howard [00:05:03] This is a picture of me.

Stephanie Johnson [00:05:06] Ms. Howard, so, you talked about, you gave us several examples of your fond memory. I'm just going to go back a little bit. And can you tell us where you were born?

Janice Howard [00:05:22] OK. Well, you know, at that time, you were born in Freedmen's Hospital [Howard University Hospital in Washington, DC]. Not in Alexandria. I wasn't born in Alexandria Hospital. I was born in Freedmen's, which is now how —

Stephanie Johnson [00:05:33] Can you (inaudible) about the date? Do you know, can you recall — ?

Janice Howard [00:05:37] My birthday?

Stephanie Johnson [00:05:38] Yes, your —

Janice Howard [00:05:37] Oh, yes, uh-huh. It was February 6, 1946. No problems. Just turned 80.

But then we went to Henry Street when I was, you know, after I was born, with my grandparents. We didn't stay there. We went to a home — my parents owned a home — and the first home was Arlington And we stayed there a while. I showed you pictures of the ballet and the dancing, practicing, and they had big shows. I remember taking acrobat [acrobatics] and ballet, and my brother took ballet, no, acrobat [acrobatics]and tap. It was a lot of fun. The dance studio was right across from Ben's Chili Bone, I think, or a hot dog place. I just know it smelled so good. And it was in that area.

Stephanie Johnson [00:06:47] Can you describe the neighborhood you grew up in? Like, the aesthetic of it. You said you only briefly stayed at Henry Street.

Janice Howard [00:06:58] Henry Street, mm-hmm.

Stephanie Johnson [00:06:59] Henry Street as a baby.

Janice Howard [00:07:00] Right.

Stephanie Johnson [00:07:03] So, your neighborhood, the locality you said was Arlington?

Janice Howard [00:07:07] We went to Arlington. We stayed for a while. That's where I have pictures of me doing ballet. That was Arlington. I was very young then, too. I don't remember the exact age. I remember my neighbors across the street and all of that, but I'm sure I was somewhere around three, four.

Stephanie Johnson [00:07:30] OK, let's just go back a little bit to the Pendleton Street neighborhood. Can you kind of, like, give me an idea of what Pendleton Street, that neighborhood, what was it like, if you can remember?

Janice Howard [00:07:46] Well, I remember our house or, you know, did serve a lot of purposes. We had people who stayed there as far as tenants. The rooming house. And I remember my uncle had a barber shop. You know, it was separated, but it was — A separate address, but part of — In fact, it was more Pendleton than Henry [Street]. You know, that has two separate addresses, Pendleton and Henry.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:08:21] What was your uncle's name? Like, his full name?

Janice Howard [00:08:23] His name was Uncle DeLoss. Jackson. And he has a middle name. I think it's Napoleon. Napoleon Jackson. And my aunt, Malyssa. M-A-L-Y-S-S-A. I think her middle name was Mary. My mother didn't have a middle name. Her name was Corinne Jackson, named after her mother.

Stephanie Johnson [00:08:56] Um, so, you said your friend —

Janice Howard [00:09:04] Frances Raphael.

Stephanie Johnson [00:09:05] Frances Raphael, yes. Are you and Frances still friends now?

Janice Howard [00:09:12] Very close. She lives in Washington. And she still teaches at the University of Maryland. She wants to, she loves it. Dr. Frances Howell [Frances Raphael-Howell].

Francesco De Salvatore [00:09:25] OK. Can you describe a little bit more of your memories of that neighborhood growing up? Like, what did it look like, what did it sound like, you know, for someone who wasn't there, right? OK, can you kind of paint us an image of what, you know, what that neighborhood looked like? Yeah, for the Pendleton Street —

Janice Howard [00:09:51] It was —

Francesco De Salvatore [00:09:51] Pendleton Street building.

Janice Howard [00:09:53] It was a home where our family stayed. My grandmother lived there, my grandmother Lee, if you're familiar with Lee's Cafe in Alexandria. My grandmother came from Danville, Virginia because my grandfather said children are not living in his house. So she came up and they started Lee's Cafe, and they bought a home. In Arlington. And then they — No, they may have moved. Their first home was Alexandria that I remember, which was 421 North Columbus Street. I'd have to sit down and go through something to see if I'm absolutely correct. But that's what I remember. I remember 421 North Columbus Street.

Henry Street, I remember the things that my girlfriend says. Because I didn't grow up in the house,

but we were there all the time. My mother went there and helped, and we went there, and I went there and played with my girlfriend. I remember the big backyard, running around. I remember going to Miss Martha Miller's. I was younger than everybody else because I was taller than everybody else. So mama always told them I was a lot older than I was. I started Saint Joseph's [Saint Joseph's School] at five instead of six [years old]. However, to remember details, living there, I don't. But I was there with my grandfather and my grandparents.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:11:46] What did the building look like? Can you describe, like, what it — ?

Janice Howard [00:11:50] It's huge to me. I was little, I was young. So, that building, I could get lost in, I thought then. I usually stayed on one side, and that was the side that Frances lived on. She lived on a side. She could live there.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:12:07] Mm-hmm.

Janice Howard [00:12:08] And her mother was one of the first — I don't remember, I have to ask her — first people in the service in her area. But I should have gotten that information.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:12:23] That's OK. Yeah, can you describe a little bit more, like, what it was like inside of it? Like, what the walls looked like, the floors?

