

Kentwood Historic Preservation Commission
Oral History Transcript Cover Sheet



Name of individual (s): Arlene Keyes

Name of Interviewer: Mrs. Joyce Thompson

Date: February 8, 2007

Brief summary of individual's importance to Paris Township/Kentwood history:

Born in Paris Township and attended Godwin Public Schools. Arlene describes suburban life—including the paving of Division Avenue. Her father served as Paris Township Treasurer and Justice of the Peace.

X-reference:

Bernard Terrell (brother-in-law)
(husband of Shirley Keyes)

**KENTWOOD HISTORIC PRESERVATION
COMMISSION
[KHPC]**

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

066-2007

ARLENE KEYES

INTERVIEWER: JOYCE THOMPSON

February 8, 2007

Transcribed by: Sandy de Ryke
de Ryke Transcriptions, LLC, June 2007

**KENTWOOD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (KHPC)
ORAL HISTORY**

Subject: Arlene Keyes
Interviewer: Joyce A. Thompson
Date of Interview: February 8, 2007
Place: Arlene's home at 887 Oakcrest Lane, Jenison, Michigan

Transcribed by Sandy de Ryke, June 2007

AK Arlene Keyes
JT Joyce Thompson

[I REMOVED CRUTCH WORDS AND FALSE STARTS FROM THIS TRANSCRIPT]

JT: Today is February 8, 2007, and this is the taped oral history of Arlene Keyes. We are at her home at 887 Oakcrest Lane, Jenison, Michigan in the living room. My name is Joyce Thompson and I will be recording this oral history for the Kentwood Historic Preservation Commission. This tape will be transcribed, a copy given to Arlene so she can revise or make any corrections or deletions that she wishes. When Arlene is satisfied and the oral history is completed she'll be asked to sign a release so it will become part of Kentwood's archives. Is this arrangement satisfactory to you, Arlene?

AK: Yes.

JT: What is your name and date of birth?

AK: Arlene Keyes. June 6, 1921.

JT: And your age today, Arlene?

AK: Eighty-four.

JT: Where were you born?

AK: In Burton Heights on Bayless.

JT: I need your parents' names.

AK: Earl H. Keyes and Freda (VanAllen) Keyes. No middle name.

JT: Their birth place?

AK: Dad's was July 27th. I can't figure it out. And mom's was May 21st.

JT: Their birth place. Where were they born? What city?

AK: In Kent County, Paris Township.

JT: The names of your siblings, brothers and sisters?

AK: Forest Earl Keyes and Shirley Theda. I don't have a middle name.

JT: You were the last child? Oh, so you were the baby of the family.

AK: I scared God when I come so big.

JT: How did this birth order, being last in the family, change for you? You had your brother and sister older than you and you're the baby. Tell me how that affected the family and you.

AK: I don't think it did.

JT: Were they your babysitters?

AK: In our day we didn't have babysitters.

JT: How much older were they than you?

AK: Forest was seven and Shirley was two years.

JT: Okay, so you and Shirley were very close then.

AK: Ah, huh.

JT: Can you remember a happy sibling moment with Forest? What do you remember?

AK: I remember one time I worked my head off to get a bicycle and Forest bought me one out of his first job.

JT: Really? Do you remember the color of that bicycle?

AK: A red one.

JT: Do you remember the brand, what kind it was?

AK: Probably Sears & Roebuck.

JT: Well, he bought you your first bicycle.

AK: He was always good to me.

JT: Well, being that much older, right. He bought you your first bicycle. Cool, good. What about Shirley? What do you remember a moment way back with Shirley?

AK: That she was daddy's little baby.

JT: Tell me about that. What do you mean?

AK: Well, she was little when she was born and dad, I guess, appreciated that. And he did things with her.

JT: All right. Did you and Shirley play a lot together?

AK: All the time.

JT: What did you do?

AK: We didn't play dolls, I wasn't the doll kind, and Shirley didn't like that.

JT: Oh, she liked the dolls.

AK: She liked the dolls and I didn't. I had a little teddy bear and its ears were off and that was mine.

JT: Did you play outside?

AK: Oh, yeah.

JT: What did you do?

AK: Played jacks, hopscotch, Eenie-Inee-Over, and just normal kids things.

JT: You didn't play much with Forest?

AK: Well, he was older and he started work young.

JT: Right, let's see, you were born at a time that was during The Depression too.

