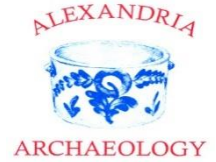




City of Alexandria
Office of Historic Alexandria
Alexandria Legacies
Oral History Program



Project Name: *Alexandria Legacies*

Title: *Interview with Carolyn Boyer Kramer*

Date of Interview: *August 13, 2016*

Location of Interview: *Beatley Central Library, Alexandria, Virginia*

Interviewer: *Terilee Edwards-Hewitt*

Transcriber: *Sandy Carpenter*

Abstract: Carolyn Kramer was born in Alexandria and attended Francis C. Hammond High School in Alexandria, Virginia. Her parents were from Fort Valley, Virginia, and her mother, Fleta Tamkin, moved to Alexandria and worked at the Torpedo Factory Naval Station during World War II. After the war, her parents stayed in Alexandria. Her father, Ray Boyer, worked as a meatcutter at local grocery stores and later at the commissary at Cameron Station. Carolyn discusses growing up in Alexandria and teaching in public schools.

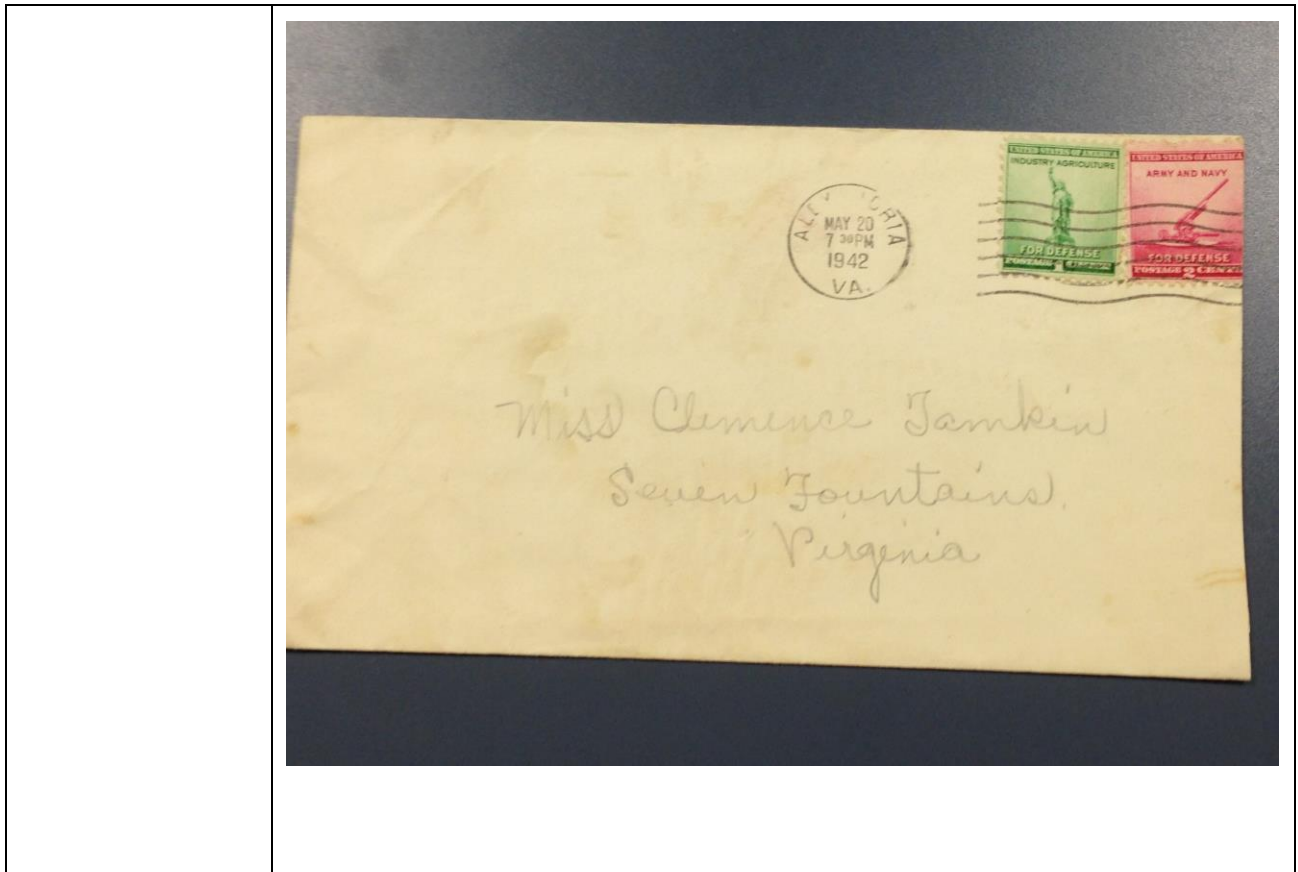
This transcript has been edited by the interviewee and may not reflect the audio-recording exactly.

