

This is Rose Hearn interviewing Mrs. Mary Krieger in her home at 164 Lavinia Street, Fort Erie, Ontario and the date is July 23, 1985.

R.H: Good morning Mary.

M.K: Good morning.

R.H: Could you tell me where you were born?

M.K: I was born and raised in the state of Pennsylvania.

R.H: Could you tell me when you were born?

M.K: March 22nd., 1904.

R.H: Where you raised on a farm?

M.K: I was, a hundred acre farm.

R.H: What kind of chores did you do around the farm when you were a young girl?

M.K: Oh pretty much everything. I would go and gather the eggs, and go to the garden and get the vegetables, and of course my father always thought a woman's place was in the home. There were nine children in the family, six girls and three boys and I loved to cook and sew, and help my mother do dishes, make beds, and stuff like that. I was not much out on the farm or out on the land, maybe to go and get the vegetables or something, or maybe go along and drop corn. It was easy work, but we never had to do it, but you know how children are, they love doing that when they're young.

R.H: Do you remember when the first World War soldiers were billeted close to there?

M.K: Yes there was a railroad bridge there. The B&S bridge they called it, and (Buffalo & Susquhanna I think it was) there was a coal-mine at Dense Run, (that's why they haul a lot of coal) and there was a one-coach passenger train and it run different hours. So when the first World War broke out I was between eleven and twelve years old, I remember that, and the soldiers guarded this bridge. I never could walk the bridge, but after the war broke out they put a sidewalk at the side of it for the soldier boys to go back and forth, well then I could walk the bridge. I had an aunt that lived at the other side of the bridge, and that was Aunt Kate my father's sister. I could go to her place real good, but I couldn't walk that bridge. My one sister who was two years younger than me, she could walk

it and think nothing of it.

R.H: Why couldn't you walk the bridge?

M.K: I got a little nervous looking down at the water and my dad said "well Mary look at three ties ahead, and don't look down". I couldn't do that, and of course I would go, but my sister would go on the bridge.

R.H: Did you have to take the long way?

M.K: No I'd get along there someway. Sometimes I'd use to have to crawl to get across that river, oh but I never could walk the, that bridge. We always liked to go to Aunt Kate's because she was always good to us girls, and she had two daughters and they were growed up. They were quite a bit older than me and my sisters. She loved to have us because she loved children, and she had chickens, and we had to take butter to her from the farm, and she got her milk off the farm, and eggs...cause she just had a few chickens. Her husband was away working in a lumber factory...you know what I mean...camp. He wasn't home all the time and so there wasn't much of her farming done. She just left it lay idle, and only the fruit trees and stuff like that were looked after, so anyway when the soldier boys came to guard the bridge during the First World War they pitched their tent in her...down by the barn on part of her property there. They ate their meals at my mom and dad's. My mother got 25 cents a meal from the government and it was three meals a day. It was their breakfast, their lunch, and their dinner. She only got paid once a month from the government, but they all were good boys. It made a lot of work for me because I was the oldest girl home.

R.H: Did you have to do all the cooking?

M.K: Well I helped my mother. Oh yeah I loved to cook, and oh I loved housework, and as I say...sewing. I'm just an old-fashioned girl. Oh yes I'd help her and I liked to bake and help her with different things and that, and then my oldest sister's husband was killed in the First World War and she had two little boys, and anyway she brought them home and my mother raised them two boys. They growed up to be two lovely men. I would have to look after the youngest one...change the napkins and that, and maybe feed him the bottle and everything, but I never regretted doing it.

a lot of things you learn like that from a child up.

R.H: Did you have electricity in the farmhouse?

M.K: No just oil lamps.

R.H: Do you remember when electricity came in?

M.K: Yes.

R.H: Have you any idea what year that was?

M.K: Well I worked at the Incandescent Lamp Company in Emporium, Pennsylvania.

R.H: How old were you then when you started working?

M.K: I was fifteen, and I loved the work and everything.

R.H: Were you making lightbulbs?

M.K: Yes, until they...well that was after they changed it into the radio tubes, and then they called it the Sylvania. They changed the name of the Lamp Company to Sylvania and that's known in different states, and the State of Pennsylvania, and they used to have one in Buffalo. They had one in Batavia, and New York State...well they had them in pretty near every state.

R.H: Do you remember how long you worked there?

M.K: I worked there a year, and I'll tell you why the reason is that I worked there. My brother had a pair of bobsleighs which he made for riding downhill, that's what they called them.

R.H: What did they call them?

M.K: Bobsleighs. They were pretty near like a skidoo today, and even the school teachers would ride downhill with us in the evenings and that. We'd have to haul this bobsleigh up the hill till we got to the top, and get on top and come down the hill, and we used to have more fun than a picnic. It was cold nights, but we were dressed warm and so were our teachers, and my oldest brother he would steer that with that great big rope...the thing that turned the front of the...watcha call them?...

R.H: The runners?

M.K: Yeah the first sleigh turned. You see it had two small sleighs, one on the back that worked with other, then it had big planks on it. You see it was all handmade. My brothers and my dad made it.

R.H: Was it all wood?

