



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



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**Title:** *Interview with Mabel Lyles*

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**Interviewer:** *Phyllis Adams*

**Transcriber:** *Jeanne Springmann*

**Abstract:** Mabel Lyles spent her early childhood with her mother's family in the rural countryside of Spotsylvania County, Va. She tells stories of washing clothes in the stream there and going to school in a one-room schoolhouse. She was able to attend Virginia Union University in Richmond on scholarship and went on to become a teacher. She moved to a segregated Alexandria in 1950 where she taught school and served her church in Christian Education and other activities.

**Table of Contents/Index****Tape: *Tape 1*****Side: *Side 1***

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Counter</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<i>Not indicated</i>	1	3	Introductions
	22	3	Growing up in Spotsylvania County, Virginia
	183	7	Going to College
	288	9	Religious Life
	318	9	Back in Alexandria in 1949
	385	10	Employment as a Teacher
	507	12	Life in the 1960s
	584	13	Concluding Remarks—Church and Family

<b>Introductions</b>	
Phyllis Adams:	...March 28, 2002. This is an oral history interview with Mrs. Mabel Lyles done by Phyllis Adams. Good afternoon. What is your name please?
Mabel Lyles:	Mabel Tyrrell Lyles.
P.A.:	And your address is?
Mabel Lyles:	828 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308.
P.A.:	Mrs. Lyles, can you tell us where you were born and when you were born?
Mabel Lyles:	I was born in the old Alexandria Hospital on Duke Street, October 3, 1927.
P.A.:	Tell me a little bit about the old Alexandria Hospital, since you mentioned it.
Mabel Lyles:	The old Alexandria Hospital, as I remember, was a two story building. There was a separate maternity ward for black and white. My first son, Reginald, was born in the old Alexandria Hospital. There were black nurses. I remember Mrs. Jackson who was quite concerned about me when Reginald was born. At that time, people were allowed to smoke in the hospital. He was born in 1950 and she complained to the mothers about blowing smoke into their babies' faces. [inaudible]
P.A.:	Who was your doctor? Who was the doctor who delivered your son?
Mabel Lyles:	I think his name was Murphy, Dr. Murphy. He was white. And my prenatal care doctor was Dr. [inaudible] who was black, but evidently he had privileges in the hospital at that time.
<b>Growing up in Spotsylvania County, Virginia</b>	
P.A.:	Tell me, who lived...all right, so you were born in Alexandria. Is that where you grew up also?
Mabel Lyles:	No, my mother and father divorced so my mother took me to Spotsylvania County to live with her parents and her sisters. As I was growing up in the house, I remember one uncle, James Comfort, who went to a CC camp. I remember him going off to CC camp down near Richmond.
P.A.:	Now can you tell me what CC camp is?
Mabel Lyles:	Was. It was one of the programs that Franklin Delano Roosevelt put in to provide jobs for people who were out of jobs. It was Conservation Camp [Civilian Conservation Corps]. They planted trees [inaudible] paid for that. That was prior to World War II.
P.A.:	Now, who lived in your household other than your grandmother, you, and your uncle?
Mabel Lyles:	There were aunts. My aunts were Evelyn, Hattie (during the summer), Sue,

