

George Eugene Kile
Oral History Interview
Marshall Public Library
May 2, 2006

It's Tuesday, May 2, and we are at the Marshall Public Library, and I am interviewing Gene Kile for the Oral History Project of the Friends of Marshall Public Library. I want to start out with your name because we have had some confusion about that. I've always known you by one name, and other people call you by another name. So can you explain that to me? What is your name and how did you come about having two names?

GEK: Well, my full name is George Eugene Kile, and when I was in high school everyone called me Gene, because that's what I wanted to be called. Then when I went to the service, why, you had to start signing your full name and everybody started calling me George. So when I came home everybody knew me as George except those who started calling me Gak.

EM: And why did they call you Gak?

GEK: That comes from my license plate. I have three initials on my license plate – G A K - and Brian Schaefer started calling me Gak, because G A K looks like Gak. So now it's a name that if anybody yells it, I always know who they're talking or yelling to.

EM: You always know. And the GAK on your license plate, what did that stand for?

GEK: George and Ann Kile.

EM: OK, well that explains it a little bit, and if I call you George instead of Gene, I hope that you will understand, because that's the name that I remember.

GEK: Oh, yeah, I answer to just about anything.

EM: That's good. Where and when were you born?

GEK: Well, I was born here in Marshall on 815 Maple Street and lived there until I went to the service. And, of course, I was gone for about three and a half years. And when I came back I got married and moved out again. And I lived there for twenty-some years in the same house.

EM: Is that right. Oh my goodness. And is that – what was the address again of that house?

GEK: 815 Maple Street, and there is still an old house – the old house is still there – people living in it.

EM: What were your parents' names?

GEK: My dad's name was Ernest and my mother's name was Cecile – Ernest and Cecile Kile.

EM: And what was her maiden name?

GEK: She was a Moore.

EM: Moore?

GEK: [Yes] her family settled out here west of town – had a farm out there. She had a sister and Fred Moore was her brother.

EM: Oh, OK.

GEK: And Harold Moore – there were four of them – four kids.

EM: And was your dad originally from this area?

GEK: [Yes] he was originally from this area. They lived out there near by where my mother lived. That's how they got acquainted, I guess. Dad had a twin brother, and two sisters, and two more brothers. So it was a pretty good sized family.

EM: Yes, a large family. How about siblings? Did you have any brothers and sisters?

GEK: I had a brother and he passed away a couple of years ago. That was all – just one brother.

EM: What was his name?

GEK: Wayne. People around town know him as Stubby.

EM: Oh is that right? And did he have a family besides you?

GEK: No, he was not married.

EM: OK, how long have you lived in the house where you live now?

GEK: I think around thirty years.

EM: Is that right? But you didn't move there after you got married?

GEK: No, we lived in an apartment and moved around a little bit until we finally found this place. It was available, and it was the spot we were looking for.

EM: And your address now is?

GEK: 606 North 8th Street.

EM: OK. You have lived in this community all of your life? Did you ever live anywhere else besides when you were in the service?

GEK: No.

EM: What was your neighborhood like when you were young and how has it changed?

GEK: Well, a lot of kids that were there - we had a lot of kids and always a lot going on around in the neighborhood. What has changed, primarily, when I drive down through there, are all the houses that are there. It used to be across the street from my house when I was a kid there was an empty field where they kept cows. And then there was another empty field just across the street from that where – that's where we flew our kites. But now both those fields are full of houses.

And I don't know. It kind of seems like I'm lost when I go through there now. And there was always a bunch of kids playing underneath the street light at summer nights. I don't know whether they do that anymore. I know there doesn't seem to be that many kids around anymore.

EM: What kind of games did they play?

GEK: Oh, golly, just crazy games, I guess. I can't think of anything that was – chase games, mostly.

EM: Yeah, just chasing each other around. Were there any neighbors that you remember particularly that you had when you were young?

GEK: Oh, yeah, behind us was an old widow woman and she was from the old school. She wore dresses down to the ground and wore a sun bonnet whenever she went out. Right next to her was another couple that were the same way.

EM: Do you remember their names?

GEK: Yeah, one right behind me was Mrs. McDaniel, and the one next to her was Jim and Hattie Walters. And then across the street was Mrs. Horner – Elmer and Mrs. Horner – and they had a daughter, Ruth. And, well, that was just right real close there. My neighbors across the street changed every once in a while. Oh, and then my neighbor on the corner was Frankie Drake. A lot of people remember him. He played piano [for] the silent movies.

EM: Oh, is that right? Here in Marshall?

GEK: I used to sit out on the porch [on] summer evenings listening to him practice 'cause he always had his door open. He was a good pianist. A lot of people remember him because he was gone for a while and then came back and spent his last years here in Marshall.

EM: How about your friends that you played with? Do you remember any of their names, specifically?

