



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



**Project Name:** *Alexandria Legacies*

**Title:** *Interview with Edwin Bohlayer*

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**Interviewer:** *Claudine Weatherford*

**Transcriber:** *Valerie Davison*

**Abstract:** Born in 1893 in what is now the Rosemont area of Alexandria, Edwin Bohlayer talks about the neighborhood he grew up in, which then included a large dairy farm. He describes the well behind the house on Summers Drive that yielded ice-cold water in summer. He also talks about the racecourse in Del Ray and about Luna Park in what is now Arlington. He remembers one of the stores on King Street in Alexandria that would give regular customers a turkey or a fifth of whiskey at Christmastime.

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*Edwin Bohlayer, 1982*

**ROSEMONT**

<p>Claudine Weatherford:</p>	<p>When I last met you, Ed, we were talking about Rosemont and your house, which is now in the area called Rosemont. I'm interested in what you remember about the early development of Rosemont; about other houses that were built near yours, either before yours was built or after, at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the end of the nineteenth century.</p>
<p>Edwin Bohlayer:</p>	<p>I couldn't tell you much about Rosemont. I don't know the man who bought the land when Wolf's Dairy was sold. [Unclear]</p>
<p>CW:</p>	<p>I've got a map. Let's see if we can find it on the map. So Wolf's Dairy was there before your house was built?</p>
<p>Edwin Bohlayer:</p>	<p>Oh, no. A family of colored people owned all that ground, and we owned the other side of the railroad tracks, and up in front of our house. They owned that land, and when they sold it...anyhow, they sold it to this man who developed it, up near us, [unclear]...</p>
<p>CW:</p>	<p>So there was a colored family, a Negro family, who owned land, a lot of land, near your house?</p>
<p>Edwin Bohlayer:</p>	<p>That's right.</p>
<p>CW:</p>	<p>Do you remember their name?</p>

Edwin Bohlayer:	No, I don't.
CW:	That's real interesting. Do you know how much land they had?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Oh, quite a few acres. Because they had it up to our house, which they farmed. It was over to Rosemont. Over to Rosemont. And on the other side of the railroad tracks, it ran from [Unclear] and Pennsylvania Avenue [unclear]. They were on that side, and it ran right down to [unclear] land.
CW:	No kidding. So that must have been about 1890, or something like that. Were you born yet?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, I was born in 1893. It was there as far as I remember. I don't know how soon Wolf got that land for the dairy. He was a colored man. He used to bring our milk up to us [unclear] right up to the house.
CW:	No kidding.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yeah. He used to walk up there.
CW:	Well, how does that fit in with the property owned by the "Howensteins" [phonetic] and "Baumgarner's"? [Phonetic]
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, you see, Union Street was the street [unclear] put in when [unclear] subdivided there, and that was in front of our house. We had to buy a lot to get out to that street; otherwise, we used to drive down along a branch to that road that went into Alexandra, through Rosemont.
CW:	It's not King Street.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Oh, no.
CW:	Russell Road?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Russell Road. That's it.
CW:	Is that it? Okay. Here's Junior Street. I'll show you on the map. Glasses. I've lost it now. This is Junior Street, Edwin, right along here. This is Russell Road, and here's Junior Street.
Edwin Bohlayer:	That's right.
CW:	Okay. And you said that the colored family owned property that was from where to where?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, our place must have been in here somewhere.
CW:	Yes. Your place is on Summers Drive. Right along there.
Edwin Bohlayer:	That's a new street that was put in since we sold, you know. Now if that's Summers Drive...then that house was right in...that must be a house there, isn't it?

CW:	Yes, that's a house now.
Edwin Bohlayer:	That's the house we were in, I think.
CW:	Okay. I see.
Edwin Bohlayer:	See, there were two houses built back in here, but you don't say anything about it. Oh...what this one is...
CW:	That's Summers Court. But the address was Summers Drive. So...and the colored family...where was their land?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, you see, their land was all down in here. Now that's the place that that man subdivided here. But we bought a lot right here, to get out, you see. I think there must have been [unclear].
CW:	So this is Russell Road. It was up toward Russell Road?
Edwin Bohlayer:	It was all up in here...here, down through here, and all over here and the railroad track. What is that there?
CW:	That's Commonwealth. The railroad track is down here. The railroad track...
Edwin Bohlayer:	That's steam railroad.
CW:	This goes to Potomac Yards. That's a railroad track, there. You're talking about...
Edwin Bohlayer:	I'm talking about the railroad track that used to go from the top of Pennsylvania Avenue down to Mount Vernon.
CW:	Twelfth and Pennsylvania, from the District?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yes. It used to go through somewheres along here.
CW:	Well, maybe Commonwealth was turned into a street, after it was a railroad.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, the railroad was...let me see. I don't know whether they built over that land, or whether they made another roadway through there.
CW:	Let's open the map up here.
Edwin Bohlayer:	I want to see it on this side.
CW:	Let me get it open for you, so you can see it better. Okay. This is Commonwealth, here, and this is Russell. This black dot is where your house....
Edwin Bohlayer:	Can you tell what that is, right there?
CW:	Where?
Edwin Bohlayer:	That's Union Station.
CW:	Let's see. This says Daingerfield. No, this is all still Alexandria.