	and Christine. Hattie lived with my grandmother's parents during the winter.
P.A.:	And who was Hattie again?
Mabel Lyles:	Hattie was one of my aunts. [inaudible]. Sister [inaudible].
P.A.:	Now tell me about your playmates as you were growing up. Who were they and what did you play?
Mabel Lyles:	We lived on a farm—twenty three acres, up on a hill. There was a creek down in front of it. To the back of us were the Andersons. They had some foster children so we played with Helen and Dorothy. They lived with the Andersons. Across the creek and up the next hill there were the Kaufmanns who were white. We played [inaudible] sometimes.
P.A.:	You mentioned the creek a couple of times. Did you play in the creek?
Mabel Lyles:	We played in the creek. We'd catch fish in the creek. Sometimes my grandmother would go down to the creek and build a fire, heat water, wash there by the creek.
P.A.:	Wash clothes?
Mabel Lyles:	Yes.
P.A.:	When you didn't go down to the creek to wash clothes, where did you wash them?
Mabel Lyles:	At the house. We had a well. We draw the water at the well, heat it on the kitchen stove.
P.A.:	Tell me how that process went.
Mabel Lyles:	You heated the water, and then you put it in the tub against a washboard, scrubbed. And after you finished washing you put them in a plain rinse, just clear water. And, if they were white things, you put them in a bluing rinse. Hang them up. Washing was a big thing. Wash day [inaudible]. The other thing you did was to prepare the meals. Wash day—that was a big job.
P.A.:	I can see why you didn't do very much else on Monday other than wash. Because that was a big job! How was it that sometimes you washed at the creek?
Mabel Lyles:	Summer. It was easy. You didn't have to draw water. It was fun.
P.A.:	Tell me about the games that you and your playmates played.
Mabel Lyles:	We would play Annie Over on Sunday. Got a ball. We would...somebody would stand on one side of the house and the other would call "Annie Over." We say, "Let it come." Then you catch the ball and threw it back. I don't know what the name of the game was, but I remember [inaudible]. We played rope, jump rope, see-saw. Put a board across a fence, see-saw.

	And we played softball.
P.A.:	And what church did you go to? Tell me about the church that you attended.
Mabel Lyles:	I went to Branch Fork Baptist Church. And I think it was named Branch Fork because three neighborhoods, three communities came together in one church. And it was near a river. When I was growing up, we had Sunday School, ten o'clock every Sunday. Then on the fourth Sunday was the Sunday we had church service [inaudible] preaching. We had Communion every other fourth Sunday. We had church every fourth Sunday. On the fifth Sunday, there was [inaudible] in Spotsylvania County all the Sunday Schools would go together and have [inaudible] programs. Fifth Sunday.
P.A.:	Explain to me what your parents stressed most in your...
Mabel Lyles:	My grandparents stressed Christian education [inaudible] Sunday. Honesty, hard work, [inaudible] that I grew up [inaudible].
P.A.:	As you were growing up did you ever feel discriminated against?
Mabel Lyles:	I always wondered why the white children had three more weeks of school. They started right after Labor Day. We didn't start until the end of September. I guess I didn't know discrimination. I thought that was [inaudible]. In the country you didn't feel that much discrimination. That's the one thing that bothers me.
P.A.:	Why is it that the white children had three more weeks of school than you?
Mabel Lyles:	The county paid for it. The black—well, we were called “colored,” “Negro”—at that time, the teachers were not paid the same. The white teachers had a different pay scale from the black, colored teachers. It was a money thing. It was, you know, separate and equal; but it was separate and unequal.
P.A.:	Since we're talking about education, tell me about the schools that you attended.
Mabel Lyles:	In Spotsylvania? The first school that I went to in Spotsylvania was a one-room school. It had a stove in the middle for heat. There was an outside toilet. I guess there was a bucket of water there in the school for if you got thirsty. And there was a cloak room where you could hang up your coats and the teachers had storage space there. In that school you had grades one through seven, and the older children would help the younger ones. Probably there was not more than 25 of us in the school with one teacher. Of course, the teacher had the full support of the parents, so nobody dared to disobey. I attended that school until I finished the fourth grade, and then it was closed because they didn't have enough children in the community to keep the school open. And then I went to the school called Number 14, for, I guess, fifth and sixth grade. And after that I went to [inaudible] for