GEK: Well, yeah, Don Smitley was one of them. He was a member of the Smitley clan. They had eleven kids in their family and he was in my class in high school. And then Dean Ferris lived down the street. He was in my class. Oh, and then there [were] Koutsoumpas kids and some LeSeures - and then up on the corner was Squab Wilson's house. Now [a] filling station is there where his house used to be. He had a barber shop over here on 6th Street. A lot of people remember him.

EM: Any one else?

GEK: Oh, there was Martin Tarble. Martin Tarble went to school. He and Rita were both in school and they were in my class. There were just a lot of class mates, and then a lot of the class mates are gone now.

EM: Right. Do you remember what kind of chores you had to do around home?

GEK: Yeah and I did them, because that was my job. In the evening you would empty the ashes in the cook stove and the heating stove in the winter time when you had fires going in both of them. You would get the coal in and get the kindling in and mow the grass in the summer and trim the shrubbery.

EM: What kind of a mower did you use?

GEK: An old push mower.

EM: A push mower.

GEK: An old push mower.

EM: Not a gasoline mower?

GEK: No, we didn't have one of those things. I pushed an old push mower around and you would get in that water grass you just could hardly get through it, but I always managed some way or other to get it cut. And then I had - when I was real young we had a fence around - we had the corner lot - and had a fence around the corner to keep, I guess, me and my brother inside. But then when we got older - when I got older - why, they took the fence out and put in privet hedge all

around. And that was my job to keep that trimmed. But I didn't mind those jobs because I found out that the more you do, the more you get.

EM: Did you get an allowance at that time?

GEK: OH, I got an allowance, and then when I got older and I wanted – I got to driving the car - I was – Dad always let me have the car whenever I wanted, just about.

EM: So that was kind of your pay for helping out around home.

GEK: The one good thing about that. He was a Pontiac dealer, and we always had a new demonstrator. And I always got to drive a new car.

EM: So, that kind of made you popular with the other with the other kids, I imagine.

GEK: Oh, yeah, everybody wanted to ride in it.

EM: That's great. Did you help much with the meals or the chores in the kitchen besides the stove?

GEK: Oh, I always helped wash the dishes. That was my job, too, to dry the dishes.

EM: What kind of stove did your mother use?

GEK: An old cook stove.

EM: So, what was the fuel?

GEK: Coal.

EM: And did you help with the cooking?

GEK: Well, not very much, you know. She was a good cook. I helped with the eating, but then not too much on the preparation.

EM: What kind of food did she make that you really enjoyed? What do you remember?

GEK: Oh, what I remember... She was so good at it, and Dad's brother always wanted to be sure they had that when they came down for dinner, was meat loaf. She made a good meat loaf. And then the roast beef. We always had good roast beef. And she canned a lot of meat like sausages. I don't think people do that any more.

EM: No, I don't think so.

GEK: They would make a bunch of sausage. Dad would always get a part of a hog and we would make it into sausage and then pack that stuff and mom would can it.

EM: In jars?

GEK: Yeah, in jars. And that was real good. Oh and then we had on our lot line - we had a couple of big cherry trees and we always got plenty of cherries in May when they came ripe. Mom would always can a lot of cherries and blackberries, so we had a lot of things to eat.

EM: Did you have a large garden?

GEK: Yeah, we had a large garden, and that was part of my job, too.

EM: I wondered.

GEK: We always had somebody come in and plow most of it, but then part of it was a spot that was hard to get horses into, so it was my job to spade that up.

EM: By hand.

GEK: By hand with an old spade. But I didn't mind that. I was always trying to see how good I could do it.

EM: Did you have any special things from the garden that you enjoyed eating?

GEK: Well, one thing we had that few people grow any more was celery. Dad always liked to grow celery and we always had a patch of celery. And then everything else – beets, we always had beets – mom canned beets, green beans, tomatoes, and corn. And for a while we had potatoes, but it didn't work out too good so we just turned that into a flower garden. And that's where I did a lot of my work, too, was in the flower garden pulling weeds and stuff like that – keeping it nice.

EM: Is that right? Where did you go to school?

GEK: South Side Grade School – eight years – and then high school.

EM: Do you remember any of your teachers especially?

GEK: Oh, yeah. Mrs. Jesse Rutman, Cora Church, Leslie Manhart, and what was her name – first grade teacher? Second grade teacher was a Hurst. Oh, and Ruth Finkbiner.

EM: Do you have any special memories about your early education? Did anything happen that you especially remember?

GEK: Nothing out of the ordinary, really.

EM: What kinds of things did you learn in school?

GEK: Oh, a little art. Our art teacher was Mrs. Hurst, and she was a good art teacher, and there was just drawing and making posters and stuff like that. Then there was a handwriting class. They don't have the same Palmer method in writing any more. And, of course, there was arithmetic and everything else that went with that, you know.

