



Blanche Moran -- 4/9/2007

By Tina Mathews, CRRL Intern, editor

Interviewed by Jane Kosa

Blanche Moran a woman who worked in the Fredericksburg area in the 30's and 40's. She lived here for many years from before the Great Depression until the interview in 1998; during that time she had experienced a wide variety of things here. If history is truly the everyday life of average people, Mrs. Moran is a great representation of that history for this area.

Interviewed by Jane Kosa

Interviewer: Wednesday, June 24, 1998. I am at 623 Stuart St. in Fredericksburg, VA. My name is Jane Kosa and I am conducting an oral history interview of Mrs. Blanche Moran. She is going to tell us about her experiences working in the Fredericksburg area. Good morning, Mrs. Moran.

Mrs. Moran: Good morning.

Interviewer: Can you tell us where, how long you have been in the Fredericksburg area?

Mrs. Moran: Well, most of my life. I say I have been here most of my life. We moved here from Bowling Green, Virginia in 1923 and we lived at 210 1/2 George St. at first which was upstairs over the back of the old Brent store that used to be on the corner of Caroline then called Main Street and George Street. Then we moved to Hanover Street and I lived there until I got married. Then I lived in New Rochelle, NY for about 13 months and we moved back to Fredericksburg again and during the war years when my husband came back from overseas we moved to Corpus Christi TX for about 13 months. And then back to Fredericksburg again. I've been here ever since.

Interviewer: Mrs. Moran, where have you worked in Fredericksburg? Where was the first place that you worked here in Fredericksburg?

Mrs. Moran: I have worked mostly in restaurants. The First place I worked was for my uncle. He had a restaurant on what was then Commerce Street, now called William, and I worked for him and my cousin was his daughter and we worked together in his restaurant

which was on the 200 block of Commerce St... That was the first place I worked.

Interviewer: What was the name of the restaurant?

Mrs. Moran: Cain's Restaurant. Now it's, let me see. It's right next door to the recreation center where there's a pool hall and where they sell those real good hot dogs. I don't know exactly what's there right now. The 200 block.

Interviewer: How long ago, how long did you work in the restaurant and when was it? What dates? Do you remember?

Mrs. Moran: It was back in 1930, '34 and '35 around that area.

Interviewer: How many hours a day was the restaurant open?

Mrs. Moran: It was open from about ten in the morning. They didn't serve breakfast. They just served lunch and dinner. It was open from ten in the morning until about ten at night.

Interviewer: What were some of the items that you served?

Mrs. Moran: It's been so long ago. Let me think. Nothing unusual, just the regular fare roast beef, fried chicken, baked chicken things like that. The thing that was a little different about the restaurant was that in the front area there were nice tables and chairs, cloth tablecloths and there was a partition about three fourths, two-thirds of the way back and behind the partition was a bar and they sold draft beer. I didn't work back in that area. There was a man that worked back there but this was back during the years when the CCC camps were in Fredericksburg and a lot of the CCC boys used to come in there. They'd go through the dining room. They had to march through the dining room to get to the place where they served beer, which was really odd. Too bad they didn't have a side entrance where they wouldn't have had to go through the dining room where people were eating. But that was the way it was.

Interviewer: How many tables were in the restaurant?

Mrs. Moran: I guess we had about 25 or 30.

Interviewer: Did any famous people ever stop by the restaurant?

Mrs. Moran: No, not really. I don't remember anyone famous that stopped by.

Interviewer: So what happened? Did you work there until it closed? Or what happened to the restaurant?

Mrs. Moran: I worked there until I got married and then we moved to New Rochelle, New York. And then he, my uncle, kept it running for a short while after that-maybe two or three years, then he retired and moved to Florida. So the restaurant closed down. Then the next thing that opened up in that same building was an appliance store called J and J and they stayed there for a long, long time.

Interviewer: After you came back to Fredericksburg, where did you work then?

Mrs. Moran: At the Palms Grill which was on the ten hundred block of Princess Anne Street for Mr. Gus Rangos, he's dead now. Then he remodeled his restaurant and found me a job. When he had that restaurant remodeled and he found me a job over on the corner of Commerce and Princess Anne Street which was the Mayflower Restaurant which is now burned down and it's the corner where the old city hall used to be. There's a little garden there now. There was a restaurant there called The Mayflower. Then when Mr. Rangos' Palm Grill was remodeled and completed, I went back to work for him and then some years later I worked at the Southern Grill, which was on the same block.

Interviewer: So how long did you work? What dates did you work at the Palm Grill? And how long were you there?

Mrs. Moran: From '36 to about '38.

Interviewer: From 1936 to 1938?

Mrs. Moran: Then I worked at the Southern Grill which was on the same block, a little closer to the Baptist Church. And the reason there were so many restaurants right along there together is because at that time Princess Anne Street was the thoroughfare, main thoroughfare through town. It was the Number 1 highway that stretched from Maine to Florida and it did a lot of business. We had a lot of tourists that stopped there. We would have tourists that would come; stop to eat there on their way to Florida and the same people would come back in

the spring of the year, going back north and would stop again. We would sometimes have the same customers.

Interviewer: So what type of food did the Palms serve?

Mrs. Moran: They had approximately the same type of food. They had seafood. They had American food, altogether American food and it was a little more, a little fancier maybe than where I worked at Cain's Restaurant, a little more elaborate.

Interviewer: So?

Mrs. Moran: They even had soft-shell crabs and things like that.

Interviewer: So what hours was the Palms open?

Mrs. Moran: It opened earlier than Cain's. It opened by six in the morning and stayed open until about eleven at night and we would work shift work. Sometimes we would have the morning shift go on at six and go off at two and then sometimes we would have what we would call a split shift work three or four hours in the morning and then go home a couple of hours in the afternoon and come back for the dinner hour.

Interviewer: So how many people worked at the Palms Restaurant?

Mrs. Moran: We had about six or seven ... Two on one shift and two on another like that and sometimes three depended on the time.

Interviewer: And so what did you do when you were working at the Palms restaurant? What were your duties?