	the seventh grade but we were to ride the bus. Walked about a mile and a half to the bus stop. Had to be there at 7:30 and we usually got home about 4:30 to 5.
P.A.:	And how long was the bus ride?
Mabel Lyles:	To Number 14, it was about 10 or 15 miles. They let us off at Number 14. The teacher didn't arrive until about quarter to nine. So they let us off [at] quarter to eight. We had a half hour there before the teacher. And none of us got hurt. [inaudible] anything dangerous. Just playing. And then the teacher left at 3:30 and we had maybe a half hour, 45 minutes before the bus picked us up to go home because we were the last.
P.A.:	And you stayed there and played [inaudible].
Mabel Lyles:	I can't recall anybody getting hurt. That was strange when you look at children today...we were what? 10, 11, 12 years old.
P.A.:	What subjects were taught in your school?
Mabel Lyles:	Reading, writing, arithmetic, social studies, maybe a little science.
P.A.:	Now what about...tell me about your high school.
Mabel Lyles:	Before we leave the elementary school I remember one thing that was fun. We had May Day where all different schools came together and had exhibits. The girls would do embroidery and other things. We had dances. All the schools had dances. That was elementary days. And then, when I got to high school, I went to John G. Wright, we had science, social studies, English, math. In high school my favorite subject was science. My favorite teacher was Mr. Ellis Scott, he was also principal of that school, now deceased. He went on to become the president of the Virginia [inaudible] which was the educational organization for black, for colored teachers, at that time.
P.A.:	What was it about him that most appealed to you? Why was he your favorite?
Mabel Lyles:	Because he believed that I could do it—that I could learn. He wasn't afraid to [inaudible].
P.A.:	He believed in you. Did you belong to any clubs in school?
Mabel Lyles:	There weren't any [inaudible]. I did join the school chorus, but I really couldn't sing.
P.A.:	You really couldn't?
Mabel Lyles:	No. The teacher who was in charge of the chorus when she needed somebody to stay with the physical ed class, I was the one who got to stay with the physical ed class. [inaudible] the ones that could sing by [inaudible] University.
P.A.:	What is your most vivid memory about school?

Mabel Lyles:	I guess graduation night when I made my salutatorian speech. My grandmother was there. And I thought I got a little bit of [inaudible] memorized it. Mr. Scott told my mother, my grandmother that I was better at rehearsal during the day.
P.A.:	But you were the class salutatorian?
Mabel Lyles:	Right.
<b>Going to College</b>	
P.A.:	Where did you attend college?
Mabel Lyles:	Virginia Union University, Richmond.
P.A.:	Did you have difficulty leaving home to go to college?
Mabel Lyles:	No! Just had to work for the money to go.
P.A.:	Tell me a little bit about that.
Mabel Lyles:	When I decided to go to college, we were in the kitchen talking—my grandmother and my Aunt Christine. And, my grandmother had said she wanted me to come to Alexandria to get a job as a housekeeper and a cook. And, to send her some money home. So I told her that I wanted to go to college. And she said, “How do you expect go to college?” We talked and finally I started crying. [Mrs. Lyles is crying now as she is talking about it.] Christine wanted to go. What was wrong with me? She told her that I wanted to go to college? [inaudible] I came to Alexandria to work. And I saved my money and got a scholarship from [inaudible] union in Spotsylvania County. It was \$50. I got a scholarship from the Ford Foundation. That was \$75 because I had done well in science. Then my grandmother went to talk to somebody in Fredericksburg that was a donor. He gave me \$50. So, I ended up with over \$200 plus what I had worked for, and went to college. At the end of the first year, I had scarlet fever. Couldn’t even take the final exams in June. Then I stayed out the next year. Saved my money [inaudible]. I changed my major after I had the scarlet fever. I started out majoring in science. It was just too hard to make up those courses, knowing I had to work [inaudible]. My thing was to finish college.
P.A.:	And after all the words between you and your aunt, you got your grandmother to see that it was a good thing that you really wanted?
Mabel Lyles:	Right.
P.A.:	So how did your grandmother feel when you graduated? What did she think about your graduation from college?
Mabel Lyles:	I guess she was happy, but then I decided to...I finished in June, and I decided to get married in July. And she didn’t like that. But she had been telling me for a whole year [inaudible] whole year, “It is not good to