	This map is only of Alexandria.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, this isn't Alexandria. Russell Road used to run right on into that Union Station at King Street there.
CW:	Oh, oh. I see what you're saying. It is over...right here. So Russell Road...Where did we say Russell Road...? Right. Here's the King Street station, right here. That's the Union Station. That's the intersection of King and Russell.
Edwin Bohlayer:	There's North King Street up here?
CW:	Yes, it is.
Edwin Bohlayer:	And that's Russell Road, there?
CW:	Right. So the colored folks had this property all down to the Union Station.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, I don't know if it was quite to Union Station, but they had it all around here [unclear] Alexandria, I know. You see, it's all been subdivided. Because this man that we bought from, he only bought the land down to the Russell Road, where we are. He bought the stuff down to Russell Road. He didn't buy all that other [unclear].
CW:	So after the colored family, Mr. Wolf....Where was Mr. Wolf's dairy?
Edwin Bohlayer:	It was east of...What's that Commonwealth road? [Unclear]
CW:	Okay. Here's Commonwealth. So...East. Do you mean north or south?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Does this tell you anything about the Braddock Road, right here?
CW:	I'll show you. Braddock Road is here. This is Braddock Road.
Edwin Bohlayer:	See, we lived back in here. Actually, we were back here.
CW:	Yes, right there. Right under your finger.
Edwin Bohlayer:	We had to go down...there used to be a branch that run through here. There was a cannon that was right up in here. Then [Unclear] house was right in here somewhere. Wolf's house, where he was living there, when he rented that place, was on the other side. But it was on the Braddock Road, right here somewhere.
CW:	This is Braddock Road. So maybe up this way. Okay. Did he live where his dairy was?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, he afterwards moved up there. In the beginning, he rented that place, where the other people lived.

CW:	Where the colored folks lived.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yeah. Because they had a lot of sheds there, you know, and everything. They used to raise a lot of crops, these great big turnips with the cattle and all that stuff. He had this place there where they cooled the milk or something like that...strained it [unclear] Alexandria.
CW:	Did he sell it in Alexandria?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yes. [Unclear] There was another, Thompson Dairy, that was down in Alexandria, somewhere below Alexandria. They used to handle milk, too.
CW:	Thompson, huh? Where was that located? Do you remember?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, [unclear]. You know, one time there I used to go over there, and I used to buy buttermilk.
CW:	At Wolf's?
Edwin Bohlayer:	No, at this other dairy, in Alexandria. You couldn't get buttermilk today. It's all substitute stuff, powdered and [unclear], and they put [unclear] in the buttermilk. I told some [unclear] about it, they went over there, and they showed them around. They tasted the milk, and one guy came away with three gallons, it was so good. I'm telling you, it was good stuff. But you can't buy that stuff anymore. You can't buy buttermilk.
CW:	Did you shop in Alexandria much? Where did you and your family buy your food, and clothing, and tools, or whatever you were buying? Where did you get that?
Edwin Bohlayer:	In Alexandria.
CW:	So you would go to Alexandria, from your house on Summers Drive.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yeah.
CW:	And how did you get there?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, in the first place, my grandmother, who lived next door, on the two acres that we had, two acres plus...My grandmother gave my mother that two acres, see. She broke it up. Later, she gave the other two acres to her brother. Anyhow, she had a [unclear], and we used to go in, maybe once a week, on a Saturday, and buy everything we needed. Of course, eventually, when she died and all, like that, it was changed. We brought our horse and wagon and buggy ourselves, to go get things.
CW:	So you remember riding the horse and wagon.
Edwin Bohlayer:	And you know, in those days, when you drove out of her place,