Mrs. Moran: Well, to wait on the tables, of course and then The Palms and Southern Grill had banquet rooms upstairs. And sometimes we would work the banquet rooms, too. Certain clubs would have meetings there and things of that kind.

Interviewer: Do you remember what any of the prices were back when you worked there, for the various meals or food items?

Mrs. Moran: I wish I could remember. I really don't remember exactly. I know that people would come in the morning for a cup of coffee for five cents.

Interviewer: Were there any special decor in the Palms?

Mrs. Moran: The only thing. No, not anything special. But the only thing I remember that was special in the Southern Grill. Mr. Soret was the manager and he liked to fish and he would go on fishing trips down to Florida and one year he caught a huge marlin fish and had it stuffed and it was hanging on one of the walls. I remember that.

Interviewer: So when did you work at the Southern Grill?

Mrs. Moran: That's the Southern Grill I was talking about. Oh, after I left the Palm Grill which would be '39 I worked there from '39 till about '42 something like that.

Interviewer: And so what were the hours of the Southern Grill?

Mrs. Moran: Well, that was the place that I meant that they were earlier. The Palms Grill and Southern Grill both opened early about six o'clock but the shift work that I worked was more at the Southern Grill than it was the Palms Grill. Sometimes I would work mornings and open the restaurant up and sometimes I would wait and come in later in the day and be there from twelve till eight at night.

Interviewer: So did any famous people come in to either the Palms Grill or the Southern Grill that you recall?

Mrs. Moran: No.

Interviewer: Any celebrities or political officials?

Mrs. Moran: No, not that I recall.

Interviewer: Not that you recall.

Mrs. Moran: We would have a lot of people, parents of college students that would come there a lot.

Interviewer: Did any of the local associations such as maybe lawyers or doctors congregate at either restaurant?

Mrs. Moran: Yes, you would see, you know different ones coming in especially to get together in the morning to drink coffee and just sit around talking.

Interviewer: So there were some groups who came in regularly?

Mrs. Moran: Yes, we had regular customers that would come in, the lawyers and one thing or another around town.

Interviewer: So are any of the restaurants still standing?

Mrs. Moran: No. The Mayflower burned down. The Palms Grill is now Irish Brigade. (Since out of business) Southern Grill isn't there any more. There are not any of them there anymore.

Interviewer: And so how close together were these restaurants located?

Mrs. Moran: Almost next door.

Interviewer: Almost next door?

Mrs. Moran: Well, The Mayflower was over on the corner where I told you of Commerce, which is William now, and Princess Anne and then you would cross over past the bank and then the First one that you got to was the Palms Grill. Then there was another one I didn't work at but it was called the Occidental Restaurant, which was next, and then the next one was the Southern Restaurant, Southern Grill they called it. Next door to the Southern Restaurant where I worked was a diner called the Southern Diner and it was run by the same people that ran the Southern Grill and that was just before you get to the Baptist Church. But I never worked there. But that stayed open even later it night and when people would come from dances, they would often stop at the little Southern Diner to have a late night snack or early breakfast or coffee or to sit and talk.

Interviewer: So now when did the Palm Grill finally close? The Palm Restaurant close?

Mrs. Moran: Long after I worked there. I just don't know. `60's I think, in the sixties.

Interviewer: In the 60's?

Mrs. Moran: I believe.

Interviewer: So how long did you work in the restaurant business?



Mrs. Moran: I guess nine years.

Interviewer: Nine years total?

Mrs. Moran: Nine or ten.

Interviewer: And it was from what time frame? You started in about what year?

Mrs. Moran: If I had known ahead of time, I could have gotten it figured up. I didn't know you were going to ask questions about where I worked. Let me see. In 1934, I guess I started. It's hard to remember. '34, '35, '36, '37, '38. '39, '40, '41. I probably worked 'til '41 or '42.

Interviewer: So you worked during the time between the Depression and World War II?

Mrs. Moran: Um huh.

Interviewer: So what was the Fredericksburg economy like during that time?

Mrs. Moran: Well, during the Depression it was tight times everywhere and it was hard to get jobs. I remember my husband was originally from New York State and when we came back here to live after we had lived up in New York for about thirteen months, he found it very, very hard to find work down here. He used to say that he believed that the Southerners were still against the Northerners. That they didn't want to give him a job. They were still waging the Civil War down here. I can't find work. He even did, you know, very small jobs and very little money, too. He would paint houses or paint a barn out in the country for 25 cents an hour and things like that. It was very, tight times.

Interviewer: So was it easier for you to find work here?

Mrs. Moran: In restaurants. I could find work in restaurants.

Interviewer: So what type of wages did you make back then?

Mrs. Moran: \$5.00 a week and tips. (laughing)

Interviewer: \$5.00 a week and tips?

Mrs. Moran: Uh huh. Tips were very little. They're not like they are now. If you got a dime, you know you were lucky or if you got a quarter, you thought that was good. If you had a dollar from a big group of people, you thought you were rich. Now a days, it's nothing compared to what people tip now. But and then a lot of people didn't tip at all. So tips were not very much.

Interviewer: So, did you have any other benefits from the places where you worked? Did they provide any other benefits other than what they would pay?

Mrs. Moran: None whatsoever.

Interviewer: Did you have? How often did people eat out back then?

Mrs. Moran: Not like they do now. Nowhere near as often. You very seldom saw people more than once a week, once every two weeks, the same family.

Interviewer: So, now were the restaurants open every day of the week or did they have certain days that they were closed.

Mrs. Moran: They were open every day. Um huh. I remember one time waiting on a certain group of people that would come in. A man, his wife, and the son and his wife and their children. It was a big table, about eight people and they would come in every Sunday after church and I would get a dollar. I thought I was rich! Heh, heh, heh. Because I always got a dollar tip from that same group every Sunday. But really now that would be nothing, you know, compared to what they tip now.

Interviewer: So, did you ever, in the restaurants, what was the behavior like? Were there ever any incidents?