M.K: Yes it was all wood, and what they used on the runners was wagonwheels

old-fashioned wagonwheels, and they were some kind of a metal or steel or something...so they were put on it. Those bobsleighs used to go as fast as a train, at least I thought so. We had a lot of fun going on up the hill, and that's the way we had our fun when I was growing up. So I was on one time and we came around and there wasn't so many of us on, but my brother wasn't with me that time and I was about...let me see...it was shortly after I quit the Sylvania. I was not quite sixteen yet or that, and we were going around this curve and I hit the...what do you call it, and dislocated my shoulder. It was my right arm, and of course I was ready for high school and then it fractured the collarbone, and that year I was laid up quite a while for that. You know having an arm like that bandaged up, and then I didn't want to go to high school...no I'm gettin ahead of my story, and that's when I started to work at the Incandescent Lamp Company.

R.H: After you had the accident?

M.K: After I had the accident.

R.H: So you went to work there because you didn't want to go to high school?

M.K: Because I was away behind in school, and the other children were away ahead of me.

R.H: So you went to work, and you worked there for a year?

M.K: Yeah.

R.H: Were the conditions good in there?

M.K: Where I worked? Oh yeah, lovely. We all worked together good and everything.

R.H: Was there a Union?

M.K: No no. No Union in them days.

R.H: What did you get paid?

M.K: Well now you've got me there, I just forget but we made a good allowance, you know what I mean...what they were paying in those days. I'm going back a good many years, and that's why I can't remember.

R.H: Do you remember how many hours you worked?

M.K: Yeah, eight hours a day, and I loved working there cause they were all nice to work with and everything.

R.H: When did you first come to Fort Erie?

M.K: I came to Fort Erie in the first part of 1922. I came over here as a young bride and landed at the ferry-dock.

R.H: You landed at Agrette's?

M.K: Yes, and I'll never forget the lady's name. I'll give you the lady's name and a lot of people in Fort Erie would know her as she was on the Customs. She had a sister that had a bakeshop on Jarvis Street right next to Bobby Lands Drugstore.

R.H: And she was the customs officer?

M.K: I'm trying to figure the customs lady's name. I was trying to think of it the other day so I could tell you. Oh isn't that too bad that I can't remember...a lot of the older people on the Customs would know her name, but anyway what I thought funny was, I had to go in and she says to me "did you buy anything in Buffalo", and I says "no" and she says "have you got anything on that you bought in the States" I said "yes I have, I married Gordon Krieger and I'm coming over here as a young bride and we were married in Buffalo". What was her name? Norm Graham was the customs...

R.H: Where did you first live when you came to Fort Erie?

M.K: I lived with my husband's mother on Phipps Street till we went housekeeping. I stayed there till after my first child was born. She nursed me, because she was like that, you know what I mean, like a midwife.

R.H: What was Phipps Street like, were there many homes on there?

M.K: Not too awful many. There was a lot of them older homes there but they looked really nice to me because they kept them up, you know, remodelled.

R.H: Was the roadway all paved when you were there?

M.K: No, no.

R.H: If it wasn't paved, what was it? Was it dirt?

M.K: I can't remember, no it was pretty well kept up: So we went housekeeping at the top end of Phipps Street...Phipps Street were the old Michigan Central Roundhouse was. I remember that. Of course Fort Erie was a railroad town at that time, so many railroaders.

R.H: This Roundhouse, how far away from Phipps Street was that?

M.K: It was right on Phipps Street, right at the top end there. Up near...oh there is a street that goes across there, but I just forget the street name now. We had Pratt and Lambert's, and then with the coal

engines going, boy our house was...we used to put the windows up and our curtains would be just dark from the coal smoke and the Pratt and Lambert smoke. The paint factory was always there, that was there when I came over here to live and it's still here. We lived on Dufferin Street, and then we moved up there where...oh there was a Chinese restuarant on Jarvis Street and they tore it down and the undertaker's name was Mr. Atwood, the older man that had the funeral business. Well he took it and made the lumber and built three house up at the top end of Phipps Street and we rented one of them when we went housekeeping. Thirty dollars a month for a good size house. Three bedrooms upstairs with a bath, and a kitchen, dining room, and living room, and a nice hallway downstairs with and a full basement, and we only paid thirty dollars a month rent.

R.H: Where was your husband working at that time?

M.K: He was chief-clerk on the Michigan Central Railroad.

R.H: Did he work shifts?

M.K: No, it was mostly day-work at that time.

R.H: So he was a railroad man too?

M.K: Yeah, that's what I said, it was a railroad town. When my second baby was born why Grandma Krieger nursed me and Dr. Streets delivered him.

R.H: Where was Dr. Streets practice?

M.K: When he first came out of College he opened up his practice in Grandma Krieger's home on Phipps Street. It's there today, a brick home.

R.H: The home is still there, do you remember the number?

M.K: The home is still there, but I forget the number though it would still be on the house today and he stayed there until, as I call it... until he bought his big mansion just kiddy-corner from there, the corner of Phipps and Central.

R.H: So that's where he had his practice in your mother-in-law's home, but what did he pay for that?

M.K: Twenty five dollars a month rent, but that was a lot of money in them days.

R.H: And he was your doctor?

M.K: Yeah, for the second baby. I wanted an older doctor, but I thought, well I'll have Dr. Streets then, but I always liked him for a doctor.

R.H: Was there no hospital at that time?

M.K: No, there was no hospital here at that time in Fort Erie. He was born right at Grandma Krieger's too, and Grandma Krieger nursed me, and in those days you had stay in bed ten days before you'd get up on your feet. Now times have changed.

R.H: Was there Maternity Homes around here?