AK: Ya.

JT; You said that was hard. That was quite a feat, him giving you a bike back then.

AK: It probably put him out cold.

JT: I can understand that. Tell me the occupation of your parents.

AK: My dad was always Township Treasurer, Paris Township.

JT: What kind of a job did he have besides Township Treasurer?

AK: Well, he always -- I can remember most of the time he was always doing things for the township.

JT: Are you talking about Paris Township?

AK: Yes.

JT: Okay, Paris Township Treasurer. All right, and your mom?

AK: Took care of us brats.

JT: Okay, so she was a housewife.

AK: She was a housewife.

JT: When you think about dad, what's some memory that comes to mind about your father?

AK: He was always busy doing book work.

JT: How do you remember how he looked?

AK: How he looked?

JT: Ah, huh.

AK: He had curly hair, bald.

JT: Big man?

AK: No. Well, he was tall, but he wasn't robust.

JT: Okay. What about mom? What do you remember?

AK: She was a little woman; the sweetest one on earth.

JT: You said mom was a housewife, all right. Did she have a particular type of food that you liked that she cooked?

AK: She always spoiled us. She cooked and baked all the time.

JT: Oh, she was a baker. Okay, what was your favorite baked good?

AK: Anything we wanted.

JT: She baked regular every day or once a week?

AK: Once a week, usually on Saturdays. It was wash day on Monday, ironing day on Tuesday, oh, she had a routine. Wednesdays she went down shopping downtown, but she was always home when we got there.

JT: From school, you went to school, I see. All right, tell me where you and the parents lived. Where did you live?

AK: It was Keyes Avenue right south of the school.

JT: That changed names, didn't it?

AK: Well, then it was 36th Street, or Horton.

JT: Horton, it went to Horton, correct.

AK: Ah, huh.

JT: All right, tell me about your house. What did it look like?

AK: Just a two-story house.

JT: Bedrooms? How many?

AK: We only had two bedrooms.

JT: Upstairs? Downstairs?

AK: Upstairs.

JT: What was downstairs?

AK: Living room, dining room, and kitchen.

JT: Okay. Where was the bathroom?

AK: Upstairs.

JT: Do you remember what the building was made of?

AK: Lumber, I guess.

JT: Color?

AK: White.

JT: Were there other buildings, other homes on the street too?

AK: Not when we first moved out there, except my grandpa and grandma lived just beyond the field.

JT: Okay. Was it a newly-constructed home back then?

AK: Dad had it built.

JT: Did you have a garage?

AK: Not 'til years later.

JT: So, were there a lot of trees around, or fields?

AK: Nothing. A good patch of sand burrs.

JT: Oh, good. Well, that's where you got all of your playing outside, I see. The best place to be at your house. Where was that? Tell me about that. Where did you like to be in the home?

AK: In the home?

JT: Ah, huh. Where did you like to be?

AK: Probably out in the yard playing.

JT: And the least favorite place to be at the house? You didn't like it there.

AK: The basement.

JT: Oh, the basement. Was it a Michigan basement?

AK: No.

JT: Why didn't you like the basement?

AK: Nothing going on down there.

JT: Concrete, probably. Cinder blocks.

AK: No, it was poured concrete.

JT: Did you have chores at home?

AK: Yes.

JT: What did you do?

AK: I did the scrubbing and that.

JT: When you were old enough, right?

AK: There were things that needed to be done.

JT: You and Shirley, more so than Forest?

AK: Well, Forest he had to clean the basement.

JT: What did you clean? You said you cleaned.

AK: I don't know.

JT: Did you wash floors?

AK: Wash floors?

JT: Ah, huh.

AK: Oh, ya.

JT: Dust?

AK: Dust anything that needed to be done.

JT: Did you sweep?

AK: Ya.

JT: What did you use?

AK: A vacuum, a Hoover.

JT: Old Hoover! Old Hoover. They were popular back then.

AK: Yes they were.

JT: No Bissell sweepers?

AK: No, Bissell sweepers.

JT: Okay. Do you remember the nearest neighbor?

AK: Well, Mr. Whippler was our fire chief and he lived kitty-corner across the lot. He and his family were there for years.

JT: When a street became developed, how many houses were on the street when you were living there as a child, do you remember?

AK: Well, my grandfather built the second one from our house and the one next door. There was a few -- probably six or eight.