	graduate and come out of college on your own. You ought to have a special friend, or husband, or somebody.” Then when I got finished, and engaged, and when the time came for me to be married, she wasn’t ready. I got married anyhow. So then they decided that I was hard-headed. I wasn’t a [inaudible] person.
P.A.:	You just showed a little independence?
Mabel Lyles:	[inaudible] family. My grandmother was first cousin to Nannie Burroughs, to Nannie Helen Burroughs. When people would ask her about her mission, she would tell them that her mission was homeless. [inaudible]
P.A.:	Give me your grandmother’s name. You talked about her a little bit. Give me her full name.
Mabel Lyles:	Mabel Barris [inaudible]. And Burroughs Ave. in Washington [inaudible] her maiden name. Helen Burroughs School is right now the progressive [inaudible].
P.A.:	The Nannie Helen Burroughs School?
Mabel Lyles:	[inaudible]
P.A.:	Tell me about college life at Virginia Union during this period.
Mabel Lyles:	I lived in Huntley Hall first, on the campus. You had to be in the dormitory by dark. If you went from Huntley Hall to [inaudible] Hall, which was the library, you got a pink slip [inaudible] go between building and whoever was working at [inaudible] Hall signed you in. And if those slips weren’t correct, you got in trouble. Up until junior or senior, when you got to be a senior, didn’t have to worry too much about those pink slips. If you went downtown, you went in groups of twos and threes. All you had to do was sign out, leave the campus, and come back together. And if separated from [inaudible] downtown, somebody saw you walking downtown by yourself, you got called in by the dean. Wanted to know why were you by yourself, what were you doing. Girls weren’t allowed to smoke below the second floor. No smoking on the first floor. Men only came to the first floor unless they were bringing up a trunk or something. They would holler, “Man on the floor.” We had an area in each dormitory where you could take guests. At that time we had what was meal cards. Had a certain amount for three meals. If you used too much at one meal [inaudible] Places on campus where you could go and purchase snacks at that time. Purchase your snacks [inaudible]
P.A.:	Would you describe your college years as being a happy time? A good time? A stressful time? How do you describe it?
Mabel Lyles:	A good time. I had to work, but it was a good time. We used to go to dances at Fort Lee once or twice a month. Once a month, I guess. And there was sorority or fraternity activities. And we had to go to chapel. Freshman year you went to chapel Monday through Friday. There were



	assigned seats. If you weren't in that seat, you could fail. And I think the senior year they probably left it. We didn't have to go to chapel. Freshmen, sophomore, junior, you went to chapel three times a week.
<b>Religious Life</b>	
P.A.:	Since you started talking about chapel, we didn't talk about your religious affiliation. We didn't talk about your church in Spotsylvania County.
Mabel Lyles:	In Spotsylvania County—we can go back there for a few minutes—our revival was the fourth Sunday in August. So, the fourth Sunday afternoon, they would invite children twelve and up who hadn't joined the church to come down to the front and sit on what was called the [inaudible] bench. So I went down and I sat there until Wednesday. Then I stood up to join the church on Wednesday. They accepted me and, then, on Friday, I was baptized in the Steppes River. The deacons would go down and pick out a spot. The mothers or the deaconesses of the church would be in charge of the girls who were baptized in the river. [inaudible] dress. You came back to the church for [inaudible].
P.A.:	So was baptism only once during the year?
Mabel Lyles:	Yes, in the river. But now they baptize in the church every so often.
P.A.:	How long were your church services?
Mabel Lyles:	I suppose two hours, or two hours and a half probably, 11:30 to about 2. The minister had more than one church. So we had many [inaudible].
P.A.:	What did you enjoy most about the church service?
Mabel Lyles:	I enjoyed Sunday School. Sunday School has always been my favorite.
P.A.:	Did you ever teach in Sunday School?
Mabel Lyles:	Not until I was grown up and married. [I] teach at Shiloh [Baptist Church].
<b>Back in Alexandria in 1949</b>	
P.A.:	Tell me about your moving back to Alexandria as an adult.
Mabel Lyles:	My husband and I got married at Shiloh Baptist Church.
P.A.:	And what year was that that you moved back to Alexandria?
Mabel Lyles:	1949.
P.A.:	What was life like in Alexandria in 1949?
Mabel Lyles:	Segregated. There were some black businesses [on] Alfred Street. There was a library [inaudible]. The black library [inaudible]. Basically all the churches that are here now, you'd see then. Schools were segregated. There was Lyles-Crouch School, the old school [inaudible]. The shirt factory. And there was Parker-Gray across the street that was built [inaudible]. And elementary classes in Parker-Gray. The two little houses