Janice Howard [00:12:34] Most of my memory is current, of the inside.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:12:38] Sure, yeah, yeah.

Janice Howard [00:12:39] But I just remember it was very big to me. I remember helping my grandparents make the biscuits and the bread, and watching them, and they would give me my little part to play with. I remember my grandfather taking the large wedding cakes out. It was amazing to me to see huge wedding cakes. Henry Street is legacy. It's huge. So I remember my grandparents not as much, but now I remember Silas working in the restaurant, serving people at the counter. At one point, they had a countertop where people could come in and eat. I remember that, and I remember people coming in. At that point, there was a building next to it. Or maybe a house. I'm not sure. I might have them mixed up. But not a big building. Just a little, teeny house, and I remember when it was torn down. But if you could tell me more of what kind of details you want to know.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:14:02] Yeah, no, this is all great. You're doing great. [*To Stephanie Johnson*] Do you have any — ? You wanna butt in or — ? I have a few more questions, but OK. [*To Janice Howard]* So, can you lay out, like, you've kind of talked about your uncle's business, the restaurant. Can you kind of clearly lay out what were all the businesses that were there, over time?

Janice Howard [00:14:26] That's it. That was at first. My grandfather believed you can always keep a [rooming] house. You can always have your own business. And he cared for the people in the area. So most African Americans could not come in [and stay in any hotel], like [Nation of Islam leader] Elijah Muhammad and the famous musicians. When they had something to do, they had to stay there [at the rooming house] or someplace like that. And because there were so many rooms, that's what that house was designed for: to care for people that couldn't take care of themselves. His rents were not high. [They were] very, very low, and he maintained the place. I mean, that's the way I grew up. But, normally, if we bought a house, the house always had a tenant. It always had a renter. It would be a school teacher doing a practicum, and they had to do it in Alexandria, Virginia. Am I answering [your questions]?

Francesco De Salvatore [00:15:39] You're doing great. Yeah, yeah. There's no right answer here, I promise.

Stephanie Johnson [00:15:45] So, Ms. Howard, you talked about people coming in. So can we say that Elijah Muhammad, Cab Calloway, some of the musicians [came to stay]? But I also noticed that your grandfather or your parents were more so like activists in the community.

Janice Howard [00:16:17] Very. Right.

Stephanie Johnson [00:16:19] Can you tell us a little bit about that? You know, the activism that they did. Like, you talked about segregation, where Blacks couldn't go in certain places. Shall we say they also fought for causes for Blacks in the community?

Janice Howard [00:16:40] Yes, but because I was so young — I was three when my grandfather died. I saw pictures of him at NAACP meetings, but I only saw pictures with my mother. I went to activities. My mother was extremely active: NAACP, treasurer of the NAACP. And she wouldn't go any higher. I think she was vice president, but I'm not sure. Lifetime members [of the NAACP]; she's a lifetime member. My grandfather was a lifetime member. I'm not sure about my grandmother, and I hate to leave her out. She was an educated woman and she was very helpful, too. She did a lot. But my grandmother — I'm sorry, my mother — went to many things. (inaudible)

Janice Howard [00:17:43] I stopped you. Yeah, I did.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:17:48] I think (inaudible).

Stephanie Johnson [00:17:51] Mm-hmm.

Janice Howard [00:17:52] I remember when we had the Poor Man's March [Poor People's Campaign], and my mother would always go there every day and get people, bring 'em home, wash their clothes in the washing machine, everything that they had, feed them, and go on to the next day.

She was amazing. There's so many people in Alexandria that don't know what they did as far as helping others get through college. I know one [they helped] through law school.

My mother. It was amazing to see. I went off to boarding school, and my mother went off to Africa. She stayed in Africa probably quite a few months. And I enjoyed showing her pictures of her. She's showing me pictures of what she was in, and things like that. I remember going to a —

Francesco De Salvatore [00:19:00] (inaudible)

Janice Howard [00:19:04] Yeah. I remember going to a soirée, but if you want to talk about the thing I most remember is when my mother got us an invitation to meet Harry Belafonte. Her friends. Sitting in the room. Frances and I went again. We were the only two there, talking and looking at Harry Belafonte.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:19:24] Wow, wow. Can you say more about that? What — ?

Janice Howard [00:19:28] What I did? Well, we talked.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:19:29] Yeah, what do you remember about that?

Janice Howard [00:19:30] I remember my dress. I had a pink striped dress that was beautiful. I remember looking at his skin because it was so red. His skin was almost like it was — It was just red! I remember meeting him, and I remember also having — He had a singer with him. She wasn't there, but she later came to our house on Columbus Street. 421 North Columbus Street. What else? I just couldn't stop looking at him, and he talked to me. And he was just red [*laughing*]!

Francesco De Salvatore [00:20:13] I'm curious, now that you bring that up, I'm just curious to kind of go back a little bit because you talk about some of the, sort of, celebrities and leaders, and people who've stayed at the Pendleton Street house. Are there any specific people that come to mind that stayed there, for you? Like, do you have any memories that come to mind?

Janice Howard [00:20:34] Well, I remember Elijah Muhammad because he was building a church or something next door. I think it was building next door, but I could have it —

Francesco De Salvatore [00:20:51] Sure.

Janice Howard [00:20:51] Yeah.

Stephanie Johnson [00:20:52] It was a church.

Janice Howard [00:20:53] It was a —

Francesco De Salvatore [00:20:53] Yeah.