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Terilee Edwards-Hewitt:	All right, this is recording. This is Terilee Edwards-Hewitt and today is August 13, 2016 and I'm interviewing Carolyn Boyer Kramer and we are at Beatley Library [in Alexandria, Virginia.] So thank you very much.
Carolyn Kramer:	You're very welcome.
Her mother, Fleta Tamkin	
T E-H	So we have two topics I'm hoping we can cover today. And obviously please let me know if you want to stop at any time for a break. One is, you said your Mom, whose name was Fleta.
Carolyn Kramer:	Correct.
T E-H	That's very pretty, where is that from?
Carolyn Kramer:	She grew up in the Shenandoah Valley and it's an unusual name, you don't encounter it very often, if ever, but there were several people in that little valley who had that name. So that's where she got it from.
T E-H	All right. Cool. And her maiden name was Tamkin.
Carolyn Kramer:	Correct.
T E-H	And she worked at the Torpedo Factory.
Carolyn Kramer:	Right.
T E-H	And that was during World War II?
Carolyn Kramer:	Yes.
T E-H	All right.
Carolyn Kramer:	She lived in a place called Fort Valley which is in Shenandoah County and when she was a young woman, maybe not even twenty years old, I guess, maybe like twenty one, twenty two, actually, she came to Alexandria and lived in a home on Caton Avenue, and did child care. So that's why she came down here.
T E-H	Do you know what year she was born?
Carolyn Kramer:	Nineteen nineteen.
T E-H	Nineteen nineteen, Okay. Wow. So do you know what brought her to Alexandria? Was it for employment?
Carolyn Kramer:	As far as I know, it was to do child care for a family that she was acquainted with. So probably this family approached her and said would you be interested and she came down to do that. That's how she started. That's not the job that she stayed in.
T E-H	Right. And then let's just talk about your father. So, Ray Boyer—.

Carolyn Kramer:	Correct.
T E-H	And was he from Alexandria?
Carolyn Kramer:	He was also from Fort Valley.
T E-H	Oh.
Carolyn Kramer:	The same area.
T E-H	And I'm sorry, that's Virginia?
Carolyn Kramer:	Virginia, yes. Well, I'm from Virginia and I kind of take it for granted its Virginia. Not everybody thinks the same way I do.
T E-H	That's a very Virginian thing I think. In a good way.
Carolyn Kramer:	He was drafted and I don't know what year it was. I could look it up, but I don't know it now. He was drafted in the service and my parents were not married yet and he served out his time in the military, and went overseas, and when he came back from World War II my mother said she would like to stay in this area rather than going back to the country so that's how we got here.
T E-H	Oh, Okay. Excellent. And what branch of the military?
Carolyn Kramer:	This was the Army. The 9 th Armored Division.
T E-H	Oh, Okay. Just so you know there is also the World War I and World War II commemoration events [happening.] Although 2016 has almost passed, we are still also trying to get stories directly or indirectly about WWII.
Carolyn Kramer:	He was born in 1918 so that would have been like the end of World War I. Maybe even after it was already over.
Fleta Tamkin's jobs in Alexandria	
T E-H	Right. So, if you don't mind, if you could tell me a little bit about your Mom working at the Torpedo Factory. Do you know how she found out about the job?
Carolyn Kramer:	When she left the child care position, she went to work at Whelan's Drug Store in Alexandria. And she was making sodas and milkshakes and whatever. I have a stack of letters that she wrote to my Aunt between 1941 and 1945 and in one of the letters she talks about how it was hard work. She was on her feet for so many hours at a time and she had to, you know, she had to make up the orders quickly and get them served quickly. But, one day, she made forty cents in tips.



T E-H	Oh.
Carolyn Kramer:	So then, from that, then she went on to the Torpedo Plant. And how, I guess she found out about that by word of mouth.
T E-H	OK.
Carolyn Kramer:	Or maybe they were advertising that they needed workers, I don't know.
T E-H	And, just for the drug store, do you know what street that was on?
Carolyn Kramer:	I do not. I would like to know.
T E-H	All right. I'll let you know. Hopefully we can find out.
Carolyn Kramer:	She said that it was the biggest drug store in Alexandria, in her letter.
T E-H	In her letter. Okay. And back when drug stores had lunch counters.
Carolyn Kramer:	Right. Which I remember too.
T E-H	Oh, Okay. Yeah those were all gone by the [19]70s.
Carolyn Kramer:	Pretty much. I guess fast food places took the place of them.
Fleta Tamkin's work at the Torpedo Factory	
T E-H	Yeah. So, do you know what she did at the Torpedo Factory?

<p>Carolyn Kramer:</p>	<p>I do not. It was under the Department of the Navy. I know that the torpedoes that were made there were tested down at Point Lookout down where the Potomac River meets the Chesapeake Bay, in that area. I know that she had access to making these things, I think she made them. I don't know if they were given out or just what. But they are pieces of jewelry. One is a torpedo on a chain that could be a necklace and one is a pin with a torpedo on it.</p> 
<p>T E-H</p>	<p>Oh, how neat!</p>
<p>Carolyn Kramer:</p>	<p>Just about everyone in my family had one of these.</p>
<p>T E-H</p>	<p>Okay. Well, I'll definitely take a photo of that, just because that's really neat.</p>
<p>Carolyn Kramer:</p>	<p>And I think there's some of these on display at the Torpedo Factory.</p>
<p>T E-H</p>	<p>Yeah, in the exhibit on the first floor.</p>
<p>Carolyn Kramer:</p>	<p>But, what she actually did, I don't know.</p>
<p>T E-H</p>	<p>Okay. Do you know what shift she worked?</p>
<p>Carolyn Kramer:</p>	<p>I think, in at least one of the letters that she has a preoccupation of how to get from Alexandria back up to Shenandoah Valley. She never drove.</p>
<p>T E-H</p>	<p>Okay.</p>
<p>Carolyn Kramer:</p>	<p>She would take a bus. She would have to coordinate it with family. Have</p>