Mrs. Moran: Nothing. People were very good. I mean we didn't have any rough crowd that came in. It was not like a little beer joint out on the road, you know what I mean. It wasn't anything like that. They didn't serve alcoholic beverages, except for the first place I worked. They had that bar in the back where they sold draft beer. That was my uncle's place but the other places, they didn't sell alcoholic beverages and it was a very fine group of people that came in there. The flood during 1942 raised a lot of commotion in Fredericksburg. My, that was something I don't think anybody will ever forget.

Interviewer: Were you working during the time of the flood.

Mrs. Moran: No, I wasn't. I had already given up my work then. My husband had gone overseas and he wanted me to be home with the two boys and he said give the job up and stay home with them. So I did and then there was so much going on during that time. You know, it was so hectic. We were living at that time on Hanover Street right underneath the Masonic Lodge. We had an apartment down there and the river rose from up to Main Street and past and it came up a little ways up the hill to the side door of one of the buildings that was on that corner. It was Phillips Furniture Store, right on that corner and that's the corner of Hanover and Main Street and the water was up to their back door. But of course it didn't get all the way up the hill where we lived because it would have flooded the whole town if it had gotten up that high. But my husband, at that time, had already gone into the service and he was in New York on Long Island and he heard about the floods here and got emergency leave to come home to see if everything was all right at home. He had a hard time getting home. The railroad tracks were flooded and it delayed the train but he finally got there. We were fine.

Interviewer: So?

Mrs. Moran: We were high and dry in other words but no electricity for a while and water was contaminated. We had to have typhoid shots and we had to burn oil lamps and I remember a friend of my mother's lived down below the railroad and they were flooded down that way too from Hazel Run and she was so upset and so nervous. She came to the house and my mother had a pot of soup on cooking. She said, "Oh that smells so good." So she stayed with us that night because we weren't flooded out and she had lost a lot of her clothing and her furniture because her house had flooded. She was so upset. I remember years later she talked about she said "I never tasted anything so good in my life as that soup that night." So I said, it was just because you were upset and nervous. That's why."

Interviewer: What kind of soup was it?

Mrs. Moran: Vegetable, homemade vegetable soup.

Interviewer: So when your husband came back from the service, did he find work was easier to get?

Mrs. Moran: Well, it was a little better then. Yeah. Uh huh. Yes. He worked for a long time for the city. Over in the garbage department. He was foreman for the garbage department for a while and he worked part-time for Mrs. Lloyd Stevens at the SPCA, kind helped her with that work for a while too. I didn't work any more after that I stopped. I mean, after I had gotten out of the restaurant work, I didn't work anymore. I stayed home.

Interviewer: So back when you were working in the restaurant business, were there any panhandlers that came around or any homeless type people.

Mrs. Moran: No, I don't remember anyone doing that. Although I've heard a lot about panhandlers but I think they really hit the places that were closer to the railroad tracks. I don't think they came into town into the business area a lot where we were. But I've often heard how people would have them. I don't know anyone personally. I've just heard about it that lived on the rural areas and the trains stopped close to their homes and for any repairs on the train or anything like that the people would jump off the Freight cars and go to the nearest house to panhandle something to eat and then jump back on the train before it started up again.

Interviewer: So when people were in the restaurant and paid for their meals and so forth, did they pay with cash or did they take checks?

Mrs. Moran: Cash, you never save credit cards or checks for meals. It was always cash. They didn't always have a whole lot but they always paid with cash. I can remember my mother used to, once in a while, go to the bakery that was up on Williams Street - Commerce Street. It was up on the 100 block and she would ask the lady in the bakery. "Do you have any leftover bread?" She was after getting it cheap, you know, because times were tight and she said, "No, Mrs. Scott, we don't have any, this morning." But she said if you buy a loaf of the fresh bread, you can take your wrapper off of it and it will soon go stale. She said, "That's not what I'm after. I'm trying to save a little money." Huh huh, huh-huh. She was trying to save money. She wasn't particular after the stale bread.

Interviewer: So when you worked in the restaurants, what were the kitchens like as far as appliances and so forth for preparing the food?

Mrs. Moran: Well, they had huge kettles to cook in. Everything was big - big kettles, big trying pans, and regular restaurant equipment stoves and they had dishwashers.

Interviewer: So, what kind of stoves did they have back then?

Mrs. Moran: It was something. It must have been run by electric. They were run by electricity, I think.

Interviewer: And did they have big refrigerators?

Mrs. Moran: Oh yeah, uh huh. Everything was huge: big pots and pans and big refrigerators and large equipment to accommodate all the dishes and so forth.

Interviewer: And did they run specials Do you remember what any of the specials were?

Mrs. Moran: No, I don't remember.

Interviewer: And so, in all the restaurants what type of food, where they're any ethnic foods served?

Mrs. Moran: No, huh uh, it was usually American Food. You never. At that time we didn't have Chinese restaurants in Fredericksburg. We didn't have Greek restaurants. It was All-American practically. I mean there were a few families, Greek families who ran a restaurant but they didn't specialize in Greek Food. They specialized in American food.

Interviewer: Since you've lived in Fredericksburg for so long, can you think of any other events that stand out in your mind?

Mrs. Moran: Well, let me see, the old Opera House was nice. It was on the corner of Princess Anne, I mean Main and William Street. Main and Commerce we called it then. And right there now is an antique shop on that corner I believe and at one time there was Woolworth's. FW Woolworth was there. But the old Opera House was something that we thought was rather nice for this small town. They would have shows that would come from other cities. They were not expensive big type shows but to me rather when I was a child I thought it was, you know, very nice that we had out of town show people coming in town. They had, on the side of the building there was a metal staircase that went up for the performers I guess to enter and the entrance for the Opera

House was on Main Street. Two of my girlfriends and I used to play-around those steps a lot. And, one day they wanted to go up the steps and climb over the railing and slide down the poles. Well, I don't know I was little bit timid or a little bit afraid to do it. You know they were kind of brazen about it. They said, "Oh, come on, Blanche, come on. You can do it. I said, "No, I don't think so. I'm afraid." And they kept "Come on." So finally, I got on the railing and wrapped my legs around the pole and slid down. But I went too fast, and I went down so hard on my leg that I broke my ankle. I said, "See what you did! You forced me to come down there and I knew something was going to happen. "But anyway I was out of school for two or three months with a broken leg and another thing about my broken leg. I just happened to think. It was set at home; I didn't go to the hospital. The doctor came to the house and he told my father to hold my foot and he held up above my knee and he told my father to pull that way and he was going to pull this way until the bones hit together. And I did some yelling I know. I can remember that. And that's how they did it and they put the Plaster of Paris cast on at home and everything.