EM: Right. Did you have a favorite subject?

GEK: I don't think so.

EM: No? You just liked them all?

GEK: I just liked them all, yes.

EM: That's good. Then what other education did you have after elementary school?

GEK: Oh, I went to high school, and then out of high school I went to the Terre Haute Commercial College in Terre Haute for a couple of years. And then I worked in Terre Haute for a few years.

EM: What were you doing over there?

GEK: I worked in the office of Guarantee Roofing Company. And then after that, I went to the service, I guess. And when I got out of the service, like a lot of other boys around town here, when we got out of the service, we started working out at Velsicol. And I got laid off once out there and then called back, and my cousin and I were working out there at the same time and we decided we didn't want to get laid off any more, so we quit and started in at Indiana State. And I went to Indiana State. He went two years and then transferred to Illinois.

EM: Did you go four years, then, at Indiana State?

GEK: Well, yeah, I had four years in three years.

EM: You went four year in three. How did you do that?

GEK: Well, just kicked things up a little bit. I went to summer school.

EM: You went to summer school, too? And this was all after you had been in the service. What was your degree, then?

GEK: Well I was a - public teaching degree – elementary teacher.

EM: OK. And then did you get a job as an elementary teacher?

GEK: No, I started checking around and they weren't paying elementary teachers very much, and I started working at U. O. Colson Company in Paris and I stayed there for thirty-some years.

EM: Oh, my goodness. And what years were those? What dates?

GEK: Oh, that was in the – let's see – I got married in '46, so it would have been, I think, in '50 when I started working up there. And I worked until '80.

EM: And then after you retired, that was your last job that you had?

GEK: Yeah. Well, I worked for Larry Woodard for a couple of years after I retired and left Colson's, and then I worked at Snyder at the elevator for a couple of years. I got an education down there from those farmers. I really enjoyed that.

EM: When you worked for Colson's what did you do?

GEK: I ended up being the personnel manager. I started in the credit department.

EM: So you started in with more accounting type things and ended up in personnel.

GEK: Yeah, that's what I majored in in college was accounting, but I really didn't do any accounting until I started working for Larry Woodard, and that was about thirty years afterward, so I kind of forgot some of it.

EM: Well, it sounds like you were pretty well equipped for doing just about anything with all the different types of education. You mentioned that you were in the military. Where were you stationed then?

GEK: Well up and down the east coast, mainly, all the way from Boca Chica, Florida, to Maine.

EM: Is that right?

GEK: And I was attached to a squadron of medium bombers and their job was to patrol the east coast and look for subs. So that's what we did, mainly.

EM: So were you in the Air Force?

GEK: Yeah, the Naval Air Force. I was a radio man on the plane – twin engine bomber. And we spent two or three years in North Carolina near Norfolk, and most of our work there was escorting convoys in and out of Norfolk. And then whenever there was a stir or a scare along the coast someplace where somebody sighted a sub, why, we'd take off and go up there and spend a little time patrolling out of there – which was what we did in Maine and New York two different times.

EM: But you were never stationed overseas?

GEK: No, except in South America. Yeah, but the squadron had been down there for a while and when I joined them they were due to come back and they spent the rest of their time in the states.

EM: That worked out well for you, then, didn't it?

GEK: I thought that worked pretty good, yes.

EM: Can you tell me – what was dating like when you were young? What kinds of things did you do on dates?

GEK: Well, we went to movies a lot. Back then the Indiana Theater over at Terre Haute was in its hay-days, and we went over there a lot. We went out to eat.

EM: Was there a theater in Marshall at that time?

GEK: NO, the theater in Marshall had burnt by then. That was quite a fire when that theater burned, and that took away any theater that we might have had here in Marshall.

EM: Do you remember what year that was that it burned?

GEK: Oh...

EM: In the fifties....

GEK: I don't remember off hand. Of course there was a lot of changes since then.

EM: You talked about what you did when you were young a little bit. How about when you were in the high school age or in the dating age? Did you have any favorite pastimes then? I assume that you didn't hang out underneath the street light anymore.

GEK: No, We didn't do that. Well, mainly, of course, Martin Tarble was in the group then, and I usually had a car, so there was a group of us that – we just liked to go to parks and places like that. We'd always go someplace out of town. [But we were mostly at the local Candy Kitchen.]

EM: Like a state park, you mean?

GEK: [Yes], state parks.

EM: What did you do there?

GEK: Picnic.

EM: When and where did you meet your wife?

GEK: Well, I met her, I guess, through my cousin, Dorothy. I had come home from the service, and this was on Memorial Day. And all of the veterans had marched out to the cemetery in the parade that they usually did [then but] don't do any more. But back then all the vets of WWI and WWII marched out to the cemetery.