	somebody there to meet her from the bus and drive her home. And so she mentions in the letters, I'm coming home such and such a weekend and I get off at. So it sounds to me like she got off sometimes in the afternoons. So it sounds like she might have gone to work early in the morning
T E-H	I was just asking because I know that they were doing things like three shifts. At some point, they were doing twenty-four hours a day. Quite an operation.
Carolyn Kramer:	This is just a coincidence. In 1950 my parents bought a house on King Street. Like between T.C. Williams High School and First Baptist Church. And, across from the house, across from King Street, we could see the homes of Chinquapin Village. And Chinquapin, to my knowledge, was built during the war years as housing for workers as were homes in Cameron Valley too. So, and my mother did not live there, but I just think it's kind of a coincidence she worked at the Torpedo Plant, the housing for the workers was there, and we ended up living across the street and could see that.
T E-H	So, is that the house you grew up in?
Carolyn Kramer:	Yes.
T E-H	Very cool. So, and that was on King Street more towards the west end?
Carolyn Kramer:	Correct. King Street where it meets Scroggins Road.
T E-H	Okay. All right.
Carolyn Kramer:	Very close to First Baptist Church.
T E-H	And were your parents married in Alexandria or back home as it were?
Carolyn Kramer:	They were married January 5, 1944 in Woodstock, Virginia. I think my Dad was home on leave. I don't know where leave was from. I know he did training in Fort Riley, Kansas, Fort Knox, Kentucky, Barstow Needles, California, and Fork Polk, Louisiana. I don't think he was in Fort Polk yet, so I would guess it was either California or Kansas.
T E-H	Okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	And she mentioned some of the gifts she got at the Torpedo Plant. One was a set of his and her pillow cases.
T E-H	Oh, how cute! How neat. Was there anything else that you thought about specifically about the Torpedo Factory that she told you about? Did people socialize?
Carolyn Kramer:	She mentions that there was a dance that they had. And a Halloween party that they invited anybody from the Torpedo Plant to attend. There might be some other references in there I can't think of. She mentions at least one time that somebody asked for a date. And no follow up on whether she went or not. I don't know. Not a whole lot.
T E-H	Okay.

Carolyn Kramer:	She talks about her roommate. She had a roommate and their meals. The roommate would get home a little bit earlier than she would and she would get the food ready for dinner. And then my Mom would clean up.
T E-H	Oh, okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	They didn't have to do much cleaning because there were just the two of them and they weren't home all day and it didn't get dirty.
T E-H	Yeah. Well that sounds like a good plan. Do you know how she met her roommate?
Carolyn Kramer:	The roommate, was I believe, was from up around Strasburg, Virginia, Lebanon Church. There's a town called Lebanon Church and they crossed paths, knew each other, made arrangements to room together. She also said that one Sunday they went over to visit some friends in Arlington and they went by this big new office building. The biggest office building in the country and it has five sides.
T E-H	Ah. The Pentagon.
Carolyn Kramer:	It had not yet been named.
T E-H	Oh, wow.
Carolyn Kramer:	This was brand new. So, not so many references about socializing from the Torpedo Plant, but she mentions of going to the zoo, going to Glen Echo.
T E-H	Wow.
Carolyn Kramer:	There must have been some type of a military exhibition, I guess on the Mall in Washington, and she went to that and learned how to use V mail, she tried on a WACs uniform, saw the ordnance exhibit, and did different things like that related to the military. And so she went to that. Went to a carnival with some friends, said she rode the hobby horses, played some bingo.
T E-H	Okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	Sounds like they had plenty of things to keep them busy and have fun.
T E-H	Yeah.
Carolyn Kramer:	Not specifically through the Torpedo Plant although I'm sure there were some things going on.
T E-H	Right. So, after your parents had been married a few years you came along. So now are you the oldest?
Carolyn Kramer:	I'm the oldest of three. I have two younger brothers.
T E-H	Okay. And one is still local.
Carolyn Kramer:	One is still local living in the house on King Street.
T E-H	Wow.