Interviewer: So how old were you when this happened?

Mrs. Moran: I was eight.

Interviewer: You were eight?

Mrs. Moran: Uh huh.

Interviewer: So do remember any other incidents - similar?

Mrs. Moran: Let's see. Like I said about the flood, that made a big impression, I think, on everyone's mind. People were riding up and down Main Street in boats instead of riding in cars and there were oil tanks down below town where the dock is now and oil and kerosene tanks down there and because of the flood waters, I Mess, hitting against them so hard, it caused a tire. And it was a terrible, terrible explosion down there. And the tire just lit the sky up for hours upon hours before they could get it under control. That made quite an impression with me. I remember seeing all the red sky, you know, down by the railroad. Then we used to look forward to all of the carnivals that came to town and the old Fairgrounds used to be up here. Up off of Fall Hill Avenue. And we would look forward every year. That was once a year they would have the Fredericksburg Fair. We looked forward to that. They had a racetrack there where they would have horse racing. It seems hard to realize its all houses up there now.

That would be just before you get to the river where Riverside Drive is and Woodford Street.

Interviewer: So how long ago was that?

Mrs. Moran: That was back in the late twenties and maybe the first couple of years of the thirties. Then, of course, after that, they had the fairgrounds down below the railroad, you know, as you go to the Sylvania Plant. But that fairground up there, to me, was nicer and better than the ones down here. I guess it was because I was younger and I looked forward to the fair every, year. There was a man downtown on Main Street that had a little; I guess it was an old Ford Car. He called it a jitney and it was like a little cab to take people to the fairground. And I can hear him now yelling, "Come and get your jitney to the fairgrounds." Huh, huh. Charged them ten cents, I think, to ride to the fairgrounds and back. And Fall Hill Avenue, at that time, was called Cedar Lane. They had a lot of cedar trees on that street and I guess that's where it got the name of Cedar Lane. Now it's been Fall Hill .venue for years and years. When the Sylvania Plant came to town, it meant a big improvement in the economy here. People were so fortunate to get jobs in the Sylvania Plant and worked there practically all their lives and raised a family and built homes all from the salaries that they got at the plant. I remember my husband tried to get on down there and he heard they were hiring but he got there just a little bit too late to be one of the ones that were picked. So he came home so disappointed that day.

Interviewer: So was the Sylvania Plant the first big plant to come to Fredericksburg?

Mrs. Moran: Uh huh, yes it was.

Interviewer: So what changes have you seen in Fredericksburg since you've been here.

Mrs. Moran: Well, lots and lots of changes downtown on Main Street. The stores, the big stores that were there all moved to the Mall, of course and that made downtown look very deserted, and, of course, for a long while, there was much business down there but now it's improved with the craft shops and the antique shops. But back when I was a teenager, there were very few cars, and a lot of people spent their Sunday afternoons taking walks and taking a little Brownie camera along and taking pictures. We did a lot of that my girlfriends and I. We would walk to the I guess right, towards the dam, you know

towards the river, take pictures, and we would walk over the bridge over to Falmouth sometimes and take the River Road back home. And we just had to make our own entertainment right here in Fredericksburg. There was not much, not many places we could go. We didn't have cars. My mother and father didn't have a car. And whenever we did go anywhere out of town, we would ...

Interviewer: This is side two of the First interview with Blanche Moran which is taking place on June 24, 1998 at 623 Stuart St. All right, Mrs. Moran, if you will go ahead and continue.

Mrs. Moran: Ok, well let's see. What else do we need to tell them? I went to school at the elementary school on Main Street. You know, when I first moved here from Bowling Green, where the library is now, and then, of course, I went to Fredericksburg High School which is where Maury School is now and it was called Fredericksburg High School when I went there, not James Monroe.

Interviewer: Okay, so, how many years did you go to the elementary school?

Mrs. Moran: Seven.

Interviewer: Seven?

Mrs. Moran: They didn't have eighth grade then.

Interviewer: Okay, and do you remember?

Mrs. Moran: Well, I didn't really go there all that time either. I went to the First and second grade in Bowling Green and then I went third through seventh at Lafayette.

Interviewer: So, what are some of the experiences that you remember from when you were in elementary school?

Mrs. Moran: Well, of course, there was a playground out back and swings and we played out there and I remember there was one boy that used to get on the swings and put his feet on either side of me when I was sitting in the swing and pump it real high and I was scared to death. Heh heh heh and we used to have May Day. We would have the Maypole and the May Day and then we would always. Let me see on Memorial Day we would have, we would parade up to the Confederate Cemetery. They don't do that no more but we used to do

that. And I don't know; it was just good times, you know. We enjoyed school; we enjoyed it our teachers.

Interviewer: So, do you remember any of your teachers from that time? What teacher stands out the most in your mind?

Mrs. Moran: Mrs.Kellar was a good teacher at that time. And there was a Mrs. Gray. And, I guess Mrs. Kellar would maybe stand out more than any of the others?

Interviewer: What did she teach?

Mrs. Moran: She taught English.

Interviewer: What grade was it?

Mrs. Moran: It was the fourth grade.

Interviewer: Fourth grade?

Mrs. Moran: Uh huh.

Interviewer: Do you remember any of the English lessons?

Mrs. Moran: No, I don't. I really don't. I've forgotten.

Interviewer: So, when you went to high school at Maury, who were, what were some of your favorite classes or your favorite teachers?