M.K: Yes, right. They had three in fort Erie. One was Mr. and Mrs. James Questard on Dufferin Street, and there was Mr. and Mrs. James Putney over on Emerick Avenue in that big brick home. (The brick home is still there). They had a maternity home, and then on Phipps Street there was Mrs. Moir, she was a registered nurse from out of town, she wasn't a Fort Erie lady and I had my oldest son's tonsils taken out at her maternity home. Dr. Streets took them out.

R.H: So they did more or less everything, they didn't just deliver babies at these homes?

M.K: No. Maybe something like that, (tonsils) not a serious operation, and my oldest son was seven years old when his tonsils were removed and Dr. Street did them.

R.H: Can you remember any of the stores you shopped at?

M.K: Oh yeah the ones down on Jarvis Street, they were all together...

R.H: Was that called Bridgeburg then?

M.K: You're right.

R.H: Do you remember the names of any of the stores?

M.K: There used to be Willick's the butcher and of course that was sold different times, and then Mr. Fretz he used to run it. Oh yes there was another one that used to run with Murray Spratt. Well they switched every...I don't what happened with their family or...but it was always the same type store. In those days they used to stay open on saturday nights till 10 oclock, but just on saturday nights. That was mostly meat there, and the grocers had other stuff. Mullet's had more like a vegetable store across from there, but that building is down. It's all new, I think that's where Pike's Cleaners is. There was Rungs that used to have a kind of a hardware store. A lot of people would remember that. Mr. Atwood always had the furniture store as a rule.

R.H: Was that the same Atwood that had the funeral home?

M.K: Yes, I think it would be...let me see...oh there used to be like a 5 and 10 cent store along there too. He sold all drygoods and thread and stuff like that and...I'm trying ot think of their names...his wife's name was...she was a Jackson girl...

R.H: Could you tell me anything about the shipyards?

M.K: Yeah, of course I wasn't here at that time, but my husband's mother's mother lived down there.

R.H: Was there quite a few homes down there?

M.K: I couldn't even tell you that, but Mr. Charles Glenny they had a farm down there and at the end of this farm my husband's mother Mrs. Wrensch lived there. And so when the Fenian Raid came through, her husband was a coffin maker (my husband's mother's father) and he had shavings outside the home and they hid her when she was three years old underneath the these shavings. They thought that the soldiers may kidnap her, but they drank the well dry coming through so that was quite a thing.

R.H: That was her maiden name though, Wrensch?

M.K: That was my husband's mother's maiden name.

R.H: Was there someone in her family that had something to do with the Telephone Company?

M.K: Yes. That was one of her brothers, Henry Wrensch. He had three brothers that were carpenters in San Francisco. There was Uncle Mike, Uncle George, and Uncle John. Well him and the Glenny boy they brought this telephone wire and got it connected up between the farmhouses, (a lot of people would know that if they go back in history) and so they'd bring this stuff or have it sent up, or either brought up from San Francisco. You see they were farther ahead of these companies here, but that just went on when they were kids...you know young men. This Uncle Henry was a carpenter in Buffalo on a scaffold. He fell and he was killed in Buffalo.

R.H: And he was the one that helped start the Telephone Company?

M.K: Yeah. When they were young men they put the lines between his home and Glenny's.

R.H: Where was his home?

M.K: Out at the Shipyard. They'd talk back and forth, and some of them said they were too much on the line, and they developed it more

more you see until...

R.H: So him and Glenny started the Telephone Company?

M.K: Yes, like around here they did.

R.H: Did your husband's family live out in New Germany at one time, didn't they have a farm out there?

M.K: They lived on the Bowen Road up by the Little Red Schoolhouse. That's where the new school is built, down that road from there, but now you see that's the Union Centre out there. They bought it and when they closed that school up they brought all them schools into Fort Erie.

R.H: Did they have a farm out there?

M.K: The Kriegers had a farm out there, and when they put the road through that's when they sold their farm and came into Fort Erie to live.

R.H: Where exactly is New Germany?

M.K: Well you go through Stevensville and go down to...(it was called New Germany there) and there's a hotel there called the Commercial, the Commercial Hotel and they changed it to Snyder, and that's what it's called today.

R.H: That's New Germany?

M.K: That used to be New Germany because years back the people of German descent came from the States and settled in that little village, you know the farmers and that. That's the way that came about. I've looked for those pictures too and I can't find them, of when they crossed the Niagara River. We were married by one of the ministers of that church, in Buffalo. He's gone too but I forget his name. I used to have his picture too, his wife and family, but I'm going back a pretty good many years I mean.

R.H: Did you go to Erie Beach?

M.K: Yeah it was a nice beach, and I think it was even nicer than Crystal Beach at that time. Mr. Bardol was the head of that, and he was from Buffalo, Al was his name. They used to have a little train that met you at the ferry and went right up the lake front there to Erie Beach. I wish I had a picture of that. The train going up was just a little engine, and then the cars would be open naturally, like a little trolley with benches to sit down on.

R.H: What did they have at Erie Beach, do you remember?

M.K: Well they had a lovely beach there, and on sundays they had entertainment out there. They had peacocks and different animals there. It was like a little zoo, small, but it was lovely and we'd go up on sunday and they'd have these here acrobats where the horse goes up on top of a...what do you call it? and the girl would be on top and jump down into the great big pool or body of water. It was man-made. manmade. I thought that was really nice, and then years ago they'd have like some kind of a great big thing for a man to go through and they'd shoot him out of a cannon or something. I don't how they fixed it up, but when you're young you can't remember, but I know it was just for entertainment like that.