Janice Howard [00:20:53] And my mother said — She used to talk about it because she used to talk about how she would send us next door to be in church.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:20:58] Uh-huh.

Janice Howard [00:20:59] And it was Sabbath keeping because it was Saturday when they went. I remember that and the little plot of land that they took out. A small church.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:21:09] Yeah. Do you remember anything else about that church? Any other memories of going to it or — ?

Janice Howard [00:21:16] No, people singing, and I remember praising God. [I remember] the church. Just remember it was small, and some Saturdays we would go.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:21:28] Yeah. Do you remember any of his sermons or — ?

Janice Howard [00:21:33] No [*laughing*].

Francesco De Salvatore [00:21:34] Yeah, it's been a long time, right? Yeah.

Janice Howard [00:21:36] Well, yeah!

Francesco De Salvatore [00:21:37] Yeah.

Janice Howard [00:21:38] It's 77 years.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:21:38] Yeah, yeah. Are there any other people that stayed there that come to mind at the Pendleton Street house? Is there anything?

Janice Howard [00:21:48] Elijah [Muhammad]. Let me see. I didn't know who they were.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:21:53] Right, of course, yeah.

Janice Howard [00:21:54] So, and so Mother and I never talked about it. And then, Frances probably knows.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:22:02] Mm-hmm.

Janice Howard [00:22:03] Want me to ask her?

Francesco De Salvatore [00:22:04] It's OK.

Janice Howard [00:22:05] I don't have any recollection. I remember the cooking and the baking, and running around the house. And then we moved.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:22:17] I kinda wanna follow up about the cakes and the baking. I'm just curious, can you share more sort of recipes and things that were made growing up?

Janice Howard [00:22:25] Uh, I have my birthday cake.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:22:29] Right.

Janice Howard [00:22:30] There is a picture of a cake my grandfather is taking out of Henry Street. Do you have a copy of that?

Stephanie Johnson [00:22:39] (inaudible)

Janice Howard [00:22:40] Huh?

Stephanie Johnson [00:22:41] I saw that.

Janice Howard [00:22:42] Right, well, if you need a copy, you know, they're like that, and he's walking to the truck that he has to carry him to their destination. My biggest memory is trying to see the prizes going inside my birthday cake, if you want to be honest [*laughing*].

Francesco De Salvatore [00:22:57] What were some of the prizes?

Janice Howard [00:23:00] Just jacks. A little box, a little thing of jacks and balls, and basically stuff like that.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:23:09] Yeah. That's good. Are there other recipes or things that your grandma made that come to mind?

Janice Howard [00:23:16] I make my mother's pound cake. Everybody has a pound cake, and you just missed it. You could have had a slice if you were here with me earlier [*laughing*].

Stephanie Johnson [00:23:24] It got ate.

Janice Howard [00:23:26] It got too late. And everybody here makes the pound cake. Even my husband has the pound-cake recipe. Michael, my grandson, has the pound-cake recipe.

What else? Oh, we didn't talk about this, either. I remember coming home from school. I went to elementary school at Saint Joseph's, but I went to Charles Houston [Elementary School] one year, my second grade. But to come home with my mother's apple pie is amazing. There's no other apple pie like my mother's apple pie. We would have different pies. My grandmother, my father's mother — When I call [her] my grandmother, I don't remember my mother's mother. But my father, his mother, Ms. Lee, Martha Lee, would always bake. Oh, for my birthday, [she] made ice cream. I love peach ice cream. Middle of February, my grandmother saw that we had homemade ice cream, and she opened up a restaurant called Lee's Cafe at the corner of Pendleton and Payne and Princess [Streets]. I'm sorry.

But, so, sometimes when we're talking about what I did, it gets confusing because I remember they are always going to dinner on Fridays. And I also remember that I had a grandparent, and I had a parent, and my grandmother would be home or my mother would be home. My brother and I were not left alone or in the hands of a caretaker. And on Fridays, when they both had to work a long time, I went down the street to my aunt's. We owned houses on the 400 block of Columbus Street. So, one house was my aunt's, one house was ours, and then my other aunt was on the other end. So, we always had a place to go if nobody was home.

Stephanie Johnson [00:25:33] So, Ms. Howard, I want to go back a little bit because that, too, is an area that I grew up in, the Pendleton Street area. And it always intrigued me of the interior. Like, was it wood floors? Now I'm talking about the aesthetics of the inside of it. Did y'all have wooden floors? What was the furniture like, if you can remember?

Janice Howard [00:26:05] Umm —

Stephanie Johnson [00:26:06] I know the staircase, even though — A little ahead and coming back. The staircase, even though they are remodeling it, the staircase remained. Can you just give me, like, a little insight of what the staircase actually looked like?

Janice Howard [00:26:23] OK. Coming in from the Pendleton Street side, we walked in. A tall staircase, to me at that time. And it had a round knob, and [it was] a very beautiful staircase, going up the steps. You know, sometimes you felt like a princess when you walked that staircase. Back then. You're talking 70 [years] — well, a long time [*chuckling*]. Long time. So, it seemed great, and then there was a barber shop on this end. You could come in through that door, but there were two doors there; one into the barber shop. My grandfather saw that his children could work, so he built that barber shop for my uncle. That was him, and that's what his barber shop was.

Stephanie Johnson [00:27:21] So, the Henry Street side, I noticed that there were two doors.