EM: From downtown Marshall?

GEK: From downtown. And then they had a program out there.

EM: What year would that have been?

GEK: Oh, that would have been – that was in '41, I guess. Because Dorothy came down and had this girl with her, and I'd seen her around. We got acquainted and went out to – we were always going on a picnic. And we had a few picnics and then that was, oh let's see, May – June – along in there. And then we got married October the 31st.

EM: Of that same year?

GEK: Of the same year.

EM: I don't think you told me what her name was. What was ...

GEK: Her name was Ann Lovett.

EM: That was a very quick romance, wasn't it?

GEK: Well, I guess so. I was – well, I'd been in the service, and I was twenty-four years old, and I decided that I didn't have time to mess around, so...

EM: You found the right person and you were ready, huh?

GEK: [Yes], and she was a school teacher, so it worked out real good.

EM: Was she teaching here in Marshall?

GEK: Yeah. But at that time she had some experience teaching in one - room schools. She had the Liberty School up north up around Clarksville, and, oh just, I guess, just a year or two that she did that, and then she started teaching in the Ohio School building. She started in the third grade, I think. And she stayed a third grade teacher, I think, most of her career.

EM: Is that right? How many years? Do you know how many years that she taught?

GEK: She retired. She was upset because I retired before she did. So, she had about thirty years in, then, when she retired after I did.

EM: And how long were you married?

GEK: Oh, sixty, I think it was sixty years.

EM: Is that right? Can you tell us about your children?

GEK: I have two girls – Margaret and Mary Jane. And Mary Jane married Larry Bender. Margaret married Tony Malone. Margaret and

Tony work at Wal-Mart right now in Paris. Mary Jane works for AP&S Clinic in Terre Haute.

EM: And Larry?

GEK: Larry works out here at the Ford place.

EM: And you have grandchildren?

GEK: Well, we got – oh, I don't know how many grandchildren – we've got four, I think. And we've got five great grandchildren.

EM: It's a large family. Is there anything that you remember about your daughters when they were growing up? Anything happen that you especially remember?

GEK: Not a whole lot that I can really think of that was really outstanding. I was kind of surprised at Larry. He was a clean freak as far as his cars were concerned, and I was so surprised one day when he had his car pulled up in the front yard and was washing it and he took his spare tire out to wash it. And I thought that was just a little more than I would probably have done. But he thought spare tires should be washed, so it got washed. And he's a mushroom hunter. He knows where they are and he don't tell nobody.

EM: He doesn't take you with him?

GEK: No. So we've had some mushrooms here just recently.

EM: Well, we'll leave the family then and go on to historical events that stand out in your mind. Can you think of anything that ...

GEK: Well I suppose the most – the biggest one was the end of the war. I was in Memphis, Tennessee, and they had an ordinance down there that you couldn't honk your horn in town. But when the war ended everybody honked their horn, and they didn't say too much about it then. And, I guess, when the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor, of course, I wasn't in the service then, but my cousin and I had a couple of girls and we were going to Vincennes to see a band down there, and we heard the news on the car radio. And we just kinda wondered what that was going

to cause. We didn't have any idea what it was going to cause, but we found out in short order.

EM: How long after that did you join the service? Were you drafted or did you enlist?

GEK: Well, I was about to be drafted. And I didn't think that I wanted to go in the army, so I went to Indianapolis and enlisted.

EM: Any other historical events that you remember?

GEK: Oh, I can't really – historical events – I can't really... I know there probably are some, but I can't think of any right now that stand out in my mind.

EM: That's OK. Maybe you'll think of something later. What about modern conveniences? What inventions or what things happened in your lifetime that affected your life the most, do you think?

GEK: Well, one, I think, was when we got indoor plumbing when I was a kid.

EM: About how old were you, do you think?

GEK: Oh, golly, I was maybe ten.

EM: And until then what had you had to do?

GEK: We had a back yard path – the little house sitting out by the... We had an old barn that sat on the back part of our lot, and next to it was this little house with a crescent shape in the door, you know. My brother – I used to catch him in there and throw clods up against the door when he was in there. At night when he had the door awry, I had a little flashlight that we used to light your way out the path, you know. That was a big thing when we got indoor plumbing and got the shower and everything inside.

EM: How did you take your baths before you had indoor plumbing?

GEK: Tub in the kitchen.

EM: Is that right?

GEK: Yeah.

EM: And they had to heat the water?

GEK: Had to heat the water, yeah, on the stove and pour it into the tub, you know.

EM: And then dip that out?

GEK: You'd get a few inches of water in the tub and get in the tub and...

EM: Scrub away, huh?

GEK: Scrub away.

EM: Anything besides the indoor plumbing that really changed your life?