R.H: Do you remember the names of any of the rides? Do you know the name of the one that went out over the water?

M.K: No, but they had a nice dancehall there, I know that...at Erie Beach, and then every year Mr. Bardol would have the custom men and the immigration men up there for a free party at his home.

R.H: Where was his home?

M.K: Erie Beach.

R.H: Right at Erie Beach?

M.K: Yeah, now I don't know if it's still there or not, yes it was right there at Erie Beach, a lovely big home, more like what I would say a mansion.

R.H: Did you go to any of these parties?

M.K: Yeah I went a couple of times with my husband.

R.H: Did your husband work on the customs?

M.K: Yeah, your right. He started working there in 1927 when the bridge went through.

R.H: Do you remember when the Peace Bridge opened? How long where you here then?

M.K: My second child was two years old in 1927, and he was born in 1925.

R.H: So your husband was working on the Customs then?

M.K: Yes, well right after the Peace Bridge was built, cause they didn't have so many men for the ferry-boats.

R.H: Did you think the building of the Peace Bridge was a good thing?

M.K: Yes, and when it was built it was always supposed to be...why they named it the Peace Bridge because in time we were supposed to go across and back for nothing, but I don't know if it will ever turn

out for that in years to come.

R.H: Did you go across often to Buffalo?

M.K: No not too often, maybe just to visit friends on a Sunday because you see we had the two boys, and wool was cheaper here in Canada than in the States, and you was farther ahead by buying your material over here. Cottons was a lot cheaper over there, but I never did much buying over there. I used to make our own clothes and everything you know when the boys were small and that.

R.H: Did you have a car?

M.K: Oh yeah my husband always had a car. When we were married he had a big four-door Baby Grand car. It was made by Chevrolet. You had to put the curtains up then and snap them on, and it was a double windshield, and where it was broken you'd want to pull it up to leave the air in. You could leave the air in, and it was lined with all black leather with a big large...well you could imagine, it was like a big touring car it was, and that's why we called it the Baby Grand Chevy. He bought it from Mr. Spears at Stevensville, and they finally came in to Fort Erie and opened up a car sales later on in years, but this was from the young boys father way back.

R.H: Was that your first car?

M.K: Yeah, my husband had it when we got married.

R.H: What year was it?

M.K: 1922. That's a long time ago, and of course maybe he bought it in 1921 cause it wasn't brand new, maybe 1921, or something like that. He always kept it up nice and my gosh I thought it was a big car, but it was a big car. They made cars well in them days, and I'll never forget snapping those things on when it rained. It had that isinglass or what ever you called it in the curtains, but what I used to laugh at...the windshield had a double glass and you could pull it to bring the air in or that, and then we used to be bothered with sandflies years ago because the engines you know had the radiators and they'd all get in there and oh...the sandflies used to be terrible, but now these later years they're not as bad.

R.H: Do you think it's because they're spraying?

M.K: Yes I think so. Now I think that's about all I can recall. Of course I had to stay home and raise the two children up so I couldn't get around

like they do to day. Of course we had the car, and he had it to go to work and everything, and when the boys were smaller he used to do most of the heavy shopping for me. When the Peace Bridge opened up you see, I had eight roomers and two little boys to look after, so that was a lot of work for a young woman to do.

R.H: So actually when the Peace Bridge opened you had this rooming house, did you?

M.K: Yeah, and some of the men worked on the Peace Bridge on ticket sales.

R.H: So you just gave them a room?

M.K: Yes, three dollars a week.

R.H: Three dollars a week, and they were the men that were building this Peace Bridge?

M.K: No, after the Peace Bridge was built.

R.H: Were they from out of town these people?

M.K: Yeah, and some of them were married and then they moved into town with their wives. There was the Renshaw boy and his wife. They moved here and they used to live over here...I think it's North Street, but they're both gone, and they were lovely people. I had nice boys living there. I had one that was a carpenter that used to work for Oscar Teal who was a contractor here in Fort Erie. He built Grandma Krieger's brick home when they moved from the farm.

R.H: This Oscar Teal did, he was a contractor?

M.K: Yes he was a contractor. Oh he built some beautiful homes here in Fort Erie, apartment houses and everything, oh yes he's well known for that. That would be the lawyer now you know, well Jack Teal was his...he was the Mayor of Fort Erie, and that would be Oscar's Teal's son, and Oscar Teal's wife was my husband's school-teacher when she was single. Her maiden name was Murphy on the Bowen Road Schoolhouse. They were a lovely couple, and my husband always liked that school-teacher Miss Murphy even when they were married. Of course I don't know how old my husband was when they got married, but if he was living my husband, he'd be eighty eight and that's a long time back. I couldn't tell you anymore than that, but her maiden name was Murphy and she was a school-teacher over at the little Bowen Road Red Schoolhouse. Krieger's farm was right by it. There was a road in between.

R.H: Was this schoolhouse very big?

M.K: No.

R.H: Was it a one-room schoolhouse?

M.K: Yeah.

R.H: And one teacher?

M.K: Yeah.

R.H: How long did you have this rooming-house, do you remember?

M.K: Well it was our own private home you know what I mean...oh not too long, then we built our own home when the youngest was about five years old, and that would only be say about two or three years. You see he was two years old when the Peace Bridge was built because I remember standing holding him and it was so hot that time. I think it was in July and I was waiting to see the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Kent, and that was quite the thing in those days and I wanted to see them.