JT: Okay, a nice little community. Did any of them have children that you played with?

AK: The names of the children?

JT: Ah, huh. Did you play with the neighbors' children?

AK: Oh, ya. Bleans next door to us and Schows across the street. That's about all.

JT: Okay, that was more fun than just having Shirley.

AK: Because she wanted to play with dolls all the time and I didn't like it.

JT: Now you wanted to be an outdoors kind of person.

AK: Climbing trees was my favorite.

JT: You were the tomboy.

AK: I was, I guess. Shirley took up piano and Forest took up saxophone and I had a violin.

JT: Oh, you played violin as a child.

AK: It would squeak, squawk, squeak.

JT: Well, who gave you the lessons?

AK: We used to get them from Mr. Naiper down in Burton Heights.

JT: Okay.

AK: I don't know where Shirley did.

JT: That's okay. You mentioned you had a teddy bear as a toy. Anything else that were your favorite toys besides the teddy bear?

AK: My bicycle.

JT: Oh, your bicycle. Okay.

AK: Don't forget that.

JT: Oh, I won't. That was a treasure, okay, your bike. Well, you know, you talked about Horton. What kind of a street was Horton back then? Was it paved?

AK: Gravel.

JT: So, you went down the street.

AK: Well, so was Division Avenue gravel.

JT: Okay, everything was gravel back then.

AK: Then they cemented Division. Then they tarred our road.

JT: All right, tell me about your favorite foods that mom cooked. What did you like?

AK: Favorite foods? It was all good.

JT: Nothing stands out?

AK: She was a good cook.

JT: Good. All right, tell me some good foods she cooked.

AK: She used to bake a lot. She baked bread.

JT: Okay, the bread -- any pies?

AK: Ya.

JT: And your favorite pie?

AK: Blueberry.

JT: Still your favorite, blueberry?

AK: I think so.

JT: Okay, that hasn't changed.

AK: That hasn't changed. I'm a creature of habit.

JT: We all are, really. All right, just think back to what you wore back then as a child. An outfit that you remember -- your favorite.

AK: My mom made us some old black knickers. They weren't my favorite, though.

JT: Okay, the black knickers. Is it because it was black or you would have preferred something else?

AK: The black was one I didn't like, but --

JT: I wonder why black and not white? Usually they were white.

AK: Because I was dirty all the time.

JT: Oh, that's right.

AK: [Laughing]

JT: I can understand why she would pick black, because then she wouldn't have to clean it so much.

AK: That's right. I could wear it two days instead of one.

JT: Well, then if you had knickers, then you had a dress or skirt over, correct?

AK: We didn't wear knickers that I know of.

JT: Okay, did you mean a black dress? Are you talking a dress?

AK: No.

JT: The underwear?

AK: Underwear.

JT: Okay, got it.

AK: I didn't like the old black things.

JT: Okay, so then did you have long socks?

AK: Ya.

JT: What kind of shoes? Were they sandals-- well, they couldn't have been sandals. They had to have -- like an Oxford shoe?

AK: They were just plain old -- they were Oxfords, but mostly they all had buckles on it.

JT: Okay, they had little buckles, okay, I got it. So then did you have a long dress; a dress that stopped at the knee?

AK: Not very often. We weren't lady enough-like to wear 'em.

JT: Okay. What did you wear over your underwear?

AK: A dress. And beach pajamas, don't forget them.

JT: Well, tell me about that. I never heard of beach pajamas.

AK: You never heard of beach pajamas?

JT: No, what do they look like?

AK: Well, much like slacks, except for the legs.

JT: Feet?

AK: No.

JT: Long, no feet. Okay, all right. What were they made of?

AK: What?

JT: What were these pajamas made of do you think?

AK: Made out of cotton cloth.

JT: Oh, really? Nothing in flannel for the winter?

AK: We moved so fast we didn't get cold in the winter.

JT: Arlene, okay!

JT: Okay, tell me where you went to grade school.

AK: Godwin.

JT: And what grade did you start?

AK: First grade because they didn't have a kindergarten then.

JT: Okay. And how long did you attend Godwin?

AK: Twelve years.

JT: So you went to high school there?

AK: [Must have nodded her agreement.]

JT: Okay, and graduated what year?

AK: Thirty-nine.

JT: Nineteen thirty-nine, all right. Now let's think back to grade school. How did you get to school at that time?