Mrs. Moran: We had a Miss Thompson, she was a Miss Bristow, rather, that was an English teacher that was very good. She later married Perry Thompson. While she was still our teacher, she was Miss Bristow and Mrs. Thompson. Then we had a teacher in business administration, Miss Fawn, that was good and Mrs. Euliss, science teacher, and Mrs. Courtney, history teacher. We used to call her "Old Ironsides". She was so strict. She was good, though. And then, of course, we remember the football games. I always enjoyed them. They would have pep rallies before the games. Graduation Day, of course, was the best of all. Getting out. Heh heh and having it all behind you.

Interviewer: So, how many people were in your class?

Mrs. Moran: I'm not exactly sure of the number. I would say thirty-five maybe. [changed to sixty upon review]

Interviewer: So, did you wear gowns?

Mrs. Moran: Yes, we had gray cap and gowns?

Interviewer: So, how many, do you remember how boys and how many girls were in the class?

Mrs.Moran: No, we must have had more than that. I'm trying to think. It seems to me there would have been eighteen or nineteen or twenty girls at least maybe more. I'm not sure; I can't remember now. [later corrected to thirty two girls and twenty-eight boys]

Interviewer: Do any of them still live in Fredericksburg?

Mrs.Moran: Yes, some still live here. I don't see them very often. The last one that I remember seeing was well, no, yes; I have seen some of them lately. There's one that lives out just outside of town right near the Spotsylvania Mall. She used to live in Fredericksburg down at the corner of this street but they moved out there. There's one that is in a nursing home out in Carriage Hill. Several have died, of course. Several of the boys. I don't think any of the girls have died. Yes, they have. Two have that I know of. Several of the boys have died. Dr. Moss was one of my... graduated the same year I did. Dr. Lloyd Moss and Henry Garnett. He's a, oh what is he? He lives in Newport News or Norfolk, one or the other. What is he? I can't remember. He's not a lawyer, he's something. I can't remember. I'm sorry. [He is a judge. He lives in Newport News. This was added later.] Several of the girls still live around town. I don't see them very often. I mean, your lives change after all those years. That was 1933 that I got out of high school. And you don't keep up with them. I had one close friend that I kept up with but she died five or six years ago.

Interviewer: So, did you go to any of the class reunions through the years?

Mrs. Moran: Well, we only had two through all that time. Our Fiftieth reunion was nice. We had that down at the country club, the Mansfield Country Club and, before that, we had one about six or seven years before that which was also nice, had that at the Sheraton Inn.

Interviewer: How many of the people came back to the reunions?

Mrs. Moran: I'd say about three-fourths [later changed to half] of the class and a few of the teachers. Our Latin teacher, Miss Runyon, was there. She later married a Lewis. Dr. Lewis. And our coach, Bruce Neill, who's dead now. He was there. I believe that was all.

Interviewer: So

Mrs. Moran: No, I think our business teacher was there-Miss Faughan. Yes.

Interviewer: So, after you quit working in the restaurant business and you were raising your family, what did, can you describe any events that stand out in your mind as far as Fredericksburg is concerned and your being here?

Mrs. Moran: I'm sure there's lots of things if I could just think about them. I know the town has changed a lot. You know, it's not like it was. The traffic is worse and the people are different. We used to go to bed and leave the doors unlocked at night and never be afraid but you wouldn't dare do that now. And, as I've said, besides that Fredericksburg Fair, they used to have lithe carnivals over there between. There was an empty Field over near where the Rebel Bowling alley over in that area somewhere. Right off Lafayette Boulevard. And we used to look forward to going there. Of course, we walked practically everywhere we went we walked. We didn't have cars much. My cousin, the Cain girl that I told you I worked for her father in the restaurant, she used to have the use of her father's car occasionally and we would chip in a nickel. Each girl would give her a nickel. She would buy a gallon of gas and we would ride around town. Gas was about twenty cents a gallon then. And we would ride a little bit and she would say, "I don't have any gas." We, "Oh, we got a nickel," and each one would give her a nickel and she would put in one gallon of gas and we would ride a while. Huh, huh. We didn't have much, didn't have much money but we enjoyed ourselves. We had a good rime.

Interviewer: So, at that time, where were the boundaries of Fredericksburg that you remember?

Mrs. Moran: Uh, let's see. Dead Man's Curve out by the National Cemetery was the boundary going that way. And then, out route 3, Oak Hill Cemetery was the boundary line that way. And, of course, this way the boundary line would be up by the Falmouth Bridge where you go across the bridge. No, even before that. Wait a minute, the boundary line used to be on Princess Anne Street before you got to the

Falmouth Bridge because, over near the Canal at one time was the boundary line, because they used to call that area over there Elliott City which was part of Fredericksburg well, was just outside of Fredericksburg city limits. They called it Ellwood City and then, down below the railroads, they called Darbytown and that's before you got to Mayfield. And, of course, the boundary that way, you know, would be the river. You can't go any farther that way. And out here we would say Oak Hill Cemetery was the boundary line going west. And down below the railroad, I guess the boundary line was, down by Dixon Street I think. Down that way.

Interviewer: So, you say that you walked everywhere when you were young? How far would you walk in a day?

Mrs. Moran: Well, we didn't really, you know, go out to accomplish any certain length of walking. We would just walk to just to be doing something, especially on Sunday. We would take our little (Brownie cameras along and walk, maybe, up hill Hill Avenue, which was city land then up towards the river and maybe sit around up there and talk a little while and then come back into town. There used to be an ice cream shop in Fredericksburg that was delicious ice cream, called Feuerherds? And it was on the corner of Caroline and George Street, right where Penney's store used to be downtown and a lot of times when we would come back from our walk, if we had a little money a nickel or a dime, we would go in there and get ice cream. It was a nice little ice cream shop. And Mr. Feuerherd lived up on Washington Avenue, that stone building up there that was recently remodeled. That's where his home was. So we didn't have any special. Oh, we'd go to the railroad a lot of times watch the trains come in. It was just something to do.

Interviewer: So, what kind of ice cream did Mr. Feuerherd serve?