R.H: What was it like that day?

M.K: Oh the crowd and everything, and it was so hot that day, but I got to see him cause that was quite the thing in Fort Erie.

R.H: Were they selling lots of souvenirs that day?

M.K: Oh yes.

R.H: Did you get anything at all?

M.K: No I didn't.

R.H: Did you work at Irvin Airchute?

M.K: Yeah I worked at Irvin Airchute a year after we built this home here where I am now, and then my husband talked me into quitting. I didn't like to quit because the boys had been overseas and they were both married, but he said he hated to come home and no one at home, and that was something new to him because I was always home. Of course he didn't feel good and I thought it was just nerves and I didn't want to quit, but anyway I did quit. Well I'm not sorry that I didn't quit.

R.H: Was the work very hard?

M.K: No, just like nervy. You had to use the electric sewing machines and that. The lot that we got here to build this home on where I am now...(thirty four years ago it was built) you see everyone that was in the service got a lot given to them when they came back by the town of Fort Erie, and they arranged it so much with... well I don't know how much it was with the taxes and so when I

went to work at Irvin Airchute, why one of the floor ladies, I think her name was Joyce Raymond asked me "Mary, where do you live" and I said "I live at 164 Lavinia Street why?" Oh my gosh she says "you know that was my husband's lot that he got from the town for being in the service". He was a policeman then, you know in the police-force. She was a lovely girl, and I liked to work with her, and we used to talk like that, and anyway that's the way that came about. Before that it used to be used as a policeman's...now what would you call it? They'd come up and shoot. Of course all these houses weren't up. That house across the street was there because that was moved from the Peace Bridge. Shooting range wouldn't you call it? for them to practice their...well that's what they used this lot for.

R.H: So this lot was a shooting-range?

M.K: Yeah, but I don't know how long they did it, I couldn't tell you that. Then after that I think that it was...what's his name that bought it? He ran the cabins down along the blvd., and Bert Tolson was his name, and they're both gone too, and that's the way we came to buy this lot. We built this home, my husband and his brother built it right from...mixed their own cement, poured their own forms in the cellar and everything like that. They had carpenter born in them when they had three uncles who were carpenters, and then our two boys turned out to be pretty good carpenters too. Harold built two houses, one on Bertie Street and one next to the church. He built that one first right after he got back from the service and he got the lot from the town. Then the girls all came along and then he bought the lot from the town where his brick home is, on the corner of Bertie and High Street.

R.H: How long did you work at Irvin Airchute?

M.K: Oh...I don't know if it was quite a year or not, but it was quite a while. We made good money because it was an American concern back then.

R.H: Was there a union there?

M.K: No, not at that time.

R.H: Do you remember what you made an hour?

M.K: No, I can't even remember that, but I know what I made after I went to work at the hospital after my husband died.

R.H: [Do remember the name of that female customs officer]?

M.K: Addie Trench. She had a sister who had a bake-shop on Jarvis Street, and I forget the name of the shop but they had a brother who was a baker. They used to always call that the ice-cream parlour, down farther it was on Jarvis Street. We used to go in there Mrs. Kline and I and we'd order a pop, and then take a scoop of ice-cream put that in it, and have like a soda. Yeah it was on Jarvis Street and I forget the brother's name, but he's gone too.

R.H: Did you live on Princess Street?

M.K: Yeah I lived on Princess Street when the Peace Bridge was built. We moved on Princess Street when Harold was born on the top end of Phipps Street. Remember I told you John Atwood's houses and how he built them. Well we lived there and Harold was born there, and Grandma Krieger nursed me there. My husband bought me an electric washing machine, an Easy, and it had a big copper tub with three suction cups, and Grandma Krieger used to come up and do her washing. That was my first washing machine.

R.H: So that was down at the Southend?

M.K: Northend, this is the Southend.

R.H: But Princess Street, is that not the Southend?

M.K: That's down here, right around from the power company, and Derbyshire lived right across the street. The Perry's lived next door and then I'll tell you who lived...June Hettle's father and mother, and June married a man named Al Ferguson who had a barbershop right down there on the blvd. in the Southend. June at that time was a teller in where the bank was then...I forget what bank it was but it was right across from Agrette's store. It could have been the Bank of Montreal, because the Bank of Montreal was on the corner of Bertie and the Niagara Blvd. and she used to be a teller there.

R.H: What was her name?

M.K: Hettle. She was a relation to the Dunn family here in Fort Erie, you know Dunn the mover? Well her mother was Chuck Dunn's...I think she was his sister, anyway she's quite close but I wouldn't say which way that worked. Al was from inland farther around Barrie or whatever you call it, but I always say inland farther 'cause it is, though I can't think of the names. He came here to work and he boarded at June's mom's. You know how people come into town

and they will ask if you know of anyone who would like a boarder and he was a nice man and they took him to board, and that's the way she met her husband. They lived right next door to me on Princess Street. That's how some of them met. They only had one child, one girl.

R.H: So they had a barbershop?

M.K: Yeah they had a barbership right up here until he retired. He was a good barber, well known, nice people.

R.H: [Have you heard of Judge House]?

M.K: Judge House was a judge here and I don't know where they held their meetings or anything but...

R.H: Where was his house?

M.K: Right across from where we go to pay the taxes.

R.H: The Town Hall?