AK: We only lived five houses from the school, but I never was on time.

JT: So you walked.

AK: Yes, the roundabout way.

JT: Arlene, I'm getting to know you very fast here. I can understand that. So you were always tardy?

AK: Well, not always, but I used to do some fast runnin' when the bell was ringin'.

JT: Okay, so you walked to school -- got it -- all kinds of weather and you were very close. Tell me what you remember of grade school. How many classrooms of your grade? What do you remember of Godwin back then?

AK: I think I remember the first grade the most important.

JT: Okay, why is that?

AK: Because the nurses used to come ever so often and see whether we had lice and all the kids we had an inspection like and I can remember that. I used to crawl under the table and she couldn't --

JT: Couldn't get you?

AK: Couldn't get me. I'd crawl on the other side and she would come over -- and my mother didn't think that was very nice, but she said, "That wasn't nice" but I always told her, "No, I didn't get it done." I said, "I haven't got lice and I'm not gonna."

JT: Going to be inspected.

AK: Ya.

JT: Okay.

AK: We had two nurses, Anna Sullivan and Lila VanFleet.

JT: Do you remember your first grade teacher? Do you remember who she was?

AK: No, I don't. I never thought of it afterwards.

JT: Okay, so was there only one first grade?

AK: [She must have nodded her agreement.]

JT: Okay. One of every grade?

AK: I remember we only had one first grade.

JT: Okay. When you graduated from high school do you remember how many people graduated in 1939 with you?

AK: I think only 38, or 98, or 68, I'll get it straight.

JT: Okay, so a small number.

AK: Yes.

JT: So you went through Godwin and all those grades were in that one building. That wasn't too far to walk either.

AK: Oh, no, we were just a stone's throw away. Except they used to move farther away from me -- it was a lot farther for me to go and I never got there on time.

JT: So you continued that habit.

AK: I continued that habit.

JT: In high school. Did you have consequences for that tardiness? Did they make you do anything for being tardy?

AK: Well, usually if I ran fast I could slide in and get in my seat. I had to go pretty fast, but I would make it.

JT: So, tell me about grade school. Did you have a favorite subject?

AK: I don't think so.

JT: You liked all the subjects?

AK: I didn't like any.

JT: You didn't like any?

AK: No, I don't know. I don't remember.

JT: Were you good at anything -- any particular subject -- good at math, good at reading?

AK: We let Shirley do the brain work.

JT: Okay. You were a good student?

AK: Nothing to brag about.

JT: Okay, I see, all right. Tell me about high school then. How different was that from grade school?

AK: Well, I tried to get there on time.

JT: Okay, what changed your mind there Arlene?

AK: I couldn't run as fast as I did.

JT: I get it. So you had to be on time.

AK: Right.

JT: Did you have a favorite subject in high school?

AK: Ya, The Art of Living.

JT: Okay, what was that?

AK: Mrs. Saure taught it and it was on how to set tables and do that.

JT: Oh, like Homemaking would have been? Homemaking skills?

AK: She sure was good.

JT: You liked her because she was personable.

AK: I got there on time for that.

JT: Well, when you liked something you did well, huh?

AK: Ya, I never did well.

JT: Can you remember what you wore to high school back then? Was there an outfit that you liked?

AK: I don't remember.

JT: Did you have a skirt? Did you wear a skirt?

AK: Ya, when I was older.

JT: Blouse and skirt for high school?

AK: My mother made most of our clothes yet.

JT: Did she really? Oh, so she was a good seamstress too?

AK: She was good at everything.

JT: Did she make your coats also?

AK: She did.

JT: Really?!

AK: And she was so big-hearted that if somebody in the neighborhood didn't have something - I remember once she made me a coat and I loved it and one of the kids went by the school and didn't have one and my mother took mine and gave it to her.

JT: Oh, how nice. You probably didn't like that because that was your favorite coat.

AK: Ya.

JT: Did she make you another?

AK: Yes.

JT: The same way, the same color?

AK: That I don't remember. I was so glad to get another coat that was --

JT: You didn't really particularly care. She must not have taken too long to make you a new coat. I didn't know she made your clothes. Well, tell me, were you a comic book fan back then? Did you like comic books? Did you have any books that you liked to read?

AK: Betty Brown and Sister Sue.

JT: Okay, those were your books?

AK: Couldn't wait 'til they came in the mail.