Janice Howard [00:27:27] Mm-hmm.

Stephanie Johnson [00:27:28] So, did one actually lead to where the tenants — well, I'll call them tenants.

Janice Howard [00:27:38] The tenants came in that back door, where they had that staircase up that.

Stephanie Johnson [00:27:44] So, what side of the street would that be?

Janice Howard [00:27:46] And Henry Street —

Stephanie Johnson [00:27:46] Henry Street?

Janice Howard [00:27:47] Henry Street. No, we lived on — Henry Street, right. And I remember my aunt's room, and I don't remember my room, but Frances and I, once, we'd go hide, and my aunt always had a lot of pennies on her floor.

Stephanie Johnson [00:28:02] How many rooms does that house actually have? Not before the renovation, but that you remembered? How many? How many rooms did —

Janice Howard [00:28:11] I knew it had 10 bedrooms. Ten bedrooms, and I can't remember if it included a room for us because, at the time I started remembering, we had moved out, remember, and I was in visiting or playing running around the house, counting all the money they dropped on the floor [*chuckling*].

Stephanie Johnson [00:28:31] Was it symbolic to put money on the floor like that?

Janice Howard [00:28:33] I think my Aunt Malyssa [did that]. She would leave money for Frances and I to find. Pennies. Yeah.

Stephanie Johnson [00:28:41] Oh, yeah, pennies were worth something.

Janice Howard [00:28:43] Back then it was great.

Stephanie Johnson [00:28:44] Yeah, it was. I, too, can remember going into your grandfather's, where it was no longer the bakery, but it had turned into the restaurant.

Janice Howard [00:28:55] Right. Silas.

Stephanie Johnson [00:28:56] Yes, Silas. I remember him as well. I can remember standing up on the stoop, buying that penny candy.

Janice Howard [00:29:05] Uh-huh!

Stephanie Johnson [00:28:57] But it's so amazing because I never put it all together until recently, being a student and learning the history of your grandfather's and — well, you all — what you all, your family, had inherited as well. I'm going to go back still a little further. Like, your mother. Since we talked about your grandfather some, I'm gonna bring it up some to your mother. What was she like? What was Ms. Corinne like?

Janice Howard [00:29:38] You know, I often thank God for my mother. She was a business woman. She was a parent. She had two children. I was good all the time. And my brother tried to piss her off all the time. He loved his friends. And so, when he would steal her car, he would say, "Well, if you don't let me, my friends drive. I don't want to drive." And she would say, "OK." And she didn't care if he wanted to drive or not. But he would drive.

And I remember another thing about Henry Street. He had a big party on Henry Street, [on] the first floor. Mother was giving him a small party on Henry Street, and it had a big — I guess you'd call it a jukebox. Henry Street did have a jukebox. And, so, all this area, on the lower level was opened up for his party. And I think people were standing outside, trying to get in. And I remember mama closed it down, too.

But she was not extremely affectionate, no. The one thing I knew, my mother, if I had to say something, she was very, very dependable. I remember going to Saint Joseph's. I went to Saint Joseph's, and I think we were about three blocks, two blocks from Saint Joseph's. Two. And I knew if it was raining, not to step out, that she would be there. I mean, I can't ever remember a time that she didn't pick us up. Otherwise, I'd just walk home. But to know that as a child — Children standing outside in the rain are trying to get home. And I know sometimes they have difficulty now. But I can't ever remember my mother not picking me up.

I remember when I went to high school, I went to, first, St. Francis de Sales High School. I did not like it. I didn't like the school because they would not let me take algebra. That was the subject that I loved, and they said, well, I should take home-ec [home economics] and business math. And I called my mother, crying. I did not want to take it, and she called them back and told them she was paying, so, whatever I wanted to take, give it to me. And they did, but they took their time. I didn't care if I took Latin, but with the program, I had to take Latin and I could take algebra. I was so happy that she actually stood up for me and I took my classes. It was negativity because they didn't wanna give me classes, and I don't remember —

But anyway, the next year, I went to Saint Frances [Saint Frances Academy] in Baltimore, where I

could come home, and I enjoyed that school. Sister Consiglio was there. Everybody knew her from Alexandria. She was principal at Saint Joseph's. I mean, at Saint Fran — She was principal at Saint Frances. And she was head at Saint Joseph's. I don't know how she ended up at Saint Joseph's the year I got there, but that was a lot of fun.

My mother stood up for me, but not overly. If it came to my education, that's why she moved me. And I did not like the other school. You want to hear more about that [*laughing*] ?

Stephanie Johnson [00:33:29] Well, it sounds like, in reading and learning about your family history, it also started with your grandfather, who was also an advocate about education. So, it looked like that your mom, Ms. Corinne, kind of, like, took the torch.

Can you tell us your brother's name, if you don't mind?

Janice Howard [00:33:55] No. Emmett Cornelius Lee, Junior.

And you said my grandfather, but my grandmother had a college education. I mean, [she] has a degree in there, in my office. She cared about — Her family [was] all educated. Her brothers — So, they really cared about education, too. And her last name was Carr. She was from Jamaica.

Stephanie Johnson [00:34:22] Yes, I know it's real — I'm learning that in school as well, the gender roles. During that era, women were not really recognized, but I'm glad that you are incorporating her into this oral history because I do believe that behind every great man there stands a great woman.

Janice Howard [00:34:48] Right.

Stephanie Johnson [00:34:49] You know, so it's OK to give her accolades as well.