GEK: Of course, it's like anything else, there's a lot of things happened, but I just took them just as the normal events.

EM: OK, I know that you said that you spent part of your career working in downtown Marshall. Can you tell us about that?

GEK: Well, Dad was in the garage business, and in the summers I spent most of my time working in the garage doing dirty work and things like that – whatever needed to be done. And then one year I drove a grocery truck for D. D. Doll. I delivered groceries for him.

EM: In Marshall or out of town?

GEK: In Marshall, yeah, D. D. Doll Grocery. That was one of the old school grocery stores. Farmers brought in cream and brought in eggs, and we had to candle the eggs. I didn't do much about the cream, but then I candled eggs. And then we kept chickens on the hoof. If

somebody called in and wanted a live chicken I had to take it out and kill it. I had never done that before but I found out how to do it in a hurry.

EM: Where did you keep them?

GEK: Oh, they had some cages. Just across the alley, like, just - there was some shacks – some little buildings along the alley there behind the first row of stores, and they had some old chicken coops back in there. They had a few chickens in there, and when somebody would order one, why, they'd go out and get him and put him in the truck and I had to deliver him and do the rest of the dirty work.

EM: And you said that you delivered groceries. The grocery stores don't do that any more. How did that work?

GEK: Well, the guys that were working there in the store – the people would call their order in over the phone, and then the guys would take their order and they would get up everything in a metal tray – box, and it had handles on each end, and we'd just... When they got so many of them there why then you'd just load them in your truck and take off and go around the town. I'd always try to get them arranged so that you didn't go back and forth. You could just go in a circle and get them all delivered and come back and there'd usually be some more waiting to go. They just spend your day doing that.

EM: Yeah, that was a pretty nice service that they offered then, wasn't it? How was shopping in the grocery store different than it is today?

GEK: Well, of course, right now you go in and you pick up everything yourself, but back then there was a clerk that got everything for you and laid it out on the counter. And they would sack it for you and then you would have to carry it out, unless you had a big sack or something and then they would get somebody to carry it out to your car – or out to your horse and buggy. [There were] a lot of horses and buggies in town then. Farmers would all come in on Saturday and there would be horses tied around town. They would stay in town until late that night, because on Saturday night, that was the night that everybody walked the streets. You would go down and people were just shoulder to shoulder on the sidewalks in the downtown. You don't see that any more.

EM: Now did they have band concerts on Saturdays then? Was it on the same night?

GEK: Oh, they had it on, I think, maybe, Thursday or Friday night.

EM: So it was on a different night. You mentioned your father having a business. When did he start and where was his business located?

GEK: He and Bob Flowers got started in Kile and Flowers. Their first garage was over here on 6th Street. [It] was the North 6th Street Garage. And that's where, well, there's been several other things in there, other garages, and I think Granny's or somebody had a used furniture store or something over there last. I noticed it's empty again. But that was the first place. And they ended up over here where – what's the name of that store?

EM: Over to that – Hoggatt's?

GEK: Hoggatt's, yeah, over here at his – where he is, that's where they had their last...

EM: So, just across the street from the library on Archer?

GEK: They had their last garage there.

EM: How long were they there? Do you know?

GEK: Oh, golly, they were there several years, up until the '40's – early '40's, I guess.

EM: And then did they sell out to someone or...?

GEK: Well, Dad retired, and Bob kept going - he and his son. It was Flowers' Sales and Service then and they built this new garage out here north of town – in fact, where Plymoth or Dodge is now. That's where Flowers had their last garage there.

EM: When your dad worked there did they just sell automobiles or did they sell farm implements or?

GEK: Oh, they had John Deere, yeah. They had John Deere and Pontiac. Yeah, they had the John Deere dealership here in town. I spent a lot of time on John Deere tractors then, too.

EM: When you worked for him was it in the 6th Street business or the Archer Avenue building?

GEK: Well, it was more or less over here on the Archer Avenue business when I spent some time there. I don't think I did too much work when they were over on 6th street. Though I spent a lot of time in the garage messing around.

EM: Did you always have – you mentioned an automobile that you had at home. Did you always have automobiles or did you have horses and buggies when you were young?

GEK: Well, no, we had the old Model T, but we never had a horse and buggy. The first car that I remember was a Model T. We used to drive – Dad had a brother up around Redmon and we used to drive that old Model T up there, and every time we would cross the rail road tracks the front wheel would get to going – flopping back and forth – and we'd have to stop until they got lined out. That happened to a lot of Model T cars in those days.

EM: Was it because of the tires or why was that?

GEK: It was just the loose spindles in the wheels. Yeah, an old Model T – you drove them everywhere, you know. [All] roads were mud, so you just had to have something that would go through the ruts in the old muddy road and they wore out pretty quick.