JT: I see, your parents ordered them in the mail for you?

AK: Seems like they must have.

JT: Okay.

AK: Shirley was the reader.

JT: Okay. Did you listen to the radio as a child?

AK: Oh, yes, we'd all gather in the corner on Saturday night and listen to Amos & Andy. You're going to find this awful boring.

JT: I think back then I did too. I listened to the radio more because we didn't have a TV until much later than anybody else. And that was not in your time either, the TVs, so the radio had to be some type of --

AK: Well, I still like to play the radio and don't use the TV.

JT: Besides Amos & Andy were there any other programs that you liked?

AK: I don't think we had a chance. I think Dad watched Amos & Andy and we had to listen too.

JT: I see. You're right, the parents would monopolize that, exactly. All right, think back on those years on Horton with your family. What did they do for fun?

AK: My family?

JT: Ah, huh. Dad, your sister, brother and you.

AK: We would go to the airport and hang on the fence and watch the planes land.

JT: It was very close by.

AK: Ya, it was a block away.

JT: Right, exactly.

AK: We'd go out to Green Lake.

JT: You went out to Green Lake. What did you do there?

AK: My grandmother had a little rickety cottage so we'd go there and stay.

JT: And you went swimming?

AK: Ya.

JT: Fishing?

AK: No. We'd go out to the Pavillion (on Green Lake) and listen to the records on the whatever.

JT: So, that was like in the warm months, correct?

AK: Ya.

JT: What did you do in the colder months?

AK: Sled.

JT: Oh, you had a sled.

AK: I think we had one sled between the three of us.

JT: Where did you go for a hill?

AK: We just made our own hills.

JT: Okay.

AK: Pile snow up or whatever.

JT: I see. No ice skating?

AK: Oh, yes, we did a lot of ice skating. Forest used to take us skatin' out in -- gee, I don't remember where we'd go.

JT: Okay. Were these skates that strapped onto your shoes or were they actual boots, ice skate --

AK: No, they strapped on.

JT: Okay. All right, if you ice skated, did you roller skate? Did you have those too?

AK: We used to go to the Coliseum roller skating.

JT: Okay, where is this Coliseum?

AK: In the ghetto of Division Avenue.

JT: Okay. Now, you were pretty young, because you were born, you said, in 19__?

AK: Thirty-nine. I was born in '21.

JT: Twenty-one, so you don't remember too much of The Depression, do you?

AK: We had all we wanted to eat, which was more than our neighbors had.

JT: Okay. So, it didn't affect the family like others. But, you don't remember too much because of the time that you were --

AK: I was little. We used to can a lot.

JT: All right, do you remember World War II?

AK: Ya.

JT: Because you were older then, because you graduated in 1939, so -- When I say World War II, what memory comes to mind? What do you remember?

AK: I just know my brother-in-law (Bernard C. Terrell) went to the service.

JT: That was hard for the family, wasn't it?

AK: Ya, because he had a little kid that was only just a few years old.

JT: Right.

AK: I don't remember how old Bob (Bernard's son) was.

JT: Do you remember any shortages from World War II?

AK: Do I remember what?

JT: Shortages. Do you remember anything like that?

AK: No, we were always very fortunate.

JT: Okay.

AK: And I worked at Kroger's for 13 years, I think.

JT: At that point in time? I'll get to that in a few minutes here. So, do you remember, oh, what do they call those?

AK: Rations?

JT: Yeah. Do you remember that?

AK: Oh, ya.

JT: What kind of rationing?

AK: Well, like meat and butter and --

JT: You had short supplies of those. All right, let's go onto your work experience, your first job.

AK: I babysat all the time. I guess that's why I never got married.

JT: Who were your customers -- your babies that you babysat?

AK: People started building houses and so --

JT: On your street. You were talking to people on your street.

AK: Oh, I went everywhere babysitting.

JT: Okay, was this word-of-mouth that people knew that you did it so you were contacted that way?

AK: I don't remember that.

JT: Okay, so babysitting was your first job. After babysitting what did you do then?

AK: My grandfather (Jarod Keyes) owned a greenhouse so I had a little red wagon and I used to have tomatoes and radishes and I'd go down the street.

JT: Okay, so you said your grandfather had a little greenhouse?

AK: No, a big greenhouse.

JT: A big greenhouse.

AK: On the corner of 36th Street. It was just down the block from us.