	next door to the library were used for school activities. And down on the corner of Patrick and Pendleton [Streets], there was a USO [United Services Organizations], that was used for a cafeteria and some classes because Parker-Gray was crowded. I think, in [19]49, I think the seminary school was still open, which was a two-room school that went up to the seventh grade. Those were the school facilities for blacks. I started substituting at Lyles-Crouch in 1952. And I substituted between Lyles-Crouch and Charles Houston until 1954. Then I got a regular job. By that time they built the new Parker-Gray and changed the name of the old Parker-Gray to Charles Houston in honor of a lawyer who helped the citizens to acquire a high school in Alexandria.
P.A.:	Tell me a little bit more about the black businesses that you dealt with in Alexandria.
Mabel Lyles:	There was a drug store that was run by [inaudible] and sold the regular things. They had a soda fountain. And there were some prescriptions. And there was [inaudible] Flower Shop run by the [inaudible], that is now operated by one of their grandsons. Those are the two I remember.
P.A.:	Where did you buy your clothes? When you wanted to buy something nice, where did you shop?
Mabel Lyles:	Shop on King Street. There was Hayman's, or [inaudible]. Dress shops on King Street shop there. And then you had Bradshaw's for shoes. I guess if you really wanted a hat or something special, you went into Washington, to Hecht's or Woodward and Lothrop.
P.A.:	How were you treated when you would go into these establishments?
Mabel Lyles:	We were allowed to try on dresses and things. You see, this is, now it's 1950 and people are beginning to [inaudible].
<b>Employment as a Teacher</b>	
P.A.:	Tell me about your first job.
Mabel Lyles:	My first job was with the Alexandria Recreation Center, or Department. I was playground director. I worked at Lyles-Crouch. Parker [inaudible]. The hours for playground directors were 10 to 12, and then we had a break, and we came back and stayed from 4 to 8. One summer I worked at the [inaudible] same hours. We had weekly activity. One week it might be roller skating, or some kind of contest. We had a [inaudible] contest. [inaudible] Each week there was a different [inaudible].
P.A.:	Do you remember what you earned on your first job?
Mabel Lyles:	No. We were paid every two weeks. But I don't know [inaudible].
P.A.:	Tell me about your work as a teacher in Alexandria.
Mabel Lyles:	I started at Lyles-Crouch, September, 1954. Started with the fifth grade. It was supposed to be a very good class. Some of the children in that class

had been looking forward to working with a special teacher, Miss [inaudible], because their older brothers and sisters had had Miss [inaudible]. So I discussed that with Miss Hilton, and she decided to let those four or five who wanted to work with Miss [inaudible] to go on to her class. They were supposed to be the brightest ones, but there were other bright students. [inaudible]

At that time we were tested. I guess we had the [inaudible] achievement tests each year, so Miss Hilton looked at the children's test scores in fourth grade, and when they finished in the fifth grade, she looked again. She saw that all the children had made progress. So I felt very good about that. The next year, I had a fourth grade class, and that was 34 boys in that class, and 20, and 10 girls. At that time—it was 34 altogether so it must have been 24 boys and 10 girls. At that time, we had to keep a register, register in which we wrote the children's names, kept the attendance. [inaudible] Mr. T.C. Williams was the superintendent that required that we visit each home during the year. So when I turned in my register I had these 24 boys and [inaudible] the girls [inaudible]. I kept that class September to June, the whole 34.

This was 1954, and the Supreme Court decision came down that [inaudible]. When we returned to school in 1955, we got a directive from the state that Virginia was not changing. That led to what was called passive resistance. We got pupil placement [inaudible]. We went from pupil placement to transfers, if they wanted to go to different schools. I stayed at Lyles-Crouch [inaudible] 1958. And I taught two years there. We were going through the testing. Spring of 1960, a team of white and black auditors came out to test the black pupils. At that time I was teaching fifth grade again, which meant four and five—kept the children two years. And in that class, that was tested—we had prepared for it—and those students tested better than any other fifth grade class in the city. [inaudible] integration. Of course, I am proud of that, that they tested well.