	<p>see, Wolf's Dairy came right up to her ground, the east part of her ground; also, the east part of our ground, too. You used to have to go up a road, alongside where the lawyer's living, in that brick house up there, on "Jean Street" [phonetic] Road. I don't know whether you call that "Jenny's" [phonetic] Lane or not. You know, there were quite a few acres to that place up there. [Unclear] bushes and big round logs on it. There's a lawyer that lives in it now. On the other side of this lane, where my grandmother used to get out, up on King Street Road, was that house that they're trying to do away with, or sell it. Everyone wants to sell it, you know—Baumgarner's house. They want to sell it. It hasn't been settled yet, as far as I understand.</p>
CW:	No, it hasn't. As far as I know, it hasn't.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Because the owner [unclear]. The lawyer bought that big house there. What was his name? As I say, you get so old, and your brain gets so clogged up with memories, you can't hold it all and you lose some of the old ones, taking on new memories.
CW:	Well, we're doing you a favor then. Because you'll get rid of some of the memories, and then there will be room for more.
Edwin Bohlayer:	That was Adams' house at that time.
CW:	Adams' house. Now was that the lawyer's name?
Edwin Bohlayer:	No.
CW:	Who's Adams?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Adams is the one who owned that big house there, opposite the lane there, where they used to go up to Baumgarner's house—big brick house up there. They had a carriage house and everything.
CW:	So that was near the Baumgarner's?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yes. There was a lane from my grandmother's, that separated those two places. It went on out to [Unclear] Road.
CW:	The lane that separated...
Edwin Bohlayer:	Baumgarner's property and Adams'.
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	
CW:	Okay. What do you remember about that old electric train that ran through Alexandria, down to Twelfth and Pennsylvania?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, I'll tell you...when I was going to school in Del Ray, in the lower grades, you know, it was there in existence then. It was two trains run together. It had wires overhead with a trolley



	pull on it. You had a motorman/conductor and a trolley-man on the train. It used to run through Alexandria to Mount Vernon. You'll want to get the stuff on that, I guess, after a while.
CW:	Absolutely. I'm getting it on, right now. It's on. So it must have been before...when did you start school? When you were in school in Del Ray, how old were you?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, I'll tell you...At first I went to this little shack, a little shack that was just a frame house with a pot-belly stove in it. One room, the toilets all outside. It was on Duncan's Lane. Well, anyhow. That's where I first went, when I first went to school, five or six years old.
CW:	And you remember the train was there then?
Edwin Bohlayer:	I don't know whether I remember the train was there then or not. I don't know for sure. It must have been, because that was the only transportation they had all through [unclear]. You see, I wasn't going there very long when they built that Del Ray School, the brick school, then I transferred to that. Then we used to have to walk from our place. We didn't have any transportation, like you do now. You walked, and you carried your own lunch. There was no free lunches or anything else, and there was no dining place to eat. You'd eat the best you could, but not in the school rooms. [Unclear] I was very young when I went to that school, and the track must have been there. Us kids would buy cigarettes, and we'd smoke them. You could get twenty American Beauties for a nickel. We didn't have pretty many pennies. I was lighting one day, walking along, trying to light it, and I fell and bumped my nose, and I never smoked anymore, after that—riding around with a gang, on a motorcycle. I ain't kiddin' ya.  But after a while, the jitney started to run—the jitney, little cars (I call them jitneys) to Washington. And you know, that eventually killed that car line. After that, bigger buses started running to Alexandria, but I don't think they continued to run to Mount Vernon after that. I don't know what kind of transportation you got to Mount Vernon.
CW:	So the jitneys killed off the electric train.
Edwin Bohlayer:	That's what I understand.
CW:	When do you first remember the jitneys?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, I know I used to ride the train. I used to ride the train going to...see, it was there when I was going to the Del Ray School, and I wasn't very old then.
CW:	The electric train.

Edwin Bohlayer:	Yes. Then, of course, when I went...there were no high schools around, anywhere around here. You had to go to Washington to high school. So I finally...Well, you know, it's a funny thing. Sometimes I'd walk all the way to Alexandria and catch the boat that ran to Washington. They used to have a boat that ran to Washington.
CW:	Really.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yeah, a ferry boat. Just for the fun of it, I liked to ride the ferry. So I'd walk all the way down, a mile and a half or so, from my place, down to the wharf. Then you'd get up to the wharf up there, southwest, and then I'd have to walk way up to Seventh and...let's see. What was that? Rhode Island Avenue, to the high school. [Laughs]
CW:	To Seventh and Rhode Island you walked? After you got off the... so where did the ferry leave from, in Alexandria? On the waterfront?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Right down at the bottom of King Street, I think. I think somewhere right down in there.
CW:	Do you remember the name of the ferry? Did the boat have a name?
Edwin Bohlayer:	No, I don't remember.
CW:	And you got off at Southwest, and walked to Seventh and Rhode Island. My goodness.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Once in a while we'd take the "car" line, you know. Of course, when we went on the cars...when we went on that...there would be several from Alexandria, fellas and girls, who went to school. We'd all sometimes walk up that way.
CW:	Was this a jitney car?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, if you took the train to Washington, you had to walk from Twelfth and Pennsylvania Avenue [unclear] at the high school up there—McKinley High School. [Interruption]  Well, those were good old times. As far as Rosemont, there are an awful lot of nice houses down [unclear], very few were for sale at the time. Then there was a school built right down there, between Rosemont and the subdivision [unclear] Russell Road [unclear] was built in later years. But that wasn't there when I was going to school. That was a pain...awful that we had to go all the way to Washington.
CW:	How early did you have to leave?
Edwin Bohlayer:	I don't know what time I took it. Around 9:00 I suppose, maybe

