

JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH IRENE PICKARD

CONDUCTED BY

LAURA DERR

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Irene Ann Schenken Pickard was born 11-21 1900 to Fred and Dora Beilenberg Schenken. Before she was married, Mrs. Pickard taught school in Kenwood Park and Cedar Rapids, Iowa. During the Depression, she worked for the Director of Relief where her duties were to visit families and assess their need for assistance. During this interview, Mrs. Pickard also talks about life in Keystone, Iowa, where she was born and raised. Keystone is a community developed primarily of German immigrants.

INTERVIEW TOPICS  
CEDAR RAPIDS: THE EARLY DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

I. PERSONAL LEAD-IN QUESTIONS

- 1--When were you born? Where?
- 2--How long have you lived in Cedar Rapids?
- 2--What are your parents' names?
- 4--Where did you go to school?
- 5-6 --Are you married or single?
- 5,50 --Did you raise a family? How big?
- 4,5,25,29,31--What has been your occupation (career) during your adult  
33,35-36 years?

II. COMMUNITY TOPICS

A. Technology in the Community

1. Transportation

- 6,7,11,17, 18,22,26-27, --Railway travel (Union Station, trips to Iowa  
48-49 City on Crandic)
- 25,47 --Trolleys (the Interurban)
- 17 --Horses and First Automobiles
- 17,19,48 --Mud roads and the seedling mile
- Hunter Airport and the first planes
- Cedar River (ferries, floods, dams)

2. Communications-21

- 22--Newspapers
- Radios
- Advertising
- 41--Telephones

B. People in the Community

1. Amusements/Recreation

- 24,43-44--Motion Pictures
- 46 --Cedar Rapids Parks
- 15,45-46--Dances
- Carnival Week
- Chautauqua
- Community Theater
- Little Gallery
- Symphony Orchestra
- Circus
- 25,41-42,43 --Greene's Opera House
- Amusement Parks (Alamo)
- Camps
- Community Centers (YWCA, YMCA)
- 14-15--Stage shows at Keystone, Iowa
- 2. Famous Characters
- 55 --Cherry Sisters
- 54-55--Grant Wood
- Carl Van Vechten (The Tattooed Countess)
- Marvin Cone
- 18-19--Dwight Eisenhower
- 42--Pavlova
- 42--George Burns and Gracie Allen
- 42--John Berrymore

3. Lifestyle 11-12,32
  - 40-41--Life before air conditioning
    - Winter Activities
    - Holidays (Memorial Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, Christmas)
    - Clothing
  - 9--Toys
  - 23--Saloons/Taverns
  - Farm Life
4. Family Life
  - Household Help
  - Women's Roles
  - 7,9-10,12,13,17,56--Childrens' Activities/Behavior
  - 16--Sunday activities (Church life, Sunday Blue Laws)
5. Ethnic/Minority Life-39(including towns around Iowa)
  - 3,6,7,9-10--Immigrants (Czech, Greek, German, etc.)
    - Indians
    - Segregation of Blacks
    - Jobs Available

C. Organizations and Institutions in the Community

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  - 29-20,31-33--Cedar Rapids Schools
  - 5,8,35,52,53----Coe College
    - Mount Mercy College
    - Cornell College
2. Government -3-4,36-38
  - City Services
  - Streets/Roads
  - Relationship with Marion (Courthouse Dispute)
  - 2,26,46-47--Relationship with Recreation Dept. Kenwood Park
3. Medical-49-50
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  - 50--Patient-Doctor Relationship
  - Broken Bones
  - 50-52--Polio, TB, Debilitating Diseases
  - 50--House Calls
    - Home Delivery of Babies

4. Business and Economy

- Local Factories (Douglas Starch Works, Quaker Oats, etc.)
- Local Brewing Companies
- 23,29 --Retail Businesses /Department Stores
- Professions
- Banking and Finance
- 24 --Restaurants (Greek Restaurants in 30's)
- 16,28,37--Businesses that no longer exist (old groceries, drygoods, icehouses)
- Farmers Market
- Mills on Cedar River
- 45,25-26,28-29,40 --Buildings Erected
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- Companies (Labor Unions, Strikes, Pay)

5. Attitudes/Values 37-38,54

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- Sex/Petting
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- 3-4,5,8,30-31,34,53-54----Working women, Voting Rights for Women
- Patriotism (World War I)

D. Historic Events in and Outside the Community -13-14--Halley's Comet

1. Catastrophic Events

- Clifton Hotel Fire (1903)
- 55 --Douglas Starch Works Explosion(1919)
- Bank Closings (1933)
- Lyman-Stark Building Collapse(1913)
- Public Library Murder(1921)

2. National Historic Events

- 54--Womens' Suffrage
- 20-21,22 --World War I
- Roaring 20's
- Prohibition
- 5-6,34-35,39,54-----Great Depression

Interview with Irene Pickard

Date of Interview: May 29, 1985; 2121 Eastern Avenue, N.E., Cedar Rapids, IA

Interviewer: Laura Derr

Transcriber: Leslie Onthank

LD: This is Laura Derr on May 29, 1985, and I'm in the home of Irene Pickard on Eastern Avenue and it's 20. . .