Mrs. Moran: just the regular, you know, vanilla, chocolate, and strawberry mainly, but they would have a few other flavors like maple or something like that.

Interviewer: Did they have cones or did they fix..?

Mrs. Moran: They had both... they had cones and you could get dishes too; also banana splits and sundaes.

Interviewer: So when you went to watch the trains, how many trains came into Fredericksburg?

Mrs. Moran: Not very often. I mean, we didn't, you know, we didn't stay there long enough to see how many came through. We would just go down there mostly for the walk, go up on the ramp and watch, you know, whatever train might come in and watch people get off and get on. I don't know exactly how many would come in. I was thinking back to when we lived on Hanover Street. We lived, I think I told you we lived in the lower portion of the Masonic Lodge and a lot of tourists would come in town, of course, visiting the different places around town, historic places, and they come around the corner to our house sometimes and knock on our door to find out what time the lodge would open and my husband was a great teaser. Sometimes they would ask him, "Well what did they use the lower part for where you live?" He said, "Oh, they used to keep the horses here." Heh heh. He said, "This was a stable, a horse stable." He didn't know what they did with it. He just made it up. They would say, "Oh really!" You know, they took it all in and thought it was unusual that we lived in a place where they kept the horses. Heh heh. Oh dear. There was a little tea room next door to us, too, called the Continental Tea Room, and that catered to tourists more than it did local people and

Interviewer: So this was near where you lived?

Mrs. Moran: Um huh. It was right on the hill right where we lived, right below us. It's nothing there now because that's been torn down and the building that we lived in has extended, has enlarged and extended down to that driveway where that -- where we lived where we had a yard and where the tea shop was. The Masonic Lodge was built on to the building, added on to it. The theaters in town, Mr. Pitts, you know, owned the theaters and the first one I can remember was the Leader Theatre which was on the same block where the Colonial Theatre is now, only it was a few doors going up the street north. And that was the First Theater I remember here in town. And then, of course, when they built the Colonial, it was so, such a big improvement over the old Leader Theater, we thought we were really in a citified theater then. We even thought it was so elaborate compared to the old one and then when he built the Victorian Theater that was even nicer. That's the one close to us on down. The Baptist people, you know, bought that lot, the Baptist Church people and, of course, on Sunday, everything was closed up. We didn't have anything open on Sunday hardly. Maybe the restaurants and things like that and Mr. Pitts would never open the theater until after church was over. He always waited to have the first film about one o'clock in the afternoon, one or two o'clock, three o'clock or something like that in the afternoon. Someone said that the... that the Baptist Church people objected to the theatre being

built behind their church and, then when Mr. Pitts donated an organ to the church, they didn't object any more after that. They were happy they had the church, had that organ so, behind the church but they didn't want it open didn't want movies to be shown until after church was over, which of course, he accommodated them that way. He never showed the movies in the morning. He was a well-liked person. I think he was very generous. He made quite a bit of money, had a lot of other movie theaters around places like Orange and Culpeper and all like that. But he was very liberal and generous with donations, charitable donations.

Interviewer: So, the theater, the ice cream shop, were there some other places, going to watch the trains, were there some other places for entertainment?

Mrs. Moran: Well, there was a bowling alley behind Goolricks Pharmacy that Mr. Pitts also owned and that was flooded out during the flood --the big flood of '42. And the Opera House, of course, had the shows. Then occasionally, they would have showboats that would come up the river and they would put on minstrels and different shows which was nice. People would go down to the river and board the showboat and watch the show. That was something different, too. One year, talk about having celebrities come to Fredericksburg. I never had one come in the restaurant, I don't think that I can remember. But I didn't see this but I heard that Franklin Roosevelt in his, on his yacht, the Sequoia?

Interviewer: Sequoia

Mrs. Moran: It was docked in Fredericksburg one time down at the wharf.

Interviewer: But you didn't see him?

Mrs. Moran: I didn't see him, but I heard he was here. A girl that I went to school with saw him.

Interviewer: Did she have anything to say about it?

Mrs. Moran: Well, yes, she said he was very nice looking, and, you know, very pleasant and asked them to come aboard and see the yacht and she and some of her family, I think, went aboard the yacht. They lived down there near the river. That's why she happened to hear about it, I think, that he was going to be there. Yeah. There was

another place down below the railroad tracks that was a mansion considering the other houses here in Fredericksburg, called, Hazel Hill Mr. Shannon owned it. You know, Shannon Airport, he owned this house and it was a big, big old home but he. I guess, moved out, and moved somewhere else. I don't know where he went. It was vacant for many years and I had heard my mother say, way, way back when she was a young woman that that was a park down there before his house was ever built there. That it was a park alt the end of Princess Anne Street where his home was later built. I never was in it but when my boys were young, they used to go in there and look around in the old house. And I remember, now my oldest son is 63 years old and he said, "how I wish I had some of those old piano music sheets," you know. He said, "they would be worth a lot, of money today." He said, "I used to see them down there in Shannon's house all the time." I don't think they ever took anything nut of there but they used to go in there and look around and see what was in the house. The furniture had been taken out but there was odds and ends laying around.

Interviewer: So were there any other houses that you especially remember besides that house?

Mrs. Moran: No, we always thought Washington Avenue had pretty homes which were old homes and they were nice but I can't remember any other particular homes. I know, whenever people come to town from to visit me from other states, I usually drive them around Washington Avenue and point out, and you know, Mary Washington's monument and Kenmore and the Mary Washington House and things like that. Sometimes we would go in them but, I mean, sometimes we would just ride when we didn't have time and I would just point them out to them and they could see that we had some much history here in Fredericksburg and James Monroe's Law Office, of course, I always pointed that out and the Rising Sun Tavern. And the house down by the Railroad Station, wasn't that considered John Paul Jones's house? Or do you know anything about that? It's never been remodeled and

Interviewer: It seems like I remember seeing that sign there.

Mrs. Moran: It's either John Paul Jones's home or his brother's

Interviewer: I remember seeing a Jones name on that house.

Mrs. Moran: I don't even know if the plaque is still standing but it used to be on that house.