Janice Howard [00:34:55] Right, I have to bring it in sometimes. And my mother, too. I mean, she was a woman.

Stephanie Johnson [00:35:00] OK, and you —

Janice Howard [00:35:00] She was a strong — It was amazing to see what she did, and the people that they helped. My father died when I was very young, three years old. He had tuberculosis, and so she had a great role, and to watch her work in that restaurant. She said, "I will work in this restaurant," Lee's Cafe, when they opened it. Ten years. She worked 10 years. I went to Saint Frances at that point in Baltimore, and she went to, like I said, Africa, Nigeria, and I don't remember the other places, but I have the pictures. And she did the things that she wanted to do, and worked or had her own things to do and run.

Stephanie Johnson [00:35:56] You said that your mom wasn't as affectionate. Or do you see it as just an error of time?

Janice Howard [00:36:10] Probably. I mean, she wasn't not affectionate. I come home and hug and kiss. But, you know, I don't just — What I see now, or maybe back then, when you have a mother and a father — I had a mother, and I had a grandmother until she moved back to Danville [Virginia]. But at that point, you know, when they say, "Criticize your mother," I can't. I think my mother was awesome. I used to think, "How can she do this?" Because I saw other people with husbands. And later on, I found out she didn't want to marry until my brother was grown, and nobody else could tell him what to do. She wanted control. So, she married at 49 or right before she turned 50, something like that.

Stephanie Johnson [00:37:02] And that name is?

Janice Howard [00:37:03] Urquhart Dixon. Everybody knew him, too. He would take us to lots — No, his grandchildren. My children. He did a lot of support.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:37:21] How do you think your mom has shaped who you are? Or your mom and your grandmother? Both people.

Janice Howard [00:37:27] Well, my mother has shaped [me] because when I went through school — I went to school and high school. I didn't have to be good. I didn't have to be smart because somebody told them I wasn't [*chuckling*]. And then I went to college, and I made tremendous — I gave her — She really thought I was struggling hard, but I wasn't because I made A's in math. That was my favorite subject. I did great. But not all of the other subjects. So, when I went to high school and I started making all A's, she said, "Oh, you need this, you're doing great." So, that's when I realized she was affected by that because, elementary school, she never acted like it mattered. So, I did average. In high school, I did very good. And in college, I was very good. You know, I don't want to say how good, but very good. And then I went to law school. Law school. I have an AmJur [American Jurisprudence] Award for one class, so I did good. She was proud.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:38:49] I know your father passed when you were pretty young, but do you have any memories of him at all?

Janice Howard [00:38:59] [*chuckling*] No. I have memories that my grandmother would tell me, and she would say, "Oh, he'd put you on his lap and tell 'em, 'Don't whip love. She's just love.'" I ate that up. I remember my grandmother very well, but I was three [when my father died]. My brother had great memories of my father. I have great pictures of my father.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:39:23] What were some of the stories that you heard about your dad?

Janice Howard [00:39:26] Hmm?

Francesco De Salvatore [00:39:27] What were some of the stories that you heard about your dad?

Janice Howard [00:39:31] [*laughing*] (inaudible) to tell you. He was educated. You know, my father had a college degree. He was very handsome. But —

Stephanie Johnson [00:39:48] So —

Janice Howard [00:39:48] Go ahead.

Stephanie Johnson [00:39:49] I'm sorry. So, I will say that you all came from a lineage of educators.

Janice Howard [00:39:56] Yes, yes. My aunt was educated. She graduated from Howard [University] in three years. My Aunt Signora had a house. Mm-hmm.

Janice Howard [00:40:06] And her children are here, too.

Stephanie Johnson [00:40:07] So, Nora, is she a Lee or is she —?

Janice Howard [00:40:09] She's a Lee.

Stephanie Johnson [00:40:10] Oh, OK.

Janice Howard [00:40:12] My father's —

Stephanie Johnson [00:40:13] Yes. OK.

Janice Howard [00:40:14] sister. Mm-hmm.

Stephanie Johnson [00:40:17] So, you all came from a background of educators.

Janice Howard [00:40:21] Yes, I guess.

Stephanie Johnson [00:40:23] Do you think that — ?

Janice Howard [00:40:24] Well, the women — I'm trying to think. My father was educated. He did graduate. And my grandfather [*whispering*] could pass for white.

Stephanie Johnson [00:40:33] Yeah. No, no, you can use that because I used that in my (inaudible) as well.

Janice Howard [00:40:38] You did? My grandfather could pass for white. And so, when he first moved to Alexandria, his business was in the [city's] Black section. And they would ask him, when he would walk to the white [section], you know, they [said], "Why you always walk back to the Black section?" And he talked about — my mother talked about [how] he fell out or got injured or something, and he went to — They took him automatically to the Alexandria white hos[pital]. And when my grandmother went, my grandmother was dark, they took him out of there real quick. I remember them talking about that.

Stephanie Johnson [00:41:21] So, that's Mr. Jackson.

Janice Howard [00:41:23] Yes, that's Mr. Jackson. They took him out. And he would have contracts all over the city. And I forgot the name of the person he was taught by. Do you remember? Taught how to do it. Bakers.

Stephanie Johnson [00:41:39] Um, no [*laughing*]. Yeah, you're right. He was a German baker. I don't —

Janice Howard [00:41:51] Mm-hmm.