Carolyn Kramer:	The older of the two brothers lives in Raleigh, North Carolina.
T E-H	Very cool. So, growing up in Alexandria, right off of King Street, what was a fun childhood activity that you did when you were not in school?
Growing up in Alexandria	
Carolyn Kramer:	The street in back of us was named Bayliss Drive and there were a lot of children living on that street. So we would go through the back yards and go back there and play with those friends. They would come over and visit with us too, but there were more children back there than on King Street. I remember one friend had a little log cabin play house in her back yard and so we established the happy face club. Mickey Mouse was popular at the time. So I think we were trying to emulate that.
T E-H	So, you created your own? How neat.
Carolyn Kramer:	We did crafts and games and things like that. Maybe that's how I got interested in teaching.
T E-H	Yeah, definitely. I'm asking about this because we think there may have been a baseball field on Shooter's Hill and I didn't know if there was organized sports that you either participated in or were aware of?
Carolyn Kramer:	Okay. As far as I know there were no organized sports for girls. Even in high school there weren't sports for girls. Unless it was like intramural sports maybe some tennis, maybe girls basketball. I don't know. I never knew about it. Just didn't have it for girls.
T E-H	Oh okay, interesting.
Carolyn Kramer:	The younger brother played baseball. I guess Little League it was and I think they played on Lockett's Field down at the end of Braddock Road.
T E-H	Okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	Down near Potomac Yards area. Anyway, he played there.
T E-H	I see you went to Minnie Howard for Elementary School for grades one through seven.
Carolyn Kramer:	Correct. There was no Kindergarten in Alexandria. I don't think Alexandria had public Kindergartens until the 1960's.
T E-H	Oh wow. Okay. Did you have a favorite subject at that early point?
Carolyn Kramer:	Probably reading. And I always did like to make things. So probably reading and art I liked. Minnie Howard School was a brand new school when I entered it in first grade. I don't know if it was because the school was new and maybe they were still doing some finishing up of construction, or if it was because we were the youngest age group in the school, but I don't think we attended full day. I think we went home at maybe one thirtyish every day.

	Still we had a rest mat, for a rest and had lunch. So, it's probably less intense than what kindergarten is now I would think. We had good teachers. We learned to read. We got a good start.
T E-H	And that was first grade?
Carolyn Kramer:	Yes. We got a good start.
T E-H	Did you bring your lunch or was lunch provided?
Carolyn Kramer:	Either. You could buy your lunch I believe it was a quarter. Milk was three cents, I think, a carton.
T E-H	Oh wow.
Carolyn Kramer:	So if they had lunches that I liked, like spaghetti, I would buy. Otherwise I took my lunch in my Roy Rogers lunch box.
T E-H	Oh very cool. The metal—.
Carolyn Kramer:	Yes.
T E-H	Before the plastic lunch boxes.
Carolyn Kramer:	With the thermos.
T E-H	What was your favorite lunch to bring from home?
Carolyn Kramer:	Oh. Probably bologna. I don't remember that much. I do remember a field trip. Talking about lunches. For the field trip, we were, I guess, bused, down to the train station at the base of the Masonic Temple and we got on the train there and rode over to Washington.
T E-H	Oh wow.
Carolyn Kramer:	And then we got off the train, and had our lunches in the waiting room, ate our lunch there, and then we got on the train and came back.
T E-H	So you did a field trip to Union Station?
Carolyn Kramer:	Yes.
T E-H	Although it's got beautiful statuary and—.
Carolyn Kramer:	Well, maybe they showed us some things in there, I don't remember. But, I remember riding the train and sitting in the train station eating lunch.
T E-H	Oh okay. Do you remember any other field trips?
Carolyn Kramer:	We went to the zoo. Not long ago I read a little history of the National Zoo and it mentioned the lion escape. Maybe it didn't escape, but its paw got out the cage and hurt a child, might of killed the child, I don't recall.
T E-H	Oh my gosh.
Carolyn Kramer:	But I think, I seem to think we were talking about that that was a point of discussion. About the lion. And I remember as a follow up the teacher had us

	draw a picture of some of the animals. And I remember one girl drew this wonderful giraffe and everyone was envious because she was such a good artist.
T E-H	Ah. Very cool. And then, for eighth grade, you went to Jefferson.
Carolyn Kramer:	Correct.
T E-H	And that was before it, I'm trying to remember if it combined with Hammond. I don't know.
Carolyn Kramer:	Jefferson never combined with Hammond.
T E-H	Oh, okay. Jefferson Huston is the one now.
Carolyn Kramer:	Is that what it's called?
T E-H	Yeah.
Carolyn Kramer:	Okay.
T E-H	And you went to Jefferson.
Carolyn Kramer:	I believe that building used to be the high school.
T E-H	Right.
Carolyn Kramer:	Years and years ago. But, when I went it was just for eighth grade.
T E-H	And then for grades ninth and tenth you went to Hammond.
Carolyn Kramer:	Hammond High School.
T E-H	Hammond High School. And that was a, like I said I printed out, I was doing some research on the schools. So that building was built in 1956.
Carolyn Kramer:	Okay.
T E-H	So, it was pretty, not brand new, but
Carolyn Kramer:	Newer than G.W. [George Washington] I guess.
T E-H	Yeah.
Carolyn Kramer:	I do remember going to Hammond on an elementary school field trip. There was like a symphonic concert there.
T E-H	Okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	And I remember being so impressed because it had a balcony. The auditorium had a balcony.
Taking the AB&W bus to school	
T E-H	Oh. Okay. And did you walk to school? Take the bus to school?
Carolyn Kramer:	Okay. We were basically bussed. If I missed the bus, I walk as my mother did not drive.