EM: Now, we have a picture taken in the Hoggatt building where a car is suspended from the ceiling by ropes. Do you remember anything like that or why they would have done that?

GEK: Not really.

EM: We were told that it was to store them in the winter when the roads were bad.

GEK: Oh, wow, I...

EM: And to save the tires – is why they suspended them, but...

GEK: I don't ever remember doing anything like that.

EM: OK, that must have been before your time. You mentioned something about church, also, that you wanted to talk about – what church you attended when you were young and then when you were older?

GEK: Well, I went to the Methodist Church, I remember. Well, every Sunday my mother and I would go. Dad – that was his day off, and my mother and I would always go to church and to Sunday School and I went to all the Sunday Schools there. You had to advance [yearly]. You started with the lesser Sunday School class and you kept advancing every year just like regular school. And when Ann and I got married her father was pretty regular over at the Congregational Church, and I moved over there and I've been going there ever since.

EM: Is there anything that you especially remember about either church – about the ministers or things that you did? Were you an officer in the church? Did you have any jobs?

GEK: Well, yes, Ann's grandmother was the treasurer of the church and when she gave it up, why, they gave it to me and I had it for many years. [I remember] a lot of the retirees and things that we did to that church that... of course, [I wrote] all of the checks and [I paid] the minister and we had to... At that time, we didn't have a regular minister. And they would get a professor from Indiana State to come over and he would come over just on Sundays – just for the service. And we had some good people from Indiana State come over and conduct church service for several years. I remember them.

EM: Do you remember the names?

GEK: Oh, I just can't come up with it this evening. I can't think of any right now.

EM: That's OK. [Is there] anything else about church that you want to share?

GEK: Well, I know back before I started going to church over at the Congregational they had quite a kids' program in the basement. They skated down there and they had a shuffleboard court on the floor and they had – oh, I thought I was going to come out with his name then he got away from me, though. And that's the [way] they did things then. [And we] haven't had the young people in church that they had back then. But then the Congregational Church was one of the first churches in Marshall to be built. And [that] building that is there now is the third building that has been there on that lot.

EM: That same lot, yeah. Do you remember the others or were they way before your time?

GEK: They were way before my time. I've got pictures of them, but they were - yeah, they were way before my time/

EM: What organizations did you belong to in town?

GEK: Oh, I belong to probably the one that I belonged to the longest was the Lions Club. I'm a fifty year member of the Lions Club. The K of P – I belonged to them up until the time the building burnt. Oh, and Boy Scouts and surely there were some others.

EM: What did K of P stand for?

GEK: Knights of Pythias.

EM: And what did you have to do to be a member of that, or is that a secret?

GEK: Well, it was a secret organization.

EM: Was it? Then I shouldn't have asked that.

GEK: And they – well, I'll tell you this – their initiation was a secret thing.

EM: Was it a religious organization or philanthropic?

GEK: No, the Knights of Columbus was the religious side of it.

EM: OK. And that was in the Catholic Church, wasn't it?

GEK: Yeah. That was the Catholic Church.

EM: What about the Lions Club? I know you probably held a lot of offices there.

GEK: Well, I did about everything, I guess. I was secretary and treasurer for many years until they finally got somebody else to do it. Nobody else wanted the job, so I would just keep it. So I was the treasurer for a good many years and then they needed a secretary, so I took on the secretary part of it. And I was secretary treasurer up until the guys that have those offices now took them.

EM: Were you ever a state officer?

GEK: No, I was never a state officer – no. My – Ann's dad was the District [Governor]. [He] had a state office in the Lions Club. [He] was great in tourism. That was his big thing.

EM: Attracting tourists to this area?

GEK: [Yes].

EM: You also mentioned when we were talking earlier something about when you were a child and piano lessons.

GEK: Well, I did take piano lessons. And I can't play the piano today. I wish I could. But I took lessons for four years and about all that I could play was chop sticks.

EM: Where did you take lessons?

GEK: I took lessons from Nina Hogue.

EM: Was she a relative of yours at all?

GEK: No, there were Hogues in Ann's family, but not that branch. She was the wife of Wes Hogue who was a carpenter down here at Kirchner Lumber Yard for years. And she taught piano up there on 5th Street – north 5th Street for years. I used to take piano lessons up there every Saturday morning – right by the school up there. And I did that back when I was [young]. I found a pin – of course, it's been some time back – that I got, I think, from her and it had the year '29 on it which would have made me eight years old.

EM: Is that right? And what ended your musical career?

GEK: A winter storm. One Saturday morning it was a winter storm. Everything was covered with ice and snow and it was too bad for me to get out and go to take my lessons and that was the last time I thought about it.

EM: Your mother didn't make you go back again?

GEK: No, it was the winter, but – and she played the piano, but – no, I just didn't go after that. I was able to enjoy my Saturday mornings with the rest of the gang then.