	8:00. Something like that.
CW:	That's as quick as you could make it today. Just about, during traffic hours.
Edwin Bohlayer:	<p>One time a bunch of us kids were waiting in the [unclear] station area. I used to get on the train, to go there. It connected with Braddock Road, right down [unclear]. A bunch of us found a little pocketbook that had about forty-five cents in it. We spent it, and then we found out who it belonged to...a girl...so we gave it back to her. [Laughs] A great life.</p> <p>But our mail, it came to...Like those letters I've got in there...Braddock Heights, Alexandria, Virginia...plus, I was born in Alexandria County. I wasn't born in Alexandria here. I was born in Alexandria County. But when it was broken up, Alexandria got some of it, [Unclear] got some of it, Fairfax got some of it. Finally, Alexandria fought for it and got it all back for Alexandria City. Of course, then the house was in Alexandria.</p>
CW:	Was that before you were born, that it became part of the city?
Edwin Bohlayer:	No, after I was born. Way after I was born. See, [unclear] came to Braddock Heights, Virginia, Route #3. Letters in there to my mother...money that was given to my mother's brother's two children, when he was killed, the insurance...Workmen's Compensation paid her so much money because [unclear] and it was only marked Alexandria, Route #3. That's all that was marked on the mail—Route #3. [Unclear]
CW:	But that was later, Braddock Heights. Or during the same time, it could be addressed Braddock Heights?
Edwin Bohlayer:	It's been a number of years ago.
CW:	How did they deliver the mail?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Oh, we had a box put down on the road. They didn't bring it to your house. See, our place...we bought a lot to get out to Junior Street, and you had a box right down there. They wouldn't bring it up to the house.
CW:	Did they travel by horse and buggy?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Perhaps they did, then. I imagine. Because you had the ice man coming around to your house; you had the baker man coming around to your house; and the milk man delivered by himself. Things like that.
CW:	Did these people come once a week?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Who?

CW:	The baker, the ice man, the milk man?
Edwin Bohlayer:	I think several times. I don't know it too well.
CW:	And those letters came from the soldiers, you said? From the First World War? Tell me that story again.
Edwin Bohlayer:	<p>Well, I told you about... Alexandria used to have a racing place in Del Ray. But the [Unclear] Artillery took it over during World War I. Then the soldiers used to come up to our house on horseback, lay around the grounds and eat apples or whatever was growing. During the war, they would send her mail, the soldiers would. Of course, after the war was over, my mother used to have a lot of [unclear] patients, so [unclear] over in Washington, in one of the hospitals, to come over and have a good time and have a meal. She'd cook a special meal for those people [unclear] depending upon how many girls we'd get. So we'd have fun, play ball, and stuff like that.</p> <p>But the funny thing is, none of them ever said anything to me about why I wasn't in the war. You see, I got a Number One draft card. I went to Alexandria, and couldn't find anybody. Finally, I kept hunting, in the post office over there, and found the man in charge. He said, "Oh, we don't want any more. We've got all we can handle, for another week." There were so many going out of the Bureau of Engraving &amp; Printing, that they decided to keep us in there, you see. So I was put in Three C, and never heard any more from them. My son had to go, in World War II. I just felt awful bad, because I got out of it, and he was very skinny and thin. But they said he was fit enough to go, and they sent him. Of course, he was in the engineers, from [unclear]. He was more or less kept in an office there, in the engineers, but he was a courier between England and France, taking messages across. During the Battle of the Bulge, they took almost everybody out of that office, the engineers, in the night. It was a terrible situation there. But that's when I felt so bad, that he had to go. I would gladly have taken his place, because [unclear]. These young fellas don't have a chance anymore. They want to stick them right in there. Why don't they take some of these laying around in offices, doing nothing. I think they ought to take even married men; they ought to take them up to forty-five years old, able to go and fight, not all these young fellows. It's terrible to take them like that. It's a shame. They haven't had a chance to [unclear] yet. Look at Vietnam—forty-some thousand killed over there, almost all young people.</p>
CW:	I agree.