Stephanie Johnson [00:41:51] — remember the name offhand, but you're right.

Janice Howard [00:41:53] But he lived [in] West River.

Stephanie Johnson [00:41:54] Uh-huh, yes.

Janice Howard [00:41:54] When he first got here.

Stephanie Johnson [00:41:55] You are correct. And that baker ended up dying, but we can research that as well. And that's how your grandfather kind of, like, started his business from him.

I often wondered, you know, just your family in general, collectively, the mindset. Like, their mindset was succeeding, knowingly or unknowingly. And when I say that, you know, like — Do you think that that was what made you? Like, deposited into you, poured into you to become —

Janice Howard [00:42:38] Yeah, I think it was. I think, with my mother's family, she had a sister and a brother. Of course, my Uncle DeLoss tried and did many things successfully. My Aunt Malyssa was a teacher. She was an awesome teacher. Hybla Valley.

My grandfather was a businessman. My mother was a businesswoman. She, unfortunately, did not go to college, and didn't think she needed to to be successful. So, that is where I came in. I did not want to work for anybody. I hadn't figured it out. So, when I did go, I went to D.C. Teachers College [District of Columbia Teachers College]. I figured teaching math would be a breeze. I graduated with my diploma in math and business. So, I knew I wanted to do both. I taught, I went in to teach for about five minutes, and realized I didn't want to do that because the children wouldn't listen. I first started at Garnet-Patterson [Junior High School in Washington, D.C.]. The children didn't listen. At that point, I had, what, two children or one? But, anyway, it was hard work. Later on, I met my husband and I decided to go to law school. I didn't want to live with anybody. No, I had a difficult time.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:44:20] (inaudible) names. Are they OK?

Stephanie Johnson [00:44:21] Yeah.

Janice Howard [00:44:22] My two children's names are Denise Wardlaw and Damon Wardlaw. And they went to T.C. Williams [High School] [Alexandria City High School] and Damon played football. And everybody remembers Denise because she was such a wonderful personality. My daughter died. And then I received three children in my household. And raised them until they were grown. They've been gone maybe three years, two years, and they have their own home on Woods Place.
(inaudible) [*whispering*]

Francesco De Salvatore [00:45:10] (inaudible) yeah.

Janice Howard [00:45:11] I can. And what I remember most about those years is [that] we lived in Parkfairfax. They did not want to accept us in Parkfairfax, so my mother called [civil rights activist] Melvin Miller, and then we were accepted in Parkfairfax.

My husband was a police officer in Washington, D.C. when he got out of the military. That was Clark Wardlaw. We sent Denise to a school that was very good. I'm trying to think of the name of it. And a church down the street from Woods Place, where we were living at first. And close to Fort Ward. I mean, Parkfairfax, too, because we were in Parkfairfax. Denise became Miss Parkfairfax at two years old because she could talk, and she enunciated each word, and they did not believe she was two years old. We went to MacArthur School [Douglas MacArthur Elementary School], and that was interesting.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:46:31] What are some of your fondest memories being, you know, a new young mom? With your kids?

Janice Howard [00:46:38] I was blessed. I mean, to be in Parkfairfax and to be able to walk to my mother's, and right here in Shirlington. After my son was born — he was about two months — I started back to college to finish my education. And that's when I finished and started teaching.

From teaching — that was an experience because I had not experienced children like I did in D.C. at Garnet-Patterson. OK, (inaudible) back. At schools like Garnet-Patterson in Washington, D.C. I went on to other schools. I taught in high school. Trying to think of the name of that one. I taught at high school, and another junior high school besides Garnet-Patterson. From there, I went to deciding I wanted to be a lawyer.

So, I went to law school after marrying my second husband, Robert Howard. OK, I married Robert Howard, an attorney at the time, and I decided I wanted to go to law school at the time. He says, "It's a great idea," but that's before we were married. And when I got in, he said [*chuckling*], "Oh, I'll help you." I said, "I think I can get in with my grades, no problem." It was hard studying for the [entrance] exam because you just don't know. I don't think it [studying] helped me at all.

So, I did get in with no issue. Law school to me was not difficult after teaching at Garnet-Patterson. That was the most difficult part of my life at the time. I felt that you just did what they said [at law school], and you'd be alright. And so, instead of making up my own rules and saying, "OK, I'm gonna do this." And they had groups. I was in a group, and I got out because I don't think people listen to what the teachers asked [them] to do. I did what I was asked to do, and added to it if I thought it was necessary.

I finished law school, and Bob and I decided to open Howard and Associates, which was [focused on] discrimination, finding discrimination, or discrimination contracts. That's what we had. We had contracts for the different government areas, and we formed an association, and we would get discrimination contracts, and travel all over the country. We started out right here at your local — or at places like Treasury [the U.S. Treasury Department]; departments, different departments.

And then we applied for a contract. This contract was for associations of whoever wanted to apply throughout the country. Different law officers or any attorney could apply. They were accepting 10 people, and you had to do discrimination complaints against the different organizations, like HUD [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development] and stuff like that. We would travel. They put out for 10 attorneys, and we were shocked that we were two of the 10 throughout the country. We had to adjudicate. We had to adjudicate those cases. And it was amazing. That was very interesting. We had people in our association — We were the attorneys, but we did have our own clerks.