I stayed at Lyles-Crouch until December of 1960 and I went out on maternity leave because, well, I went out because you had a baby in those days, you had to retire, resign. I stayed out until 19—September of 1961, and then I returned to fourth grade, to Charles Houston across the street. If you had maternity leave come back the first opening take you in. So Mr. Butler was principal across the street. I worked at Charles Houston until Jefferson Houston was opened in 1971. And I worked at Jefferson Houston. I taught there until they started a reorganization. 1973 Jefferson Houston was made a primary school. I was teaching fourth grade. I had a choice of going to Lee or to [inaudible]. So I wrote a letter to the school board asking them to send me to Lee because I wanted to see my son on the school bus. [inaudible] They granted me permission to do that. So, I went to Lee. I taught at Lee until Lee closed. And that was probably 1970, somewhere around there, the closing. And then I went to Mt. Vernon, and I taught at Mt. Vernon full-time—sixth, fifth, and fourth grade until I retired

	[inaudible].
P.A.:	Was the transition to integrated schools a smooth one here in Alexandria?
Mabel Lyles:	Yes, especially in the elementary schools. At Lee, we had a few bomb threats where we had to go outside for a couple of hours during that first year. [inaudible] they had some problems with the middle-school students.
<b>Life in the 1960s</b>	
P.A.:	You mentioned the Civil Rights movement. What was your involvement in the Civil Rights movement?
Mabel Lyles:	Other than to pay my NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] dues, that was it, because my first child was born 1950. Then in 1951, another. So that was, basically that was...
P.A.:	During that period you were in the midst of rearing your family?
Mabel Lyles:	Yes.
P.A.:	Are there any family stories that your grandmother shared with you about her growing up, what life was like for her, that you can share with us?
Mabel Lyles:	My grandmother's mother had, I think it was, nine children. And her husband, her first husband died [inaudible]. And then she married a man [inaudible] who had about eight or nine children. And they grew up together. My grandmother started working in service early, I guess about fifteen, sixteen. She worked there until she married my grandfather. They lived together [inaudible] until he died.
P.A.:	Do you have any artifacts or heirlooms that remained with your family from your grandmother or from her mother?
Mabel Lyles:	I have a cut glass bowl that belonged to my grandmother's mother. I still have that. I have a gravy ladle that belonged to my grandmother. And I have some flat irons that [inaudible].
P.A.:	Would you allow us to take photographs of these objects?
Mabel Lyles:	Yes.
P.A.:	Do you remember any medicinal recipes that your grandmother would use?
Mabel Lyles:	Oh, yes.
P.A.:	Tell me about that.
Mabel Lyles:	There was something they called bitter apple. It was like dried fruit. They made a tea out of it. You had to drink that. That was like, I guess it was like Milk of Magnesia. There was also black [inaudible]. Castor oil. Take mineral oil for prevention of colds and so forth. Those are the basic things that I remember.
P.A.:	Tell me, do you remember what you were doing when President John

	Kennedy was assassinated?
Mabel Lyles:	Oh, yes. I was teaching fourth grade across the street at Charles Houston and I was showing a film on Williamsburg when we got the news in the afternoon. Of course, that was a couple of days before Thanksgiving so we had time off to watch the proceedings. My two sons, and a friend and her husband, her daughter—we went to Washington. We stood in line to go through the Capitol. Mr. Webber and his wife, no, Mr. Webber and his daughter, and my son, Reginald, got out of line and came back home. And Mrs. Webber and my son Ronnie and I went through the line past the casket. And then, of course, the next day we watched the proceedings on television.
<b>Concluding Remarks—Church and Family</b>	
P.A.:	Can you share with us some bit of information or wisdom that you would like to share with the young people of Alexandria? Anything that you think would be helpful to them—something that you learned?
Mabel Lyles:	I would say to them to take advantage of the educational opportunities that are offered today. And to do the best that they can, every day, because we can't relive the past. So be careful of decisions that you make today. And basically, follow the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. And to keep God in their life. Try to be as Christ-like as you can in all actions. If they have not decided to follow Christ, go to different churches. Decide where you want to be. And when they find a church, to stick with it, because there aren't any perfect churches on earth. And there's going to be something in all churches you don't like. But just remember that God, Christ is the head of the Church, and to keep your mind on God, and Jesus Christ.
P.A.:	Since you've talked about your strong faith, would you like to share with us some information about your church?
Mabel Lyles:	My church is one of the historical churches in Alexandria. It is 135 years old. It was started by slaves. There are some old families in the church. The Norton family has been there a long time. The [inaudible] family. And then a lot of people come through Shiloh. We get a lot of military people. We get people who come in just for three or four years. It's a growing church. We have a young membership now. Our pastor [inaudible] is in his fifties. We have a lot of people in the church, I guess, [age] twenty-five to fifty. And then we have a good group of seventies, people in their seventies. I can think of at least three ladies who are in their nineties now. One lady, sister Mabel Price, comes to church school every Sunday. Of course, Ms. Irene North comes to church but she's not quite as active.  We have a good children's church that just passed the first anniversary. And I said earlier I taught Children's Worship on the national level, so I really, I feel that I am blessed to be able to put what I was teaching other people into practice at my own church. And our average attendance there,