Edwin Bohlayer:	It's an awful situation. "Take them out and shoot them. What do we care?" It's terrible.
CW:	It is.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Now, if you don't sign up and you're drafted, they want to punish you, a [unclear] fine [unclear] and all that stuff. They're crazy. The country's going crazy [unclear]. You can have that in there, too! I'd like to tell them a whole lot [unclear]. I'd like to be President for a while. I think they'd shoot me, because my things would be so terrible that they wouldn't want me around. [Laughs] I'm gonna stop talkin' now.
CW:	Do you remember about the Janneys? Did you know the Janneys?
Edwin Bohlayer:	I didn't have any association with them, as I remember.
CW:	The street called Janney's Lane, out there.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Oh. That was on the other side of...If I'm not mistaken, that was on the other side of King Street Road.
CW:	Okay. We were talking about Janney's house.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, with reference to Janney's Lane and the house...I remember that that house caught on fire. I was up there, and I saw them with saws, trying to saw that house in half. You can't believe it, but that's what they were trying to do —separate that house, pull it apart, save it. It was a big house, then. It was an awful big house. But further down...I don't know much about further down, other than that one house. I very seldom [unclear] way up there, other than [unclear] where the Howensteins and the Baumgarners lived. We stuck around there, with my grandmother [unclear].
CW:	Were the Baumgarners and the Howensteins considered wealthy people?
Edwin Bohlayer:	The Baumgarners [were]. Howenstein, he was quite an "old" guy. Whether he had money or not, I don't know. But anyhow, he had a market, a little standard market, or he used to have one down there, and he would take his vegetables and he'd raise peonies, and he had a lot of cherry trees, and he'd pick cherries and you could buy them for five cents a quart. He'd pay about a penny to pick them. He had his horse and wagon, and he plowed and stuff like that, you know. But as far as I remember, Howenstein, he was an awful old man, and his wife lived there. I don't know how many children they had. Then there was an Ed Howenstein, and for a while he used to live down there by the railroad tracks, in a little house, for a number of years. But

	the only person I remember now, that is [unclear] the Howensteins...I think there were a couple of daughters, but they were married away. I don't see them. But there is a son, who lives up there in Virginia, a Howenstein. He lived right down there in Del Ray, and he moved out of there and retired from the [Unclear] Company. [Unclear] have his address [unclear].
CW:	He might. Well, we can get it later. I'll remind you. You can get it later for me. You don't have to get it right now.
Edwin Bohlayer:	It's right in the telephone book there.
CW:	Oh, good. I'll get it later. He could be a real good source.
Edwin Bohlayer:	I never see them. They say they're awful busy. She raised a garden, she would raise a lot of stuff. They were happy up there, just the two of them.
<b>THE WELL BEHIND THE HOUSE</b>	
CW:	Remember, the last time, Edwin, you told me about the well that was in back of your house?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, there was a well there. See, the place we used to get water from at our grandmother's...she had a twelve-foot well there, and it never went dry. It was down in a spring. It was all hillside there. Anyhow, during the war, the soldiers took over my grandmother's house for a hospital. I guess they let them live there. Then we started to drill a well, and we didn't have enough water to drill it, so we had to give it up. Then we dug a well, got it down about fifteen feet, and it caved in. It was all black dirt, terrible stuff, and where they dumped it, you couldn't raise anything in it. [Unclear] So we dug another one, about fifteen feet from that, and about twenty feet from the house, and that one was about twenty feet deep. It had awful cold water, the same as my grandmother. Awful cold. But people who came there in trucks, to deliver stuff, would go right there for that water. You didn't need ice.
CW:	When did you build the well that was twenty feet deep?
Edwin Bohlayer:	I don't remember when we had it. I was very young at that time. But they had to have water.
CW:	This is the one that had the real cold water.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yeah. Of course, these people have filled it in, since. There's no well there anymore. You can't tell where it is. And I don't think these people who bought the house last...I think it was the other people, who bought the house first.
CW:	But the twenty-foot well was probably built before 1900, do

	you think? Do you think you were a little boy?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Eighteen-ninety-three. Oh, yeah. I was a little boy at that time. Sure—1893. It was seven years to 1900.
CW:	Right. Do you think it was built in that period?
Edwin Bohlayer:	About that time, yeah. Of course, we used to take...my cousin built a [unclear] that big, and put [unclear] in it, and you could set “huts” all around it. We used to lower that into the well, and keep stuff cold, before we had ice coming in.
CW:	Oh. With pots in it?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yeah. [Unclear]
CW:	So you’d lower that into the well, to keep it cold.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Right down, touching the water.
CW:	That was before the ice delivery.
Edwin Bohlayer:	I think so.
CW:	Didn’t you also tell me that you lifted a bucket from the well, up to the second story of the house? Did you tell me something about that? I thought that’s what you said—that you drew water up to the top part of the house? That there was a bucket, with a rope in it?
Edwin Bohlayer:	We used to bring water...you had to put two buckets in the well, you know, to bring the water up. We didn’t have a bath. We had the room, but it didn’t have a bathroom because it didn’t have pressure up there, see. City pressure didn’t run up there. So we used to have a big “pantry,” right next to the kitchen and the well. We had a big window there. We’d take the water out of the well and dump it in the bathtub, then heat the water on the stove, to take a bath.
CW:	Drawing it through the window, like that?
Edwin Bohlayer:	We’d draw it through the window. You’d draw it in a bucket of water, and dump it in another bucket, so you could dump it through the window, into the bathtub.
CW:	Oh, I get it. I misunderstood that.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Then we heated the water on the stove. We had a gasoline stove, and one time she thought the coal stove was out—which was right next to that thing—and she went to fill it with gasoline, and spilled some on the stove and, “Psst!” The whole thing caught on fire—the gasoline can that she had in her hand, and the stove. She picked the stove up and carried it out the door, onto the porch, “through the doors,” and I rolled the can