T E-H	Um hm.
Carolyn Kramer:	But, when we were bussed, it was not public school buses. There was a public transit called AB&W [Alexandria, Barcroft and Washington] Bus Company.
T E-H	Okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	And each rider paid a dime to ride the bus to school.
T E-H	Okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	Which my dad never cared for. Because, well you know, some students got free transportation, some students paid.
T E-H	Interesting. Oh, and I should have asked, so your parents, after the war what did your father do? What was his occupation?
Her father's work as a butcher	
Carolyn Kramer:	He had helped out with butchering. Did a lot of hunting and did butchering growing up. So when he came back I guess he figured well I know how to cut meat. And so he became a meat cutter. He worked, I believe, for a while for Safeway. And then he worked for Giant Food. I know he worked for a while for Giant over on Wilson Boulevard in Arlington. And then, sometime in the sixties he was hired at Cameron Station to work in the Commissary there. So he was a meat cutter.
T E-H	So the Army Base, the PX? [post exchange is the term for a store run by the military on a base.]
Carolyn Kramer:	Right. Exactly.
T E-H	Excellent. Which is now townhouses.
Carolyn Kramer:	Exactly.
T E-H	And did your Mom work outside the home?
Carolyn Kramer:	When the war was over she was laid off. They didn't need torpedoes anymore.
T E-H	Right.
Carolyn Kramer:	In fact she refers to that in one of her letters that soon she would be laid off and then she mentions working in a store again. I think a drug store and asked my aunt if she needed any cosmetics because she could get a twenty percent discount.
T E-H	Ah.
Carolyn Kramer:	And then as far as I know after that job, she went to work for the Department of Agriculture in Washington.
T E-H	Okay.

Carolyn Kramer:	So she had a government job until my brother was born in 1952. And then she stayed home. That was basically what moms did then.
T E-H	Yeah, a lot more common then. Well that's really neat. It sounds like they were very well established here in Alexandria. Sounds like you all really put down roots.
Carolyn Kramer:	Well they bought that house on King Street, she always said, because there was bus service. Public transportation. Since she didn't drive, she needed a way to get to work.
T E-H	Right.
Carolyn Kramer:	To the Department of Agriculture. Because we lived there a couple of years anyway before she stopped working.
T E-H	Okay. So we were talking about your going to high school, going to Hammond High School. Did you have a favorite subject in high school? If you didn't, that's okay too.
Carolyn Kramer:	Have to think back. I did pretty well in school. I don't know if it was exactly my favorite but I did well in Spanish. I took four years of Spanish in high school. And then went on to take four semesters in college. A language was required in college too. I remember taking math.
Attending George Mason University	
T E-H	And then you went to George Mason for college?
Carolyn Kramer:	Right. Went to George Mason when there were four buildings there.
T E-H	Oh wow.
Carolyn Kramer:	It's changed quite a bit. The library at the time was half of the top floor of one of the buildings.
T E-H	Oh wow.
Carolyn Kramer:	Changed quite a bit. That was the library.
T E-H	And if you don't mind telling me, what year did you graduate from George Mason?
Carolyn Kramer:	Nineteen seventy.
T E-H	Nineteen seventy.
Carolyn Kramer:	At the time it was part of the University of Virginia. And we had a choice of having our diplomas printed with George Mason University or George Mason College of the University of Virginia.
T E-H	Wow.
Carolyn Kramer:	And that's what I chose.

T E-H	Okay. And what was your major?
Carolyn Kramer:	Elementary education.
T E-H	Okay. And you were saying that you felt a love of teaching fairly early on.
Carolyn Kramer:	Well, I remember in second grade, sitting at the table, we had a table that held like six students, little cubbies underneath. I remember saying to my table mates that when I grew up I wanted to be a teacher.
T E-H	Oh neat.
Carolyn Kramer:	That early I had kind of made a decision.
T E-H	Did you do student teaching when you were an undergraduate?
Carolyn Kramer:	I did student teaching at Maury Elementary School in Alexandria and my supervising teacher was Sarah Nash. I believe she has since passed away. She was a member of First Baptist Church where I had grown up too
T E-H	Oh neat.
Carolyn Kramer:	And Ms. Beech was the principal there.
T E-H	And did you drive to George Mason or was there public transport?
Carolyn Kramer:	I drove.
T E-H	Okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	I got my driver's license especially so I could drive out there.
T E-H	Oh, okay. So, did you parents, I'm just curious because cars are expensive
Carolyn Kramer:	They did provide a car for me to use.
T E-H	Oh. That's really nice. That was very cool. Did your brothers go to George Mason also?
Carolyn Kramer:	No. The next brother down went to Virginia Tech. And the youngest one went to James Madison.
T E-H	Okay. So all nice and Virginia [state colleges.]
Carolyn Kramer:	Right. Of course.
T E-H	And, I see that you went to graduate school or post graduate school.
Carolyn Kramer:	At George Mason also.
T E-H	Oh, okay. And was that right away after your bachelor's or did you work for a while?
Teaching at Occoquan School	
Carolyn Kramer:	When I graduated from George Mason the first time, after that I taught at Occoquan School in Prince William County.