JT: Okay, so you took your red wagon full of vegetables and you went down the street. Was this during The Depression?

AK: It was depression for me (laughing).

JT: Well, after perhaps. Okay, you babysat, you had your red wagon.

AK: I guess the red wagon came first.

JT: Exactly. Then your babysitting. Okay, I wondered about that. Then you said something about Kroger's. Was Kroger's after your babysitting?

AK: Oh, ya.

JT: Okay. What'd you do at Kroger's?

AK: Cashiered. Well, I first started at Steketee's.

JT: Steketee's, okay.

AK: Anyway, I worked for the China Department and I used to pack up orders and that.

JT: Downtown Steketee's? How did you get downtown?

AK: Rode the bus.

JT: Okay, you rode the bus. And you worked all day?

AK: I worked Saturdays and holidays. I was still in school.

JT: Oh, so you were still in high school then. You were busy.

AK: Oh, I was a busy beaver. I used to have a pretty good bank account until they went broke and I lost that.

JT: Oh, I understand. So, then from Steketee's you went to Kroger's?

AK: Ya.

JT: And you were cashier at Kroger?

AK: Ya.

JT: For how long?

AK: I think 13 years.

JT: That's right, 13 years. Now, where was this Kroger's located?

AK: On Division -- only a two-lane.

JT: How did you get to work?

AK: I walked.

JT: You walked there too.

AK: Unless I cut across the field.

JT: You never owned a car?

AK: Oh, ya.

JT: Okay, all right. When did you get that first car?

AK: It was an old Model T.

JT: Okay. You don't remember the year?

AK: It was an old rickety thing, I'll tell ya.

JT: Okay, so where did you go from Kroger's?

AK: Oh, a man at General Motors come and begged me to go over there. Andy Kacos, who owned a restaurant.

JT: And what did you do there?

AK: I learned how to cook.

JT: You cooked?!

AK: I did everything. Then he talked me into running the business. I was a fast talker, I think.

JT: How long did you work for Andy?

AK: Just four years.

JT: Was that your last job?

AK: No, then I worked for the bank.

JT: Oh! Old Kent Bank.

AK: Old Kent Bank.

JT: Where was this bank located?

AK: Right downtown in the old Pantlind Hotel, on the corner.

JT: And what did you do?

AK: Cashiered.

JT: You worked a long time, didn't you?

AK: I worked all my life, woman!

JT: Well, I meant at Old Kent Bank. How long did you work there?

AK: I think I worked -- I'm not sure whether I finished the 28th year or 29th. I had a hip replaced and I couldn't go back to work. So, I couldn't stand and I stood all the time.

JT: So, 28 years is a long time.

AK: I probably still would have been there if I could have.

JT: Didn't make that 30-year mark, did you?

AK: Right.

JT: Okay, you were cashier, you said again.

AK: Ya.

JT: Okay. What did you do as a cashier?

AK: Cashed checks, opened accounts.

JT: Right there at the teller window?

AK: Ah, huh.

JT: That's where you worked? How did you get to work?

AK: Took the bus.

JT: You took the bus again, see? Were there a lot of people downtown at that time? How was banking like?

AK: There were a lot of people downtown. That's the last time I worked in banks.

JT: And you retired in what year?

AK: I think I retired in '80.

JT: I thought you said that too when we first talked. All right, you told me about your work experiences. Did you have hobbies? What did you do?

AK: Went bowling.

JT: Did you belong to a league?

AK: Ya.

JT: Tell me about that league.

AK: Well, it wasn't a serious league.

JT: Okay.

AK: There was five of us that were nuts, I guess you might say.

JT: Where did you bowl?

AK: At the one on 28th Street by the viaduct.

JT: I thought so. That was a popular place back then. How long were you a bowler?

AK: Too long.

JT: Tell me how long too long is.

AK: I don't know, probably 10 years I belonged there.

JT: Okay, a long time. Anything besides bowling that you had for a hobby?

AK: I'd have to think that one over.

JT: And, of course, you have Forest and Arlene and their family, so that kept you busy with family get-togethers, didn't it?

AK: We're a family, but not much for gettin' together.

JT: Okay, you didn't do that. All right.

AK: We'd have cake and ice cream for a birthday and that was it.

JT: Well, that still got you out of the house. Where did you live during the times that you told me you were working at Kroger's, you were working at Old Kent Bank. Where were you living at that time?