	out with the [unclear] still blazing. My father was coming up the road, and he said, "What's goin' on up there?" She didn't know she had burnt her hand until it was all over. [Unclear] But that was the gas stove. Nowadays, they're worried about these coal oil burners, that people buy in Japan. Millions of people buy them, to heat their houses with. They're dangerous.
CW:	It's interesting how we revert back to old traditional patterns, huh?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yeah. I cut a piece out of the paper the other day [unclear]. It was one of those kitchen stoves [unclear]. We had one of them [unclear].
CW:	In the house down on Summers Drive?
Edwin Bohlayer:	You could have coal or wood in it [unclear].
CW:	Like a Majestic stove? Was it like that? A big cook stove? [Unclear][Interruption]
Edwin Bohlayer:	I'm trying to get rid of stuff around here. [Unclear] stuff they don't have anymore.
CW:	What do you have there? Oh, yeah. Great. That's wonderful.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yeah. It didn't cost much. Like everything else [unclear].
<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>	
CW:	What did you do for fun?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, you might say [unclear] we didn't have many people coming to see us, but we used to always, as kids, pray that somebody would come around. But the funny part of it...a man in Alexandria, who used to bring some little girls out to the house, we, like a fool, would get our guns and go hunting, and leave them. They'd lock themselves in some building or something, and we wouldn't see them. We got over that kind of a notion. [Laughs] Some of our relatives [unclear] used to come down and see us, on the train. It didn't cost very much then. [Unclear] buy a book of tickets when I was "working on it," and this train would cost me \$4.05, to go to Washington. At [Unclear] Avenue, you'd have to get off, and get on [unclear]. It cost me \$4.05, but it carried me, let's see, twenty-six working days. It was cheap. There was enough round trips in that thing to carry you practically a month—\$4.05. Plus, when I was working for the Bureau, as an apprentice, I only made \$27-and-some-cents a month, starting out—\$1.03 a day, that's all I made—and I used to give my mother \$20. I spent \$4.00 for that, so I had \$3.00 left, in a month. I'd buy a piece of pie. In those days it cost you a nickel. You could buy [unclear] for a nickel,



	and things like that. [Laughs] Oh, boy. What a life. [Unclear] But it seemed like it was the good old days. You didn't have all this crime and stuff going on.
<b>CRIME</b>	
CW:	What about crime in Alexandria? Do you remember much crime?
Edwin Bohlayer:	No, I don't. Not [unclear] like that. I can't remember that.
CW:	Did people get along pretty well?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Unless, like a kid, I didn't bother to read it, you know, or something like that, at the time. Of course, [unclear] after I got married, you know. After I got married. It's a good thing I was, because when I got laid off, in [19]36, for three years and a half, I couldn't make \$25 a week. I had railway mail service, I had [unclear] people, I had insurance companies, and a furniture company that [unclear].
CW:	Which furniture company? In Alexandria?
Edwin Bohlayer:	No. It was on Seventh Street, in Washington. The woman who ran that place gave me a bunch of "cards" to go to collect, that's what I was supposed to do. And I "marked" the cards, so I could get to all of them quicker, not double [unclear]. When I came back and showed her these cards, she bawled me out. She said, "I don't want you marking my cards all up, messing up my cards like that." And I said, "Listen, Lady. You wanted money and I got you money. I did do good." One woman paid \$10 that hadn't been paid in a long time, and I got half of that [unclear]. I said, "Listen, Lady, I wouldn't even work for you another day. I don't work for people that act like you do. You can be sure that I won't be here tomorrow, because I'm not comin' back anymore." And I didn't go back. [Laughs]
CW:	I guess you told her.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, that's a funny thing. That's what I had to do to get my job at the Bureau. They wanted me to take a mailbag "to the repair shop" and things like that. I said, "Listen, you very well know that I took an examination for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing as an apprentice plate [unclear], and that's what I want. If you can't give it to me, forget it." In a week's time they called me. [Laughs]
CW:	It's a crazy world.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Then when I got on the railway mail service, I was working two weeks on and three weeks off, without pay, and I was makin' nothin'. So I wrote them a letter, asking them to accept my