T E-H	Oh, okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	And I was there for six years. Taught second grade, third grade, and some combinations of second and third classes. That's when open classroom was popular and so a decision was made to have a combination second and third grade.
T E-H	Okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	Big classroom.
T E-H	Um hm.
Carolyn Kramer:	Then, I had my first son. I was home with him for 'bout a year and then my church decided to start a preschool and they asked if I would be interested in teaching two year olds in preschool. So I did. And liked it. And then the next year had another son and then three years later had another one. And after that went back and taught there a few more years. Then was moved up to four year olds. And I just really did enjoy it. And so, I thought if I'm going to do this I need to learn how to do it right. That's when I went back and got my master's degree at George Mason. Early childhood.
T E-H	Early childhood.
Carolyn Kramer:	And I timed that to be finished with it before our oldest went to college. So that we wouldn't have my tuition and his—.
Trends in Elementary School Education	
T E-H	Two tuitions at the same time. I'm curious because I do museum education but that's not the same as classroom education. So you've seen some interesting education trends. Like the open classroom. What did you like or not like about it? I've heard of it, but I'm very curious about it.
Carolyn Kramer:	The open classroom that I was placed in years ago had been the school cafeteria. And then they put up walls to turn it into classrooms. And then before I started teaching there, the summer before I started, they took down the walls down and carpeted it to turn it into an open classroom. I had not been trained in these new techniques and philosophies and so it was kind of an eye opener an adjustment to get used to that. The noise level in the room, it was always a hum. A buzz. I don't think it bothered the children as much as it did me because I never felt like, okay, are you listening? can you hear me? are you really attending to what I am saying? because that sound was always in my ears. But, I think the young ones were always able to tune it out more than I was. It was a learning center approach where you would have reading centers, math centers. Basically we did instruction in math and language arts. But science and social studies were done with learning centers. So it was more of a choice. So it was more of a kind of good balance. Teacher directed instruction as well as child chosen activities during a specified time of the day.

T E-H	Oh neat.
Carolyn Kramer:	It ended up being a good program. And time marches on, things change.
T E-H	Yeah. It's just very interesting how educational philosophies, theories changes over time.
Carolyn Kramer:	Well, many of the schools that were built back in that time have now remodeled and put walls in so I guess they concluded that it wasn't the most ideal method.
Teaching pre-school students	
T E-H	How was teaching at the second and third grade level different than teaching two year olds or four year olds?
Carolyn Kramer:	Okay. Right now I teach four year olds and they typically will go to kindergarten the year after they have me. Well, we don't sit down and drill. I introduce them to letters and reading but my philosophy is exposure rather than mastery. So I'm exposing them to lots of different ideas and concepts not really expecting them to be able to spout it back to me.
T E-H	Right. Do you get to take them on field trips?
Carolyn Kramer:	Yes.
T E-H	Do you have a favorite one as a teacher?
Carolyn Kramer:	Well, thinking back on the field trips I did in the past year, I seem to lean toward history.
T E-H	Oh, excellent.
Carolyn Kramer:	So we went to Colvin Run Mill [in Great Falls, Virginia] and they have a puppet show there that kind of explains the different workers involved in the process of getting bread. And the most impressive thing is the big water wheel on the outside of the mill that turns.
T E-H	Oh yeah. And that's off of Route Seven?
Carolyn Kramer:	Correct.
T E-H	Okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	And then we have gone to the Fairfax Museum in Fairfax City and the docent there emphasizes artifacts. Asks the children what are artifacts? What do they think they are going to see in the museum once they actually get into the exhibit area and then we get into the elevator and go up and she instructs them to look around the exhibit and pick out a cool artifact and stand next to that artifact. And then she remembers where they were standing and then those are the artifacts she talks about rather than trying to tell about everything in the exhibit. And then we go back downstairs and she had like a grab bag, a feely bag, of artifact

T E-H	Copy? [a reproduction]
Carolyn Kramer:	Yeah, it's a copy, facsimile, of something. And they can take it out, handle it, and look at it, work with it, whatever, and then make a guess of what it is.
T E-H	Oh neat.
Carolyn Kramer:	There's another history related thing too, but I can't think of it offhand. A definite emphasis on Social Studies and that was my, not a major, not a minor, it's called concentration in college when I was doing the elementary education. Concentration was the Social Studies.
Social Activities in High School	
T E-H	Okay. Well neat. Going back a little bit in time, when you were in high school, what were some of the social activities you took part in? Either school related or in the larger community?
Carolyn Kramer:	Mostly clubs at the school. Trying to think now. National Honor Society. Future Teachers of America.
T E-H	Oh, very cool.
Carolyn Kramer:	I did take Home Eco [economics] first year that I was there, so there was FHA, Future Homemakers of America, I was in that club.
T E-H	Interesting. I don't know if that exists now.
Carolyn Kramer:	I don't think that they teach Home Eco per say. I know that in the middle schools, in Fairfax, there's a class called Teen Living. And they learn to make some snacks, maybe sew on a button something like that. But, I don't think they have Home Eco the way that they used to. Church activities.
T E-H	What church activities? You went to services?
Carolyn Kramer:	Services and then when I was real little [I] sang in the choir.
T E-H	Oh neat.
Carolyn Kramer:	Sunday school and then there was a group called Y Teens that I was active in.
T E-H	And what did the Y Teens do?
Carolyn Kramer:	Maybe, mostly little social things. Maybe a Christmas tree decorating party.
T E-H	So was it a—.
Carolyn Kramer:	Sleepovers.
What they did for fun as teenagers in Alexandria	
T E-H	Yeah, neat. And for friends that you had growing up in Alexandria, where did you go? Did you go to the movies? And if so, where did you go?
Carolyn Kramer:	At the Fairlington Shopping Center there was a theatre called the Centre Theatre and we could ride our bikes or walk up to that in Fairlington.