M.K: Yeah, right up in there on Jarvis Street. That's where he had his office...

R.H: Did you say there was only one policeman?

M.K: Yeah at that time, but I forget what his name was.

R.H: That was for Bridgeburg?

M.K: For the town, but I couldn't tell you his name.

R.H: Did he have an office or anything?

M.K: He must have had a place at the Town Hall or something but the Town Hall was just small then. It was like a good size house and then that house was moved out up on Dufferin Street right next door to me and it was sold. It made a nice home and then they built the big brick Town Hall.

R.H: Do you remember anything about the Bellard Theatre?

M.K: Yeah, we used to go to that and that was nice. To go in to see it I think all the kids paid in the afternoon was 15 cents to see the matinee. I used to go at night with the boys to see the pictures and that. It was nice people that run that, and they lived on Phipps Street too in one of them houses.

R.H: Was that the Ziff's?

M.K: Yeah, that's right and that's where the first talkies came that I ever saw, and they came there before they gave up the business.

R.H: Did you have a photograph of a silent movie star Tom Mix?

M.K: Yes, yes.

R.H: Did he grow up where you grew up?

M.K: No he was quite a bit older than me.

R.H: I mean did he grow up in the same area?

M.K: Yes, until he took one of the horses, and went to California to become a movie star.

R.H: He left on one of the horses?

M.K: Yes, and his mother always said "it was born right in that boy" because he'd go to get the cows and he'd take an umbrella because it was raining and he'd be riding one of them cows back with the umbrella up. He was quite a man wasn't he? That was born in that boy, it wasn't taught to him like these younger cowboys.

R.H: So you went to see his movies?

M.K: Oh yes I liked to see his movies. All of us did down home. Everybody that was born and raised down there went.

R.H: Did you see any of his movies at the Bellard?

M.K: Not that I recall.

R.H: What was it like that theatre?

M.K: It was a nice theatre, and good size theatre, and they did good business. They used to run the second show at night too you know. The first and then the second show.

R.H: Did they have a piano player to play for the silent movies?

M.K: No I don't think they did but they did down home for the silent pictures, down home where I came from. But they always played for the first show, and then the second show they wouldn't play the piano. Now I can't recall if they did have but I don't think they did. I could be wrong.

R.H: But the talkies came in anyway?

M.K: Yeah the talkies came in 'cause I remember that 'cause that's the first time I ever heard a talkie unless you went to Buffalo. We never went over there to the show.

R.H: Do you know why the theatre suddenly died?

M.K: No I couldn't tell you. They used to have one in Ridgeway and I think the Ziff's ran that and now they have the drive-in. They still have that.

R.H: The drive-in?

M.K: I'm sure they do.

R.H: Does that belong to the Ziff's, the drive-in?

M.K: I couldn't tell you exactly or not. It could be.

R.H: They had a theatre in Ridgeway, did they?

M.K: Yeah.

R.H: What area was that in?

M.K: Right along main, the main street.

R.H: Ridge Road?

M.K: It would be the main street. Yeah that's right, it went right through the town, right in the centre of town, maybe across from where the china shop and that is there.

R.H: Beeshy's China shop?

M.K: Yeah along in there somewhere.

R.H: Do you remember the name of the theatre?

M.K: No I don't.

R.H: [Do you know anything about the Racetrack]?

M.K: Not much because I never went there. It is the same as it is today but it was smaller.

R.H: Do you know when it was built?

M.K: 1895. (Mary told me later that the date was 1897, and that would tie in with her next answer).

R.H: 1895?

M.K: Eighty eight years ago because my husband always remembered that.

R.H: Was it on his birthday?

M.K: No, but it was the same year.

R.H: It's a long time.

M.K: Yeah that's right. Eighty eight years ago and look at the business they are still doing. Oh I remember something else about where we bought our milk. Well Millar's had a farm out on the corner of Bowen Road and Ridge Road, (everybody in Fort Erie would know that) and they sold milk, and at that time they delivered it with horses 'cause there wasn't so many cars. So when you wanted your milk you had to put a pan out on your front porch. if you wanted a pint you'd put a note in it, and if you wanted a quart they'd leave the quart. That's the way we got our milk delivered. They'd take it out of their big cans and put it in yours. So then at the end when my first child was born I had to order what they called the bottle milk, and when they bottled it, it was called baby milk. Miller's

called it that, and so I had to buy a quart a day but that had to be sealed up in a glass quart. It was bottled to give to the child and that's the way we got our milk in Fort Erie. Anyone can tell you that if they can remember back. A lot of older people especially.

R.H: Did you have to leave the empty bottles out?

M.K: Yeah, and they called that baby milk 'cause you see it was all sterilized, like no germs for the child. Do you see the way they protected stuff years ago.

R.H: How much was the milk, do you remember?

M.K: I just forget. I couldn't even tell you that, but that's the way it was delivered.

R.H: When you say you put out a pan like...

M.K: Well with a lid on it.

R.H: So they poured it right from their can right in...?

M.K: Yeah they measured it out of their can and they poured it out or put it in your dish or can, whatever you put out.

R.H: Did they eventually deliver it in bottles?

M.K: I couldn't even tell you that, not that I recall. But it was Miller's Dairy on the corner of Ridge Road and Bowen Road. It was a farm, and I think the big barn is still there and his name was Fred Miller.

R.H: Well that was interesting, anyway...

M.K: I forgot about that.