	resignation as soon it was convenient to them; that I had better opportunities—and I didn't have nothin'! [Laughs]
CW:	They respected your spunk, Edwin.
<b>MINORITIES IN ALEXANDRIA</b>	
CW:	What do you remember about the coloreds, or blacks, or Negroes, who lived near you? Do you remember any social—what the relationship was between the blacks and the whites?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, no. As far as I know...when I went to school in Del Ray, there was no black kids in that school. That's been many years ago, you know. There weren't many living around here. They must have had a place in Alexandria, I guess. Maybe some went there. See, I was living in Alexandria County. See. I couldn't go to Alexandria; I had to go to Alexandria County at that time. That was Del Ray, see. In Alexandria, they might have had some black schools in there. I don't know.
CW:	What about the black family that owned all that land? What happened to them? Do you know?
Edwin Bohlayer:	No, I don't know where they went. I think one or two of those girls worked at the Bureau, where I did. I wouldn't want that put on there, about the...is that thing on?
CW:	Well, it is. You don't need to tell that story. I was just curious as to how the blacks got along with the other families, with the white families. Because it sounds like they had land that was next to one another.
Edwin Bohlayer:	I'll tell you that story later on, sometimes. [Unclear] Well, there you are. Now what?
CW:	Now what? [Laughs] Well, let's see. We've talked about transportation. We talked about how you bought your food. Getting back to recreation and fun...Was there an amusement park? What do you remember about [Unclear] "Springs?" Do you remember anything about that area?
<b>LUNA PARK</b>	
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, [unclear]. You know, when I was young, about twelve years old, me and my brother went over to a place between Washington and Alexandria. They built a place called Luna Park. We tried to get jobs, but we were too young. It was a beautiful place. They had everything you could think of...everything. [Unclear] It didn't cost you anything to go in, and they had the streetcar running from Washington to Alexandria and Mount Vernon. It cost you a nickel to go down to the park, and a nickel to go back. That went for quite a while.

	But the first thing you know, five-cent movies started, silent movies, and people started to go to the movies; with that dime, they could go to two shows. It hurt the park. The park finally went out of business.
CW:	Where was the park? Where was Luna Park?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, it was halfway between Washington and Alexandria. It was practically opposite...Let's see. The car-lines, the electrical equipment over there, was on that road. Near the steam cars. It was near the steam cars. It would be that street now, that runs from Washington to Alexandria. From Washington.
CW:	Route 1? Jefferson Davis [Highway]?
Edwin Bohlayer:	I guess it would be.
CW:	The one that goes next to Potomac Yard?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yeah. Yeah. Uh huh.
CW:	That's the one?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yeah. It must have been over in there. It was built on a hillside. As I say, it was near the house that produced the electricity for the car-line. That was right there. That's all been done away with now. I don't know what's been put in there. Something.  Anyhow, there's a school down here. They had put in the paper that anybody who knows anything about Luna Park, they'd like to know. They were writing something about it. I answered, and they got me a...[unclear] children came up there and [unclear] took pictures and everything. Then they had a showing over there, and I had to go...they wanted me to go there, and I had to [unclear]. Of course, you had a park across the Potomac. We used to go over there. I can't think of that one now. It finally became a colored park, and disbanded. Of course, you had that other park down the road—Mount Vernon or [unclear].
CW:	What kinds of things could you do at Luna Park?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, you could go on a chute that went down into the water. [Laughs] They had guns where you could shoot things and win prizes. Shows and everything like that. They had one show I'll never forget in there. It was about a flood. Years ago, a flood we had in this country [unclear]. That darn electrical arrangement showed the water coming down; the trees falling and washing away; the houses falling down; and the people in the water. Boy, it was the most wonderful [unclear]. It was taken from a flood that actually happened, years ago.
CW:	Was it like a movie? Was it like a film?

Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, yeah. It was all shown on the screen. That's the way it was. But it must have been these kind of films that differ from a straight film, three...What do they call them? Three-something.
CW:	Three-dimensional, 3-D?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yeah.
CW:	So what year was this? What year was Luna Park?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, I was, as I say, about twelve years old when it was built. So twelve from eighty-eight...
CW:	You were born in 1893. Right.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Seventy-six years ago.
CW:	That would make it about 1905? Does that sound right?
Edwin Bohlayer:	When the park was built?
CW:	The park, yes.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Eighteen-ninety-three. Uh huh. Yeah.
CW:	Who built it?
Edwin Bohlayer:	I don't know. They wouldn't give me a job. I was too young.
CW:	So you think it closed down because people spent their ten cents at the movies, rather than...
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yes. It hurt it, very bad. Even if it didn't cost anything to go into the park. Plus, a lot of that stuff wasn't free. Some of it was free—because they had to have some money. It was expensive. They had a man there all the time. [Unclear]
CW:	Were there people who lived near the park, who weren't in favor of it being there?
Edwin Bohlayer:	I never heard anything like that, no.
CW:	Everyone seemed to enjoy it.
Edwin Bohlayer:	[Unclear] What's that park down there beyond Mount Vernon? [unclear].
CW:	I don't know. Is it still there?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, yeah, it's still there. It's been there for years. I understand, now, you've got to buy so many tickets on an amusement, to get into the place. [Unclear]
CW:	Are you talking about Kings Dominion?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Kings Dominion? No.
CW:	No. That's way down there, isn't it?