EM: You mentioned working for D.D. Doll. Can you tell us much about him or any of the other business men in town that you remember?

GEK: Oh, golly. Just down the street was the Frank Meehling Grocery. And Bill Smitley drove his delivery truck, and he and I used to holler at each other up and down the alley. D.D. Doll had Frank Hutchens and a bunch of young guys that worked in there. Gene Clark, and Jim Craig, and Sarah Stewart was the secretary, and she - I don't know how old she was. My gosh, she looked like she was ancient then. And I used to go out to get her and to bring her to work on Saturday mornings in just a little delivery truck I had. It only had one seat and that was the driver's seat, but on the passengers side was a box that had a bunch of gunny sacks folded up on it and she sat on that. She came to work, but she had a beautiful hand. She wrote the old fashioned script type like Basil Moore used to do every now and then – a beautiful hand. And she wrote

everything that way. Yeah, I think I made \$2.00 a day delivering groceries there.

EM: Any other businesses or business men that you remember up and down the street?

GEK: I can't think of their names, though. We used to have an Oakley store and a Kroger store and - what's that other - Rademaker, I remember him. He had a bottling works and the Candy Kitchen. Old Fat Fredenberger used to work there in the Candy Kitchen.

EM: Was he Fat?

GEK: Morris Fredenberger. He was as round as he was tall. But he worked behind the counter there for quite a while and then - oh, darn, I can't think of their last name. A couple of sisters worked there behind the counter and

EM: Was it Deloris Dicken's mother - Deloris Macke's mother?

GEK: I don't think so.

EM: I thought it might have been a Tumey - I know they worked there at one time.

GEK: No, Tumeys had a place of their own. The Candy Kitchen - they made a lot of candy there - hand made candy, and Eamer Haugh, who was a class mate of mine, he married one of the Rademaker girls and then they ran it. And I think you were talking about this place that is shown on Channel 4 now.

EM: OK, the one about the food industries in Marshall.

GEK: Yeah, they asked them about the Candy Kitchen. Now he was in there for a long time. I used to go upstairs. They had a great big slab of marble upstairs that they used to make the peanut brittle on - good peanut brittle. All of their candies were good. But that was the gathering place. Every Saturday night it was full of kids and now they weren't just kids. It was full of high school people. And they had a

dance floor in the back end and a record player back there and it was just a....

EM: Did they serve meals there, too?

GEK: They didn't serve a complete meal. You could get sandwiches in there. They made good toasted cheese and sandwiches like that.

EM: Were there any places downtown that your family came for meals or did you eat out much when you were young?

GEK: We didn't eat out much when I was a kid at home. After we got married, Ann and I lived in an apartment up town and we went down to Tom's every Thursday night to eat down there. That was about the only time we ate out except when we got to go to one of our parents'. But we lived up over - now I can't think of his name - a grocery store there along Main Street and there was a pool room. Well it was right along - over here across the street. There was a pool room, too, along there.

EM: I'm trying to think of a grocery store over there. I know there was a Hornbrook.

GEK: Hornbrook, that's who it was, Archie Hornbrook. There was an apartment up over his store. And right next to him then was Bennett's Pool Room.

EM: What Bennett would that be?

GEK: That was Tim Bennett. But there was a big old guy that had it before Tim got it, too. I can't think of his name. But we used to have some wild pool games in there playing nine-ball.

EM: What was it like living in an apartment right downtown?

GEK: Oh, interesting. You could look out of the window, you know, and watch everything that was going on down on the street. And of course then there was an enclosed stairway going up in the front, but then in the back there was an exposed stairway. And I know one day I bounced down that thing one day in the winter when it was all covered with ice and I lost my footing at the top and went all the way down.

EM: Did you break anything?

GEK: I didn't break anything. We only lived there about a year. And we were there the year that the tornado or a big wind came through and tore up the high school – took the top off of the high school.

EM: I bet that would have been a little scary.

GEK: It was. And then, of course, the ceiling of that apartment was not the best, and the wind blew through there and got soot and everything else coming out of it. So we didn't stay there very long.

EM: At that time was there any damage to the downtown buildings that you know of?

GEK: No, Nothing was...

EM: Just at the high school?

GEK: Just at the high school and there was a house across the street that a tree fell on.

EM: It wasn't one of the Cole houses?

GEK: No, it was that little house that sat just south of the Cole house.

EM: OK. Well, can you think of any other stories or anything that you would like to add?

GEK: Well, let's see. I think that I touched on about everything that I had in mind. Oh, there's a lot of other things happened but then they are not worthy of mentioning. I know there's a bunch of us used to get together and go out to... Don Smitley had a relative that owned some land back down on the other side of the golf course. And we started going back in there and started building a cabin back there in the woods. And then we'd always fool around on the golf course coming out. That's when the greens were sand greens. You don't see sand greens any more.