Interviewer: I recall seeing a plaque when I used to take walks down around Princess Anne Street down near Lafayette Boulevard.

Mrs. Moran: It's right on the corner of Caroline and the Boulevard.

Interviewer: So, can you think of anything else that you would like to say about your days in Fredericksburg.

Mrs. Moran: I'll probably think of lots after you leave. Heh heh Oh. Let me think. We used to go to dances, my husband and I, at the Elks Hall. That was a lot of place to dances and we enjoyed that.

Interviewer: And where was it? Is it in the same place today? And.?

Mrs. Moran: The Elks Hall?

Interviewer: Yes.

Mrs. Moran: Yes, Of course, they've closed that one down, you know, it's down by the railroad and they've built a new one down outside of town but yes that building that's on Caroline Street was the place we went. That was rather nice. I mean a nice crowd of people went there and, even before I was married, some of the girls I ran around with, we would go down there just stag. You know, and go in and sit on the sidelines and get asked to dance. Heh heh if we were lucky. Heh heh, it was a nice place.

Interviewer: Okay, this is going to conclude the first part of the interview with Mrs. Blanche Moran on today, Wednesday, June 24, 1998.

Interviewer: Good morning, this is Jane Kosa. I am at 123 Stuart St. in Fredericksburg with Mrs. Blanche Moran. This is the second part of the interview with Mrs. Moran who is talking about her days when she worked at various restaurants in the Fredericksburg area. It is Monday, December 7, 1998 and it is about 10:20 a.m. in the morning. Good morning, Mrs. Moran. How are you today?

Mrs. Moran: Good morning. I'm fine. How are you?

Interviewer: Just fine, thank you. I dropped the first part of the interview by with you about a week ago and asked to you to look through it to see if you had any additions to the interview. Have you had a chance to read through the interview, Mrs. Moran?

Mrs. Moran: Yes, I have. I've read through it and I made a few corrections. One or two things that the names weren't exactly -excuse me - the names were not exactly right, like Cain's Restaurant was not spelled right and I corrected that and one of the teachers that taught me in school was not spelled right and I corrected that and made a few changes.

Interviewer: Well, thank you for making the corrections to the spellings of the names and so forth. Do you have anything more that you would like to add to the interview about your days of working in the restaurants or ...

Mrs. Moran: Well, not particularly about working in restaurants but I happened to think of something else that was here in Fredericksburg that you might be interested in. The bridge going over to Chatham, underneath the bridge is an island and now, of course, it's all grown up with trees but back in the twenties there was sort of like an amusement park down there.

Interviewer: What was the name of the amusement park?

Mrs. Moran: Don't know whether they had a name. [Mrs. Moran later phoned to say that the name of the place was Pleasure Island.] I remember the man that ran it. His name was Mr. Southworth and he would have music and sometimes dancing and sometimes square dancing, sometimes ballroom dancing on a big platform that was built down there and then other times there would be boxing held on that platform and there were also games of chance, like throwing the ball at a wooden milk bottle and things of that type. And it was something that gave people in Fredericksburg a place to go for amusement for a while. It was, I don't remember it too well. I don't think I was down there over once and that was when I was about eight or nine years old but it stayed in business a few years longer. It stayed in business, I think, until perhaps the early thirties. And the thing that really caused it to close up was there was a murder down there.

Interviewer: There was a murder?

Mrs. Moran: Two men arguing over something. I don't remember what it was and one shot the other and killed him. And that was just something that just closed it down completely. They didn't want to run it anymore after that.

Interviewer: How did people get to this place?

Mrs. Moran: There were steel steps. You'd go about a third of the way across the bridge like you're going over into Chatham and there was metal steps that went all the way down to the island.

Interviewer: And so people had to take the metal steps to go down to the island?

Mrs. Moran: Um hum. They walked down, went down the steps to get to the island.

Interviewer: So, were the steps fairly wide?

Mrs. Moran: Not so wide. They were deep, steep. There were right many steps that took you down there. They were just, I guess, three feet wide.

Interviewer: And so, this was on the Chatham Bridge?

Mrs. Moran: Uhm hum. It certainly was.

Interviewer: The Chatham Bridge that is standing now?

Mrs. Moran: Now, let me see. During the flood, I'm trying to think... was that bridge washed out? I'm not sure during the flood of 42 whether that bridge was washed out or not. But it's in the same location. If it is another bridge, it's the same location.

Interviewer: That's an interesting type of arrangement for an amusement - a place of amusement.

Mrs. Moran: It was very odd.

Interviewer: So, have you thought of any other tidbits like that?

Mrs. Moran: Well, let me think.

Interviewer: For here that people of today might not realize existed?

Mrs. Moran: No, I don't think so. That's the only thing that seemed to come to mind that was unusual. You know something that was different. Of course, I think I told you before about the different stores downtown. There were lots and lots of them on Caroline Street which was Main Street now. I mean Main Street then and Caroline Street now uh that have gone out of business. So many places were in

business down there that are no longer there... Brents Store which was the ladies fashion store. They even decorated hats for the ladies in that store. They put flowers on them and different things, feathers quid different things like but and then there were many, many other stores downtown that are now out of business. Of course, the main ones I told you about in the first interview, like Penney's and Leggett's and Montgomery Wards and Sears. They were the main stores down there. They are all at the mall now. I think that was 1980, they left downtown and went to the mall. But the other little stores, individually owned stores, were the ones I was thinking about that are no longer downtown.

Interviewer: What about grocery stores? How many grocery stores did they have downtown?

Mrs. Moran: They didn't have many downtown. Let me see. On the corner of Commerce and Main Street, there was a store called the Mann Grocery. Then up that hill on Commerce Street, there was a W.D. Jones Grocery Store. Those two started in business quite a long time. Especially W.D. Jones. His store is right, well the back of his store comes out into the Market Square behind City Hall, where City Hall used to be. He was in business a long time. Then down near the railroad, about a block from the railroad, there was another store. I don't remember the name of it. I didn't go down that way often. I don't remember the name of that one. Down, right on the corner of George Street and Main Street there was another grocery store, called Penders. I remember that one. P-e-n-d-e-r-s, Penders.