Edwin Bohlayer:	This isn't too far. [Unclear]
<b>THE GREAT DEPRESSION/FDR</b>	
CW:	What do you remember about FDR? What do you remember about the Depression years, and how it affected Rosemont?
Edwin Bohlayer:	What do you mean, Depression? What was that—[19]39 or [19]40?
CW:	1931, I think, was the beginning of the Depression. The Stock Market crashed.
Edwin Bohlayer:	I don't really know too much about it. The only thing I know is that my father had a friend who was a painter, and he'd been left about \$80,000 and he put his money into houses in Washington. You could rent them for about \$10 a month, [unclear] little houses, and my mother did the same thing, before they moved over here. He put his money into quite a few of these little houses, buying them. He put so much money into buying them, then the price "came" and he lost it all [unclear]. That's the only person I know who suffered in the Depression.
CW:	Your family didn't lose anything?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Oh, no. They didn't.
CW:	And you don't remember any of your neighbors or your other folks who lived in Rosemont who lost much, or were affected very deeply?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, I'll tell you...we never associated with a whole lot of people around. We kept to ourselves, like everybody else did. When we would [unclear] up to my grandmother's house or something like that.
CW:	What about when barns needed to be built, or some big chore that they needed neighbors to participate in? Did that ever happen?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Barns?
CW:	Yes. Weren't there any kinds of activities?
Edwin Bohlayer:	The only thing about building a barn...I know we had quite a barn there that my cousin from Washington...he was a fireman in Washington. He used to come down there, and built the barn for my father. Of course, I built a couple sheds to store cars in. We had quite a few sheds of our own. But as far as I know about anybody else, we never got any help from anybody else around. You did it yourself.
CW:	Mainly families.

Edwin Bohlayer:	No. They all stuck to themselves.
CW:	Why do you think that is?
Edwin Bohlayer:	There was distance between all the houses. There was quite a bit of distance. It wasn't like livin' in a townhouse, or a house like this, so close to each other. My cousin that built the barn down there...he used to come down there oftentimes. He was married. He'd go out in the henhouse, check the eggs, and suck some of them. Make a little hole, and suck it out. And my mother [unclear] wouldn't get nothin' but a shower. [Laughs] Ah, it was wonderful times.
<b>ALEXANDRIA SHOPPING</b>	
CW:	What do you remember about the city of Alexandria, when you went in on Saturdays, to shop? What do you remember about that?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Well, I don't know. I'll tell you, we used to deal with a man down in Alexandria, a man named Nugent. He had a store there. They was wonderful people. Every Christmas he'd give you a turkey or fifth of whiskey. Yeah. That's right. You don't get it at the stores around here.
CW:	For his regular customers?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yeah. We were regular customers. I don't know if she used to charge there or not. Maybe she did. But he had his whole family working in there. We'd go there until they went out of business; then we dealt with another company down there, but I can't think of that company now. I had a little book around here the other day, and I don't know where it's gone right now. It had that...charged it in that store, you know.
CW:	The Nugent store?
Edwin Bohlayer:	No, the other store. The Nugents went out of business.
CW:	Your mother charged...
Edwin Bohlayer:	They was on King Street. She used to deal there.
CW:	How about Parker's? The Parker store?
Edwin Bohlayer:	It sounds something like it, but I wouldn't swear to it. It sounds like it.
CW:	Was it common to charge food? Or to charge goods that were bought, rather than pay for them?
Edwin Bohlayer:	They'd let you charge and pay for it. But I suppose a lot of people waited until they got the money to pay for it, like on payday. Something like that. Plus, at Nugent's, we used to go in

	there, at that time. But this other place, [unclear] even got rid of our [unclear]. We used to charge it, see. They used to charge it.
CW:	Even at the Nugent's. At the Nugent's, did you use to charge?
Edwin Bohlayer:	I don't know if she did there, but at the other ones I know she did. I'm not so sure about the Nugent's. Maybe she did.
CW:	Was the Nugent store on King Street?
Edwin Bohlayer:	Yeah. So was that other one, too. That other one was out this way a lot, on the east side. I've got to throw some of that stuff out. I've got so many papers. That box I want to get rid of, that stuff. I've got a box over there with bills in it, the bank stuff from way back. There's no use of keeping it. I've got to get rid of that stuff.
CW:	Well, let the Lloyd House take a look at it, before you give it away or throw it away.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Why?
CW:	Because some of it is very important, historically—like those letters from the soldiers. You're not going to throw those away, are you? The Lloyd House in Alexandria, the city library, has a special facility to take care of that stuff. Don't throw it away.
Edwin Bohlayer:	The veterans...they don't have an organization [unclear]?
CW:	They might. I don't know. That's a possibility too. But there are so many historians who will enjoy using that information. It would be good to find that out, before you throw them away.
Edwin Bohlayer:	Do you want to read one of them, right here?
CW:	I might, yes. Not right this minute, but I might like to.
Edwin Bohlayer:	There's a whole bunch of them in there. Then I've got a whole lot of cut papers I've got to go through. I don't know what they are—cut from newspapers and stuff like that. And I noticed one little card, I opened it up, and there was...[Interview Ends]