Um, then I went on after my husband, and I practiced law. I think we practiced together about 10 years. We stopped that [filing discrimination complaints]. We did that for about two years. And then we practiced law here. And we had an office in Alexandria, Washington, D.C., and Maryland. My

husband, Robert Howard, ran Alexandria and Virginia, and we oversaw, you know, the whole area. I ran D.C., and I stopped practicing in about 2002 because I wanted to buy houses, like my mother, and help her. And I helped her. And that's what we did.

Francesco De Salvatore [00:52:37] Mm-hmm.

Janice Howard [00:52:38] Did I get through it?

Stephanie Johnson [00:52:40] So, um, I'm gonna come to, yeah, when you start purchasing. I've noticed that you and your mother end up purchasing the lots next door to 1022 [Pendleton Street], where the church once was located.

Janice Howard [00:53:07] [*whispering*] I sold them.

Stephanie Johnson [00:53:08] So, you're now kind of like the monarch of the family, would you say?

Janice Howard [00:53:21] Uh, yeah [*laughing*] !

Stephanie Johnson [00:53:22] Would you say that that's who you are now?

Janice Howard [00:53:27] If that's what the word is. You sound a little old, but it's good.

Stephanie Johnson [00:53:32] [*laughing*]

Janice Howard [00:53:33] I have no recollection of my age.

Stephanie Johnson [00:53:34] Um, so the property now at 1022 [Pendleton Street], we know that it's now being renovated?

Janice Howard [00:53:45] Mm-hmm.

Stephanie Johnson [00:53:46] And now, well, I do, I look at you as the torchbearer now for the Jackson family. Tell us about the renovation that's going on now at 1022 [Pendleton Street].

Janice Howard [00:54:00] OK. I started renovating, and the City called, and they were going to give me a grant. I don't know if it was called a grant at the time because they were giving me, helping me with the financing. Not as far as the money, but I would have a hundred years to pay it back with no interest. And as we were going into the council meeting, they told me they had the grant, and I would still have to pay my part of what I was getting. But with the grant, they did a lot of this. A lot of checking on the history and digging that. That was their portion. I was paying for

the renovations. All the renovations that's happening. I have 100 years to pay back. [*lowering voice*] Is that important?

Francesco De Salvatore [00:55:02] Mm-hmm.

Janice Howard [00:55:03] Uh —

Francesco De Salvatore [00:55:04] What's it been like going through this process for you?

Janice Howard [00:55:06] Oh, it's been hell, but don't tell anybody. Delete that. It's been quite stressful because of the contracts and the changing, and agreeing with the City, and trying to make sure my property was going to remain in my family. I am critical that it goes to the next generation that wants to be involved with what's going on on Henry Street. There's a lot of changes, and there's law — I mean, there're things that I have to follow for the grant, for the City. But it's basically for 15 years. And then the house is just free and clear of a lot of that. But those are things we would do anyway. We were keeping it.

We're keeping it low income. That has been the family. It has stayed the family's, and we are still remaining low income, so that was not a problem. And that's the major thing that has to be done, aside from the other federal things that we have to follow. It all disappears once — If I pay it off in 15 years, I lose all of that. If I want to stretch it out, I think I'm still under the rules of the grant, but —

Francesco De Salvatore [00:56:47] What do you hope for, for this property? Like, as it's being, you know, rehabbed?

Janice Howard [00:56:56] Right now, you know, all of our tenants moved out, and they will move back in unless — They have to keep their bill up. That's one of the requirements of the law, where a lot of times I was slack. I mean, I would do what I would do. But it is important to keep the bill up, I'm not saying it isn't, and it helps me to make sure they have to agree to their — I have to stay low income. So, at the time they move in, they can afford it, but sometimes they may not want to, but, this time, they're all trying to do what they are supposed to do. They're getting them — I've been telling them "No smoking." Now they understand that the City requires [that], and they have to follow because they're at the different — There're two different hotels, two different apartment buildings that require it. So, I hope to keep them the same way that they are growing to be. I mean, I will. Are you asking me? I will probably, unless my children change it, always be low income. I mean, we cannot stay in Alexandria, Virginia if we have maybe trash delivery or whatever. They will, when they move in, be able to pay their rent.

Stephanie Johnson [00:58:22] Mm-hmm. So, you talk about the tenants. Have they always been prior tenants? If you had to give me a number of years., have they been with you a while?

Janice Howard [00:58:45] Yes. The longest one moved out because he received housing in Alexandria, which was about 30 in years. And then we have John, who's probably been in there — He could have been in there more than 30 years because John has been there as long as I can think, which is about 30 years.

Stephanie Johnson [00:59:11] Thirty years.

Janice Howard [00:59:13] Always, they always want to stay unless they find better housing in Alexandria that will pay. They have certain places that they can move to, that they could go to in Alexandria. You know, they apply. That's what the one that had been there the oldest and longest, he applied, and he actually got his apartment instead of a room. Yeah, they enjoy staying there and I — They're doing well unless I had to put them out. I do not let tenants do drugs in my house. They have not completely abided by the no-smoking [rule], But this time, they will because they understand, and they have to sign more contracts about no-smoking. I didn't want smoking in the house.

They have a kitchen, a nice kitchen. They have washers and dryers, things like that. So, this time it's a little better.

Francesco De Salvatore [01:00:24] What does this building mean to you and your family?