T E-H	And that's on Quaker Lane?
Carolyn Kramer:	Correct.
T E-H	Okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	There was a theatre there.
T E-H	Wow.
Carolyn Kramer:	Where the CVS [drug store] is now, across the street from that, was a smaller Peoples Drug Store. CVS used to be called Peoples Drug Store. Next to that was the Centre Theatre.
T E-H	Wow.
Carolyn Kramer:	There was also a Reed Theatre down at the base of the Masonic Temple on King Street. There was the Richmond Theatre down lower on King Street. Just maybe like a block North of King and Washington. There was the Virginia Theatre which is had been out like North Washington Street. There's a Holiday Inn there now. Giant. There was a roller rink and the Virginia Theatre. And so there were a number of theatres around. Probably more than there are now.
T E-H	Yeah. Did you go to the roller rink?
Carolyn Kramer:	I never went to the roller rink. It was active and yeah I don't remember when it was torn down. But through the sixty's I would guess anyway.
T E-H	I know the building was still here in the late eighties. I don't know if it was open for business, but I remember hearing about it.
Carolyn Kramer:	I remember between the roller rink and Washington Street there was a frozen custard stand and I remember my dad would go down there some Sunday's and buy it by the quart, or whatever, and bring it home. And there was like a plaster polar bear outside in front of it.
T E-H	Oh. So you knew there was ice cream there.
Carolyn Kramer:	Go to Mike's American Grill in Springfield they have photos on the walls of older things in the area and they have a picture of that frozen custard place with the polar bear.
T E-H	Right. When you went to the movie theatre did you all walk, did you take the bus, how did you get there?
Carolyn Kramer:	Never the bus, well maybe to do downtown.
T E-H	Downtown D.C. or downtown Alexandria?
Carolyn Kramer:	Alexandria. We didn't call it Old Town then.
T E-H	Oh.
Carolyn Kramer:	It was just downtown. We'd probably take the bus to go down there. But to

	go up to Fairlington, we would walk or ride our bikes.
T E-H	It wouldn't be too far.
Carolyn Kramer:	I think there was a different price on the weekend as opposed to during the week too.
T E-H	For the bus?
Carolyn Kramer:	Oh for the movies. Yep. Might have been all of thirty five cents. On the weekend or something like that.
T E-H	Yeah, okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	Less during the week I think.
Chores	
T E-H	I was wondering, growing up, were there chores that you and your brothers had?
Carolyn Kramer:	My chore was to dust. And to this day I do not care for dusting.
T E-H	How often did you have to dust?
Carolyn Kramer:	Every week.
T E-H	Oh, once a week?
Carolyn Kramer:	Yeah. Guess we were responsible for our rooms. Maybe some sweeping. I remember having to pull weeds. And we always had rose bushes growing in the front, so when I got older I was trimming them. Spent roses and the bushes.
T E-H	Okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	Ironing. I did ironing.
T E-H	Was that—? Did your brothers do any ironing?
Carolyn Kramer:	No.
T E-H	It is interesting though, right again, how things kind of have changed, the expectations.
Carolyn Kramer:	Yeah. Well, back then, I guess there were certain jobs for boys certain jobs for girls but nowadays I would doubt that any child is ironing. I don't imagine a whole lot of adults iron either.
T E-H	Yeah, I think so. I was just thinking about when I went to college how almost none of the boys knew how to do laundry. Like so, they didn't know separating the colors. So anyway that's what I was think of when was in the late eighties. So, how did you meet your spouse? His name is Barton.
How she met her husband	
Carolyn Kramer:	Okay. Bart and I both went to Hammond. He was a year older than I was. I