EM: If you get in the sand now you are in trouble.

GEK: That's - yeah – they were sand greens then – oil-treated sand. And we'd run back - and just about every Saturday we were down there - either there or down at Harris' Springs.

EM: Where's that?

GEK: Oh, that's down along 11th Street. You know where the flower shop is where you get... Just on straight east then – down to 11th Street – you just keep on going down across that field there and across the tracks and on down a little stream there and then you come to an area that was – an old Archie Harris owned. And there was a little pool there and some rock formations and a spring that we always were going down to – Harris's Springs. And we always ran that area. I don't think that he was too happy about us doing that, but then we'd always slip in there anyway.

EM: Did you ever go hunting?

GEK: Oh, yeah, I used to hunt.

EM: What did you hunt for?

GEK: Oh, rabbits and squirrels, mainly. My grandmother lived out west of town on a farm and they had a woods and I'd ride my bicycle out there and go hunting.

EM: What kind of a gun did you use?

GEK: Just a rifle. Of course then I got graduated up to a shotgun when Dad and I used to go hunting. We'd always... Oh, that was one of the things I did want to bring up. We'd used to get a lot of rabbits. Of course there were a lot of rabbits around this part of the country. That was before the coyotes came in. And we'd get a bunch of rabbits and skin them and hang them up out in the summer kitchen. And they'd freeze and every once in a while we'd want a rabbit for a meal and just go out and get one of those frozen rabbits and bring it in and thaw it out, you know, and cut it up and have rabbit.

EM: And you liked that, right?

GEK: Oh, yeah, yeah, and then there were squirrels – I'd hunt squirrels.

EM: Did you eat those, too?

GEK: Oh, yeah, [there's] still a lot of guys hunt squirrels. There are a lot of squirrels in the woods.

EM: How about doves?

GEK; No, I never did hunt doves. I know that there are several of them around town that like to hunt doves. And I never did hunt quail, either, and at that time there was a lot of quail. But, I always just spent my time chasing rabbits and squirrels.

EM: Nothing bigger than that then?

GEK: No, that was it. I used to chase a ground hog every now and then. Back then we had a lot of ground hogs, but of course you hardly ever see one any more. The coyotes have got rid of them. And that was all with a twenty-two. I used to like to shoot skeet and I'd use a shot gun then. And I ended up with the shot gun and a rifle and now someone else has got those. My grandson took all my guns.

EM: Oh, really?

GEK: Yeah.

EM: He liked that idea or he didn't want you to have them, one or the other.

GEK: Well, he and his dad, and they both have nice gun cabinets and they were just adding to their collection.

EM: Where did you go to shoot skeet?

GEK: Well, there was a north gun club out here east of town. We used to go out there and they had a Thanksgiving shoot. You know, when I was in the service I got to shoot a lot of skeet. About every time we'd go

to a gun training, why, you'd have to do so much skeet shooting – why, just to show you could follow your targets was the main thing. Well on our plane we had machine guns. We had turrets, and there were two fifties in it and then there were two thirties in the tail, and every once in a while we'd go out and do a little training. A plane would come around and pulling a target behind it – way behind it – and we'd go out in our plane and we'd fire at the target, you know. And you had to learn how to lead your target and everything then. I liked that when we would go to the gun training sessions. You had to learn how to take a machine gun apart and put it back together blindfolded and all that kind of stuff.

EM: Do you remember any – were you in any actual battles, then? You said you went out to look around for U-boats and all?

GEK: No, there were not any actual battles. We started to. We were flying out of Maine once and we were flying over some pretty rough water. There had been a report of a sub coming to shore there and putting a spy on shore, and we were flying along there and all of a sudden you could see something sticking up above the waves. It looked just like a conning tower of a sub. We opened the bomb bay doors and went a tearing in down on the water, you know, and came in over the waves and there was a little bitty old fishing boat working back and forth. We scared those guys to death. But we didn't drop anything on them.

EM: That was as close as you came, huh?

GEK: That was as close as we came to dropping anything.

EM: Well, is there any thing else, now, that you have remembered that you would like to add in conclusion?

GEK: In conclusion. Well, in conclusion, no. I've gone over a lot of things that I had kind of forgotten about, and a lot of things I have forgotten about that are interesting trying to think of them.

EM: Well, we certainly appreciate your coming in to do this. I know we've planned on this for a long time and I'm glad we finally were able to get it taken care of.

GEK: Well, I kind of was hoping that maybe we weren't going to get it done.

EM: Oh, no. This was great and we really appreciate it.

GEK: But I enjoyed it.

EM: That's good. And if you ever think of any thing else you'd like to add why we can always do that, too. So thank you very much.

GEK: OK.