Janice Howard [01:00:31] I think the same [as in the past]. My grandfather was a businessman. It's a good business. It means a place for people who have no place in Alexandria to stay. It's very difficult when you have a family. Two things happened in this family that were important. People came up to have a place to live., and they couldn't bring their families. They couldn't come up here and work and have families. We have people who went back and got their families to live. Some people are still here to date, whose father came up and the mother came up, and they lived on at Lee's Cafe. At above it, above Lee's cafe.

My mother had a house that — The one next door to us, I think, and I knew the children. But there was a house where a young couple got married with no children. The children started coming. I think they had six. Maybe seven. Then the parents died, and the oldest one was 18. And my mother let them stay in the house. And one is still in there today.

And so, the history of Henry Street started that. You know, they started the unity. They started the caring, and there are many families like that, and so if I know of two or three, I know there was a whole lot that stayed, and then brought families up. I know there were student teachers, who taught at — It wasn't T.C. Williams [High School/Alexandria City High School] [*chuckling*]. What's the —

Stephanie Johnson [01:00:33

] Charles (inaudible)

Janice Howard [01:00:34] Yeah, and they learned —

Stephanie Johnson [01:00:35] I had some of those teachers.

Janice Howard [01:00:36] And they came up from wherever they lived in Virginia. And it helped them. These are things that are amazing to me.

Stephanie Johnson [01:02:48] You talked about the history and being a researcher of your family's property. It was like it was predestined. William Johnson and his wife [the Pendleton Rooming House's original owners]. That Pendleton Street corridor period has a lot of rich history on it. And 1022 [Pendleton Street], you're right, always has been that place for serving others. Your grandfather was one of the ones who also stayed there before he became the proprietor of that property.

Janice Howard [01:03:34] Mm-hmm.

Stephanie Johnson [01:03:35] So, when I look at that, the richness, and I'm a little younger, but you know, it makes — It's tangible. It makes me, you know, even though I am not your family member, I still feel a piece of that still belongs to my history as well because I come from that area, and just to know the richness of it in itself, and even being a part of it, going into your family restaurant, gives me great pride. So, just sitting here with you alone, gives me great pride just to know the history of that particular space.

Janice Howard [01:04:27] Mm-hmm.

Stephanie Johnson [01:04:28] You know, I hope that this is something that will continue. Longevity! Even well after you're gone, that it still will be remembered as the Jacksons', you know, or the Howards', the Lees', the Dixon[s']. Well, you can't change history! It's gonna always be that.

Janice Howard [01:05:01] Yeah.

Stephanie Johnson [01:05:02] And that's what you should be proud of.

Janice Howard [01:05:03] And thankful for.

Stephanie Johnson [01:05:04] Yeah. Your family has given a lot to Alexandrians. I mean, I hear people talk about it. Matter of fact, my pastor, his parents were one of the tenants on Columbus Street. The houses that your family (inaudible) —

Janice Howard [01:05:20] Oh, yeah! Mama bought on Columbus Street.

Stephanie Johnson [01:05:22] Yeah!

Janice Howard [01:05:23] She lived next door.

Stephanie Johnson [01:05:23] So, you know, (inaudible) —

Janice Howard [01:05:24] She made a rooming house out of that house.

Stephanie Johnson [01:05:26] And everybody talks about your family. So, your family is embedded in Alexandria. You should be — not only you — I mean, I know you're proud.

Janice Howard [01:05:39] Hm-hmm.

Stephanie Johnson [01:05:40] But the third generation and the generation afterward.

Janice Howard [01:05:43] Right! Because several of my children — I was surprised — moved! But I have one grand — Well, I have — Denise's children are all here. And very helpful for grandmama, you know. And I tried to give them — To want to — Well, it's a easy start. And then you just have to keep it up. Helping people and, you know, it feels great. You know, like my talking to my tenants, and I have one that I gave a letter [that said] "You have to go," and they're begging to stay. And I think that the one that should go — If I thought they couldn't help it, this one will not stop smoking in the place where they are now. I said, "Well, you can't go. You have to now — You can't stay, I'm sorry. Unless you do this. You have to take a class on how to stop. And then you have to stop." Because the place where they live now, saying they're still smoking in here, and they signed the contract. No smoking. I will have the same.

Stephanie Johnson [01:07:01] Yeah.

Janice Howard [01:07:01] They might listen to that contract. "I'm not gonna smoke anymore in the house." I say, "You will have a designated place away from the house, but close, to smoke." Now I think they'll do it, but they do have to take a class before signing the contract [*chuckling*].

Francesco De Salvatore [01:07:20] Is there anything that we haven't asked you today?

Janice Howard [01:07:23] Oh, I don't —

Francesco De Salvatore [01:07:24] That you —

Janice Howard [01:07:25] I can probably think of a thousand things.

Francesco De Salvatore [01:07:26] — want to share?

Janice Howard [01:07:27] No.

Francesco De Salvatore [01:07:31] Great. Well, I think this is a good place to maybe stop and —

Janice Howard [01:07:36] Perfect.

Francesco De Salvatore [01:07:37] I mean, I echo Stephanie. Thank you so much for sharing all of these, like, wonderful memories about your family and all the many things that you went on to do.

Janice Howard [01:07:47] Hmm.

Francesco De Salvatore [01:07:48] You're standing on a lot of strong ground.

Janice Howard [01:07:50] Thank you very much.

Francesco De Salvatore [01:07:52] Thank you, thank you.

Janice Howard [01:07:54] I'm blessed and highly favored.

Stephanie Johnson [01:07:55] Yeah!