Interviewer: So, did you shop at these little grocery stores?

Mrs. Moran: Some of them, yes, um hum.

Interviewer: Were any of them?

Mrs. Moran: At that time, though, my mother was doing the shopping. I wasn't married. She was doing the shopping. But I mean I would maybe run to one of those stores to get some - a loaf of bread or milk or something, you know.

Interviewer: Okay. Were they affiliated with IGA or any of the chains?

Mrs. Moran: No.

Interviewer: They were privately owned.

Mrs. Moran: The only one that I remember that was a nationwide store. In later years, there was a Safeway downtown. On what block would that be? 800 block across from Penney's.

Interviewer: There was a Safeway across from Penney's?

Mrs. Moran: Um hum, at one time.

Interviewer: And that's the only big chain store that was in downtown Fredericksburg?

Mrs. Moran: Um hum at that time. Yes.

Interviewer: So, how long was the Safeway there? Do you remember?

Mrs. Moran: I don't remember how long. I don't remember exactly.

Interviewer: So, have you thought of any other people? Can you think of anything else that you want to add about the way time was?

Mrs. Moran: I was talking about the different stores downtown. There were so many individually owned stores that have now gone out of business. Of course, you wouldn't remember them because you probably haven't been here long enough. But, there was a little grocery store down in the 700 block named Neris' and that's out of business. Those people are dead. There was a tailor shop across the street related to the people at Neris'. They were Italian people. His name was Vizzi. He owned the tailor shop and his wife worked in the store with him. In fact, their daughter and I were close friends and then I told you about Brents Store on the corner on George and Caroline Street. Of course, Goolrick's has been there for many, many years. It's still standing there. It's one that has never left. Then there's another one on the 700 block that's still there. It's been there many years, Washington Woolen Mills, that's still there. But, Kaufman's Jewelry Store was right along there by Washington Woolen Mills and that's been out of business for years. And Ann's Dress Shop was another store that's been out of business for a long time. All of these were individually owned stores.

Interviewer: What about Ulman's Jewelry?

Mrs. Moran: Ulman's Jewelry has been there for years and years like Goolrick's. They've been there since way back. As far back as I can remember.

Interviewer: And what about Crimsond's?

Mrs. Moran: Crimsond's? Yes, it was there, it's still there Crimsond's has been there for a long, long time. Yes, it has. I'm trying to think of any others. Along that block, there was another pharmacy. Oh gosh, I can't think of the name of it. Maybe it will come to me later. I can't think of the name of it but there was a pharmacy on that side of the street, too, in addition to Goolrick's and, of course, Bond's Drugstore. That was a well known place. That was on the corner of Commerce and Main.

Interviewer: So, what could you get drinks or sandwiches in the drug store?

Mrs. Moran: Um hum. Yes, sodas and drinks and ice cream sundaes and banana splits and all that. Um hum. Another thing that might be interesting. It's not pertaining to the city particularly but it's pertaining to the Depression times. I can remember, my mother taking sheets when they had gotten thin and worn in the middle and tearing them down the middle and sewing the outside ends together so that the strong part of the sheet would be in the middle and hemming the outside ends to save money.

Interviewer: Okay, can you think of any other things that she did during that time to save money?

Mrs. Moran: Yeah, I can think of one other thing. I remember she told me, when I got married. She said one way to save money on your husband's shirts, when the collar wears out, which is the First thing that usually wears out on a man's shirt, she said, " take a razor blade and rip the seam. Turn the collar around and put the unworn side next to the neck and the worn side will be turned down where you can't see it." So that was sort of unusual, too. Just ways to save money because times were so tight. People just couldn't afford to buy brand new shirts and brand new sheets every time that they wore out.

Interviewer: Speaking of money, what about the banks in Fredericksburg? Are any of the banks in the same location or are any of the banks that are still here?

Mrs. Moran: Fell, the National Bank, the First National Bank. Of course, we have a new one on Fall Hill Avenue, but the one that's on the corner of George Street and Princess Anne has been there since the Civil War days and the Farmers and Merchants Bank that's on the

corner of Princess Anne and Commerce Street. Let me see, that's been there quite a while but not as long as the National Bank. That used to be There used to be another bank, I think it was the Farmers and Merchants on the opposite corner, catty corner across from the one that's there now and that was called the Farmers and Merchants. Evidently that was done away with and that was when the new one was built.

Interviewer: Okay, now, what about the First Virginia Bank?

Mrs. Moran: That's more recent.

Interviewer: That's more recent?

Mrs. Moran: That's recent years in the last maybe 15, 20 years or something like that.

Interviewer: What about?

Mrs. Moran: Those two that I mentioned, I think, were the only two banks in town then - the National Bank and the Farmers and Merchants Bank. Oh, on the, no, there was one more - the Commerce Bank, the Commerce State Bank. It was on the corner of Main Street and Commerce.

Interviewer: And that would be what location today?

Mrs. Moran: That would be Caroline and William.

Interviewer: Okay, because the street names have changed?

Mrs. Moran: Have changed, right.

Interviewer: Yes. Okay, what about hospitals?

Mrs. Moran: The hospital was a very small building on Sophia Street which was called Water Street then. I'm trying to think of the side street that went up there. The corner of Sophia and ... I don't know what that street is. Lewis, I believe it is. That was the first hospital in Fredericksburg.

Interviewer: So where was it in location to where the library is today?

Mrs. Moran: Not too far from the library. The back of the library is only about a block away from where the hospital was. You go a block north like you're going towards Falmouth and the hospital would be on the next block.

Interviewer: Well, what you have told us about Fredericksburg and its earlier days is very interesting. Can you think of anything else that you would like to add?

Mrs. Moran: Not really. I really can't think of anything else to add right now.

Interviewer: Well, I thank you very much for your time and we have really enjoyed interviewing you for Historic Fredericksburg and so this concludes Part II of the interview with Mrs. Blanche Moran at 623 Stuart St. on Monday, December 7, 1998.