	guess a mutual friend introduced us. I sat next to this friend in freshman algebra, ninth grade algebra. Sora Mergler was our teacher. He, Mike, sat next to me. And Mike knew Bart because they would go to football games together. And so he introduced us. We ignored each other. We would say hi in the halls, but we didn't date or anything like that. Then, I graduated in sixty six [1966], he had graduated in sixty five and it was in the newspaper that a baby giraffe had been born at the National Zoo. He wanted to see the giraffe. He wanted to take somebody so he looked through his sister's Hammond Yearbook from that year. It was the end of the school year. She brought the yearbook home. He looked through it to see if he recognized anybody that he could ask to go see this giraffe. So, he called me and we went and we dated that summer. And, coincidentally, he had just finished his first year at George Mason and I was going there. So we had not known that was the arrangement and so then we dated through collage. We got married in seventy, after we graduated.
T E-H	And did you get married in Alexandria? At your church, or—?
Carolyn Kramer:	We got married in Annandale.
T E-H	Oh, Okay, neat. Like I said, it's very neat to hear local stories. I mean just how people are able to stay, multiple generation connection
Carolyn Kramer:	And actually, the class of sixty six usually lists which couples were from the high school. A number, not lots and lots, but more than you might think.
T E-H	Oh, how very cool. Let's see, so I'm trying to think of other things about Alexandria history. I may email you just to say, I should have asked about such and such.
Carolyn Kramer:	I remember Mud Town [the neighborhood located there is now is referred to as The Fort and Seminary Neighborhood. It was not the name preferred by people in the neighborhood. Information about The Fort and Seminary neighborhood can be found at www.alexandriava.gov/historic/archaeology/default.aspx?id=54262].
T E-H	Oh, okay.
Carolyn Kramer:	I don't know if you're familiar with
T E-H	You could tell me about that.
Carolyn Kramer:	All right. Mud Town was a little community for African Americans. It was on King Street, basically, where T.C. Williams sits now. So, when our AB&W bus would pick us up for school, it would come down Scroggins Road and turn onto King Street and it would go right by Mud Town. So, here we were, on our bus, going up to Minnie Howard School and there were the children who lived in Mud Town waiting for their bus to take them down into Alexandria.
T E-H	Okay.

Carolyn Kramer:	I remember there was one big building there that looked, always looked like it had burned out, like it had burnt. And nobody had done anything with it or cleared it out. I don't know if it used to be a school in Mud Town. I have no idea what it used to be. It was a kind of run down sort of looking place. So, I guess then when they decided to build T.C. Williams High School, they must have bought the property and then built homes behind it. There's homes behind T.C. Williams off of Quaker Lane I think.
T E-H	Yeah. And there was some archaeology work done there in the past. The City has done archaeology in that kind of general neighborhood [area] there.
Carolyn Kramer:	I just remember feeling kind of awkward that there were two different schools. Two different places for us to be educated.
T E-H	Right. And you're kind of passing each other. So, I guess as a teacher, you were teaching when Virginia schools were really having students coming from different neighborhoods, different ethnicities. Am I right? I don't know. It seems in a larger mixing of students—.
Teaching during the start of desegregation	
Carolyn Kramer:	Yes. And of course a much larger mixing now. Much more diverse now than it was even then. But, yeah, during my early teaching years it was a time of mixing and accepting everybody at the school.
T E-H	How, what was it like as a teacher then? Were you concerned about it?
Carolyn Kramer:	No.
T E-H	Did students seem to get along?
Carolyn Kramer:	Well, it was second and third grade. I don't ever recall any negativity about it. I remember a couple of little African American girls who lived in the Town of Occoquan. I still know where their houses were. But I think the homes are now little shops in Occoquan. So I guess they've moved on.
T E-H	So yeah, I also think younger kids just definitely get along with people sometimes.
Carolyn Kramer:	They just kind of, you put them all together, okay, we're going to get along.
T E-H	Right, because they don't know anything different. So, I know you've got your high school reunion coming up. So what number reunion is it?
Carolyn Kramer:	Fifty.
T E-H	Fifty. Wow. So how many students were in your graduating class?
Carolyn Kramer:	I think they always said six hundred.
T E-H	Wow. That's a big school.
Carolyn Kramer:	And considering there were two high schools. I don't know what the graduation size is now at T.C. Williams, but back then there were two high

	<p>schools, but I don't know what GW's size was, but they had six hundred. That would have been twelve hundred for the city.</p>
T E-H	<p>Wow. So that's— you can't really know everybody in your class then, I guess.</p>
Carolyn Kramer:	<p>I don't know. But there were quite a few at our fiftieth reunion, not the fiftieth, probably fortieth reunion. Actually we had a get together whenever everybody turned sixty too. So, there's been one since, but quite of number of students who had gone through elementary school together at Minnie Howard and had gone through all the grades and graduated.</p>
T E-H	<p>So yeah, that does really like we were talking before we started recording about how D.C. area has this reputation of people only being here temporarily, but obviously there's lots of people [for a long time.]</p>
Carolyn Kramer:	<p>Of course, a lot of those people came from a distance to come to the reunion but still I guess they felt a unity and a desire to come back.</p>
T E-H	<p>Well neat. Do you think you'll have a good turn out?</p>
Carolyn Kramer:	<p>I think so. Sherry Strickland, who has been working on this, has been working on it a couple of years, I think, has been in contact with people.</p>
T E-H	<p>That's great.</p>
Carolyn Kramer:	<p>So I think it sounds like quite a few.</p>
T E-H	<p>All righty. Well excellent. I know that you brought some things for me to take photos of relating to your mom and some letters.</p>
Carolyn Kramer:	<p>Yes.</p>
T E-H	<p>All right. So, I'm going to shut this off and turn it back on if we need to.</p>



Poster created by Carolyn Boyer Kramer for her father, Ray Franklin Boyer