	<p>35 to 40 children between the ages of...12. We have one hour of worship, and then after that we have Biblical activities—we might do a craft, do a skit or something, until church is dismissed around 1:30. When church is out then the parents pick up the children. Right now we are at 207 South Peyton Street, which is the St. Coletta School, on the third floor. And after the worship service each Sunday, the children get a snack before going to the activities.</p> <p>The church also provides special activities for [inaudible] 13 and up. And of course we have church school for all ages, [inaudible]. Right now I'm teaching the primary one class which is 2 to 5. And I enjoy the activities very much. I have served as superintendent of the church school during two different eras. The last time I served was when the church split back in the [19]90s, early [19]90s. Churches are different. Churches are different now. [inaudible].</p>
<p>P.A.:</p>	<p>Our time is growing short. We have only about nine minutes left. Is there anything else that you'd like to share with us? You mentioned your husband. You mentioned the marriage but I don't think you told us his name, or...</p>
<p>Mabel Lyles:</p>	<p>My husband's name is Major W. Lyles. He comes from a family of seven, seven siblings. Two brothers deceased and one sister. So there are four remaining. We like to travel. I like to travel more than my husband. We went to Alaska together in 1997. We enjoyed that. In 1965 we drove to California—the five of us. That was very enjoyable. In the [19]70s, my husband, Raymond, and I toured the Grand Tetons, Wyoming. We drove up there. We go to Florida every other year. We have a condominium there which I enjoy. We have not done a lot of traveling along the northeastern corridor, like Connecticut and those states. Major doesn't like to drive as much now as he used to.</p> <p>I went overseas in 1980 to Europe, without him. I also went to Israel in 1999. He didn't want to go to Israel. I enjoyed the trip to Israel. They are a free country but you are conscious that Israel is surrounded by hate. We went, I went with the Polycastors; Reverend Polycastor had lived in Israel. He was an archaeologist there. [inaudible] historic Israel so he took us to many places that ordinary citizens have not had the privilege of visiting. And my most disappointing thing in Israel was the River Jordan. I expected to see a wide river, the banks and everything like you read about in the Bible. But they took us to a place that had been built up—big tourist attraction, gift shop. We walked down the steps to the river. You could be baptized in the river if you wanted to. There were three or four churches doing baptisms at that time. I felt that my baptism in the Steppes River was sufficient, so I just dipped some water from the river and brought it back to the States.</p> <p>I enjoyed the Sea of Galilee. We went out on a ship [on] the Sea of Galilee. I could see how Jesus could be teaching on the ship and the next few</p>

	<p>minutes, he's up in the mountains, because the mountains are very close to the Sea of Galilee. We went down to the Dead Sea which is so salty you had to take off all of your jewels, everything so they wouldn't [inaudible]. You could float but I didn't [inaudible] Dead Sea. They are very strict. When you leave the Sea you have to go in and change your clothes and so forth before you can come into the gift shops. Even if you need to go to the restroom, you change your clothes to get to the restroom.</p> <p>Israel is very, very strict. [inaudible] have snacks. And if you go into an area that sells snacks, you can't eat snacks that you brought there. You had to purchase them there in the snack shop. The most difficult thing was getting on the airline, [inaudible] country to go to Israel. They ask you, they asked me, "Why wasn't my husband with me? What kind of work I did in the States? Why was I going to Israel?" Then they would go off, and somebody else would come and ask you the same questions. They checked the luggage thoroughly before [inaudible] boarded the plane. As soon as we got on the plane they pulled down all, they pulled down all the shades. It was a very comfortable trip.</p>
P.A.:	Mrs. Lyles, we've enjoyed interviewing you. Thank you so much for your time.
Mabel Lyles:	I've enjoyed it. It has been a pleasure. Sorry for the tears. [End]