AK: On Horton.

JT: Oh, you still -- you were in the family home.

AK: Ah, huh.

JT: Okay, so you lived there at the family home. Do you remember that address?

AK: Thirty-six forty-four.

JT: Horton. Now, we're getting towards the end here Arlene. All right, how would you describe Arlene Keyes? Tell me.

AK: A pain in the butt.

JT: And?

AK: I don't think you better put that down though.

JT: Feisty comes to mind.

AK: Ya.

JT: Okay, keep going here. Tell me some more adjectives.

AK: Well, I don't know.

JT: You never thought about that one, huh?

AK: I never thought about who I am.

JT: All right, tell me how you want to be remembered.

AK: To be good to people.

JT: Okay.

AK: Because they were good to me.

JT: Okay. I'm about done here, Arlene. Is there anything I have left out?

AK: I think you'd probably get fired for that.

JT: No. Is there anything you would like to add that I've forgotten?

AK: Back when grandpa owned a greenhouse and Shirley and I kept our white rats.

JT: Oh! I forgot about your pets. You had the rats -- two?

AK: Two white rats.

JT: Just a minute. Okay we're on side two. All right, tell me about these rats now.

AK: We used to scare little kids with 'em. They'd scare little kids, but we taught them to love 'em too.

JT: All right.

AK: Then they disappeared. I think grandpa got tired of 'em in the shed.

JT: Where did the rats come from? They were just rats?

AK: No, they were white ones with pink eyes.

JT: They were purchased someplace?

AK: I don't remember.

JT: Okay. But, you remember that particular memory of these rats.

AK: I don't remember more than that. I was near the chicken coop and Shirley all but come in contact with a skunk that was sittin' on eggs.

JT: Now this is the grandfather that was just a couple doors down from you?

AK: No, he lived on Allen.

JT: Oh, Allen Road. All right, so, and he had a chicken coop.

AK: Grandpa had the chicken coop.

JT: Okay.

AK: And Shirley used to go in there and then she all but met up with a skunk.

JT: I see. Well, you know, it's in a wild area and animals come by. I understand that. Well, let's go back to the pet issue. Did you have any pets as a child?

AK: Cats.

JT: You had cats.

AK: Well, we had cats and dogs, both.

JT: Were these outside pets mostly?

AK: No, they lived in.

JT: So, your family had pets. Did you have a favorite pet?

AK: Nowadays I had a favorite cat and I lost her last year.

JT: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

AK: Otherwise, I don't know.

JT: Okay, you can remember the cats and the dogs, okay.

AK: And Forest had a pony.

JT: Oh! There was a place on your property for a pony?

AK: At grandpa's.

JT: Oh, at grandpa's.

AK: Behind our house they had 10 acres. We used to dig holes and make wells out of 'em because we would hit water real easy.

JT: So, this is what you remember. Going over to grandpa's and you played there.

AK: Behind our house we used to dig in the wells. I mean, dig the holes.

JT: I see. Well, Plaster Creek came by there.

AK: Huh?

JT: Was it Plaster Creek that came by there?

AK: Nothin' came by there. Water was close in the ground. You don't have to dig maybe two or three feet. We'd use this to have a small swimming pool.

JT: That's right because of the -- that's true of the whole area.

AK: Right.

JT: Exactly. Okay, I got it. Okay, anything else that I've forgotten or you can remember?

AK: No, I can't think of anything. Shirley'd say, "Climbin' trees."

JT: That's for you.

AK: Well, she did the same thing. We used to take our lunch up to the top of the tree and then eat. Mom would pack our lunch and we'd shimmy up the tree and eat it.

JT: Okay. [Laughing]

AK: Oh, dear.

JT: See, that's a good memory. See, that's a memory you have of you and Shirley, okay. All right, this is my last question, Arlene, and we'll be done here -- any advice to your nieces or nephews?

AK: Save your money.

JT: Okay, why is that? Save your money --

AK: Then you won't have to borrow it from your uncle and your aunts.

JT: Okay, save the money. All right, that's good advice. Anything else besides that?

AK: Be kind to everybody, I guess. And they are. They're good kids.

JT: Good.

AK: They better stay good too. Get the back of the hand.

JT: Oh, okay. That's it. We are done. Thank you. I'm going to turn this off.

END OF INTERVIEW.

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