R.H: Yeah, there's so many things you do forget about.

M.K: Of course there's wasn't the people in the world, no germs spread or nothing, I mean like serious germs, only with Grandma Krieger's sister, but that was bought over from Buffalo that Black Diptheria. You see her sister who was fourteen years of age died with it. That's serious you know.

R.H: Mary, you mentioned that you were employed at Douglas Memorial Hospital, do you remember what year you started?

M.K: 1953.

R.H: 1953? What kind of work did you do there?

M.K: I worked in the laundry running the mangle.

R.H: What exactly did you do there, the mangle was it...?

M.K: Yeah I worked on the mangle, and it was a gas mangle, heated by gas. I did the sheets, and the drawsheets, and the bedspreads, and the pillow-cases.

R.H: Did you put them through the mangle?
M.K: Yes, everything had to be flat.
R.H: Did it have a roller type of mechanism?
M.K: Yeah, yeah.
R.H: And what did that do, did it iron them?
M.K: Yes. It did them beautiful, and pressed them.
R.H: So it was like a huge iron, but they called it a mangle?
M.K: Yeah.
R.H: How much did you make there, do you remember?
M.K: 50 cents an hour.
R.H: How many hours, like what was the hours?
M.K: Well I worked at eight in the morning, and maybe stopped for lunch, and whenever we got the laundry some days, that laundry took more hours, and maybe we'd work one day an hour longer then. But we generally was always out of there between 3:30 and 4 oclock in the afternoon unless something special came up, if the laundry was heavier. That was six days a week, and thursday was my day off.
R.H: So you had to work weekends. You mentioned that sundays you had special treatment?
M.K: Oh yes on sunday we got our turkey dinner. It was a four-course meal for only 50 cents. That kind of made me feel better.
R.H: Do you remember any of the people that worked there?
M.K: Yes, Mrs. Stark worked there. I just can't remember the one that run the washing machine but her first name was Lil, and she was from Toronto, she wasn't a Fort Erie girl, but Mrs. Stark was a Fort Erie lady that worked there. I remember a customs officer's wife, she was either a registered nurse or a nurses aid...and she worked there, and I can't just think of her last name...her married name...
R.H: Do you remember any of the doctors that were there at that time?
M.K: Yeah there was Dr. Lagree from Ridgeway, and...
R.H: Was Dr. Streets there?
M.K: No, no...yes he must of been there...yes he was there, he was always there, and then I don't know if Dr. Butters was there at that time or not. I didn't pay much attention to that. I had my health and that, you know what I mean and never much...but I know Dr. Lagree was there because he came in from Ridgeway.
R.H: Did you notice if the area was built up where the hospital was?

M.K: No, they went up shortly, or around that time the hospital was built.

R.H: How long did you work there?

M.K: I worked there, I think a full year.

R.H: And after you left the hospital, where did you work?

M.K: I worked at the Review Company, but I worked at the Review Company every thursday when I worked at the hospital because that was the paper day on my day off, to put the newspaper out, The Fort Erie Times Review.

R.H: What day did it come out?

M.K: Thursday's.

R.H: It came out on thursday?

M.K: Yes 'cause that was my day off, and that's why they got me in, to help out with the paper, and I wanted to be busy.

R.H: So then you went there full-time?

M.K: Yeah until I retired, till I was sixty six years old.

R.H: Where was it located?

M.K: On Jarvis Street?

R.H: Was it still on the same spot?

M.K: Yeah, but the building they don't use it anymore. You know what I mean, it's closed up.

R.H: Where it was?

M.K: Where it was, yeah.

R.H: So it has moved since you worked there?

M.K: Well the Johnson's had owned it when I worked there, and they sold it to Dave Scott, and then he didn't have it too awful long, and then Gary Lyons bought it. He was a young man, and that's when I quit when he had it, and that's when it changed. I don't know how long after I quit there that it changed, but he ran it for quite a while. But of course it was just these later years they built out on Thompson Road. Time goes so fast though when you don't keep tabs on anything like that.

R.H: Who built on Thompson Road?

M.K: Gary Lyons, lithograph.

R.H: Oh yes, so he built that Lyons Lithograph on Thompson road, I see. Do you remember any of the people who worked with you at The Times Review?

M.K: Oh yes there was Nellie Brownhill, she was a widow. We were pretty

near all widows that would come on for the paper you know, to work part-time. There was Nellie Butler, she wasn't a widow though her husband worked there, and there was Edie Bell but she wasn't a widow at that time either...

R.H: What about some of the men who worked there, do you remember any of them?

M.K: Oh yeah Gene Butler worked there then, and Keith McKinnon, (Keith McKinnon is still with the company) and Pete Gondson, and then there's David Cook (he still works there) and there's a fellow that works there from Chipawa, he's still out there too. He drives back and forth and his first name is Nick, but I can't remember his last name.

R.H: Was it a free newspaper then?

M.K: No, we had to pay for it, but I just forget the price.

R.H: Did they deliver them to the homes or did they put them in the stores?

M.K: Yeah, they delivered them to the homes and then they'd put them in the stores, and then they'd send them out of town. We had to do them all up and get them ready for the mail.

R.H: What was the nickname that people gave to the Times Review?

M.K: We always called it the Blabber among us women. We had a laugh because we worked like machines gathering it, oh dear, to get that newspaper out in time and maybe something would happen sometimes in the press-room and we'd get a little late at getting it, and then we'd have to work that much faster. It was the same when we worked on the programs for the Fort Erie Racetrack.

R.H: Did you have to do so many a day?

M.K: Yeah, but the racetrack forms they came in thousands.

R.H: Did you deliver them?

M.K: Yeah they were delivered done up in...they cut them up twenty fives in a bundle you know what I mean, and then we did them in five hundred big bundles, They had to be wrapped and marked and taken to the racetrack. That's the way they delivered them, and then we would come in...oh there'd be about two of us women that would come in on Saturday with Keith on the cutter, and Pete worked in the press-room to print the programs and that.

R.H: How did they deliver them, did they have a truck to deliver them?

M.K: Oh yes, they had to take them to the track, and if they didn't have

the truck they'd take their own private cars.

R.H: Who was it that did delivery, do you know?

M.K: No I couldn't tell you, but Saturdays it would be the most men that was there that would run up with them. Of course they weren't by the thousands then but...well they'd order them just as they'd use them on those days they were ordering. They'd call up maybe for five hundred or so many like that, and then they'd call up and order another bunch 'cause they did that on account of so many people. On Saturday there'd be more people than ever and they'd never know how many was coming and that was such a rush. They'd give us a call and we'd have to get them programs out, and ready to be delivered before the races.

R.H: Did they sell the programs or were they free?

M.K: Not the company didn't sell them.

R.H: No, I mean the Fort Erie Racetrack?

M.K: Oh yeah.

R.H: Did they sell them?

M.K: Yeah twenty five cents a piece they were for a program.

R.H: You said they called it The Town Blabber, why did they call it The Town Blabber?

M.K: Well because in them days if you had company come they printed... well Mr. and Mrs. So and So and Mr. So and So from some place where they lived, or Mrs. So and So is in the hospital so she had company over the weekend, and that was put in. My younger son he used to laugh about this. I didn't laugh so much because it was news and we'd all look, and we'd come in to work and one lady would say "do you know this or that" well we never noticed it in the paper, and she'd say "well I saw it in the paper". Everything we saw was in the paper and that's why we called it The Town Blabber. That was just between us you know what I mean, and Mr. Johnson didn't care. He got a good laugh out of it too, but he was wonderful to work for and also the company. I liked every minute of it. I did like the hospital too, but it was a little bit harder work, and it was hot in the summertime. I didn't mind it in the wintertime but oh in the summer...but now see all that has changed. They all got electricity, and they all got different things.

R.H: Before Television, was radio a big thing in those days?

M.K: Yeah like afternoon programs, I used to listen to Ma Perkins.

R.H: They had soaps on the radio too, didn't they?

M.K: Yeah, the Guiding Light. A minister used to play in that one, but I forget his name and that's the way it got the name you see the light in the window, and that's the way The Guiding Light got that name.

R.H: What else did you listen to on the radio?

M.K: There was other programs on, but I just can't recall some of them now.

R.H: Comedies maybe?

M.K: Yeah but they were nice stories, down to earth stories and that, and I can't think of this one that had the...one had a boyfriend and he was up an up, like some Lord or something, and he always brought her...

R.H: This was on the radio. Was it a romantic show, or was it a soap?

M.K: Yeah it was a soap, you know like real life, and he liked this here girl...

R.H: Did you have a big radio, or was it a small table model?

M.K: I had a big one but I had a small one and I had it in my room where I could sew and listen to my story.

R.H: You also had a big one, did you say?

M.K: Yes, yeah.

R.H: Was it a floor model?

M.K: Yes your right.

R.H: Do you remember the name of it?

M.K: Deforrest and Crossley. The last one I had you'd touch a button to get the station and everything, and that was the latest model I had. We got it from Skingley's and his son is still in business on Jarvis Street.

R.H: Skingley's?

M.K: Yeah his father, we got it from his dad.

R.H: Did you listen to any comedies on the radio like Jack Benny?

M.K: Oh yes, and Amos and Andy...what was those two guys...just all the comics.

R.H: Well Mary you mentioned that the Racetrack was built the same year your husband was born, and that he liked horses, did he ever tell you or do you know how they were shipped to the races?

M.K: They were shipped by rail in and out. Right at the end of the viaduct

out there. I guess you'd call it the overhead bridge, you know what I mean where you go under. I guess that's what you would call it, wouldn't you.

R.H: So the train stopped there, would that be Bertie?

M.K: Yes Bertie...no that would be Thompson Road on the other side of the cemetery.

R.H: Is that were they would disembark, like where they would bring them off the trains would be at Thompson?

M.K: Yeah, and lead them on to the track, the Racetrack, 'cause you see they've changed it around now.

R.H: And then they shipped them back that way too?

M.K: Yes back that way to until they came along with the vans, and now naturally they move them with the big vans.

R.H: Did they have special cars or anything on these trains for them?

M.K: I think so.

R.H: Were they still closed cars or open?

M.K: Yeah more than likely, just like they shipped animals. One time they used to ship animals right through here, like cows going to Buffalo to the slaughter house. I remember that too. You'd could hear them at night, the pigs a squealing or the cows or the animals you know what I mean, going to the slaughter house.

R.H: You would hear them at night would you, where you were living. Where were you living then?

M.K: Well you see their voices carried at night when it was quiet. Now you see that's all done away with now.

R.H: Well that's interesting. Thankyou Mary, thankyou very much for the interview, and on behalf of the library I'd like to thank you.

M.K: You are welcome.