IP: Twenty-one.

LD: Twenty-one.

IP: Eastern Avenue, N.E.

LD: Okay. Thank you very much. Let's start with your full name.

IP: Irene Ann Schenken Pickard.

LD: So your maiden name is Schenken.

IP: Schenken, uh-huh.

LD: Which is German.

IP: S-C-H-E-N-K-E-N.

LD: Okay. And where were you born?

IP: In Keystone, Iowa.

LD: When?

IP: November 21, 1900.

LD: So you're as old as the century then.

IP: Easy to remember my age.

LD: Right, right. When did you come to Cedar Rapids? We were talking about when you came to Cedar Rapids.

IP: Probably about 1922.

LD: So you were fully grown when you came here to live.

IP: Oh, yes. Yes. I had my certificate for teaching school and I had a job at Kenwood Park which was a town incorporated by itself. We had a mayor, we had a superintendent of schools, and the dividing line between Kenwood Park and Cedar Rapids was 32nd Street.

LD: Okay. Now, we want to talk about that at length and I will come back to Kenwood Park, but let me finish some of the biographical questions here. What were your parents' names?

IP: Dora and Fred.

LD: Dora and Fred. And your mother's maiden name?

IP: Beilenberg.

LD: Can you spell that for us.

IP: B-E-I-L-E-N-B-E-R-G.

LD: Okay. What was their background? Did they come to America as immigrants?

IP: The grandparents did, yes. And my Grandfather Beilenberg came to Wheatland, Iowa, and was a druggist. No, he worked for a druggist. He

was just a clerk. But he was very apt at being a druggist and the druggist said to him one day, "Why don't you study up and go to Dubuque and pass the examination to be a doctor?" Which he did. And he went to Dubuque and he passed his examinations and he became an M.D. through his examinations.

LD: It didn't take quite as long in those days, did it.

IP: No. And there was a place in Keystone, Iowa, which was a German community, for a doctor. And so he moved his family to Keystone.

LD: Okay. So you would be the third generation then in this country of your mother's family.

IP: Yes, that's right. Now, my father. . . his parents came from Germany and settled on a farm near Keystone. And they evidently liked education and so my father went to Kilford Academy, which was a sort of beginning college. So he taught school for a while but he wasn't very good at that. And then he was an insurance agent and he was just fair at that. And then he got an appointment to be postmaster and that was fine. And that's how I remember my father, as being the postmaster at Keystone, Iowa.

LD: All during your growing up years then.

IP: Yes, yes.

LD: He kept that position for a number of years?

IP: No, when the politics changed, he lost his job. The postmasters were all appointed according to the politics of the country. And so he lost his job. But my mother, who was a Republican also but had quite a lot of influence, so both Democrats and Republicans urged the powers that be to

appoint her as postmaster, which she became. So she was the postmaster then, or postmistress, and my father was her clerk.

LD: Oh, that's great!

IP: So we had a corner on the post office at Keystone.

LD: You sure did. So it pays to have both parties in your family, huh?

IP: Yes, yes.

LD: Now, is it too much for me to ask how did you turn out, Democrat or Republican?

IP: I'm still a Republican.

LD: You're still a Republican. Okay. Where did you attend school when you were growing up?

IP: In Keystone.

LD: At the elementary school.

IP: Yes.

LD: Was it a public school?

IP: And high school. I graduated in 1918 and then I went to Cedar Falls for a 12 week teachers' course and after the 12 weeks you could teach school. That was all you needed. And I taught the country school one year. I walked back and forth to school, which was about a mile and a half out of town, and then I taught, oh, probably two years in the town school. And I had enough money then so I thought I'd better take some more college. And I was in Ames one year and after that I taught a year in Burt, Iowa.

LD: Burt?

IP: That's near Algona.

LD: Is that B-E-R. . .

IP: B-U-R-T.

LD: B-U-R-T.

IP: And then I made an application to teach in Kenwood Park and which I received. And the ensuing years I would take night school and Saturday classes, which was nothing but a joy to me then--now I think it's awful. And in 1940 I took my last session at Coe and I was pregnant with my first child and I was the only old person in that class of young kids. But they were awfully nice to me. And the day of graduation, I just had come home from the hospital with my baby, and President Gage of Coe College came over to the house to bring me my college certificate.

LD: That's wonderful. That's great. We did neglect to say when you were married and who you married.

IP: I was married in 1930 and there were several girls wanted to get an apartment to live in. We thought that would be fun--to live in an apartment rather than in a rooming house where we got board and room. And I went to Bolton's real estate office and the agent there showed us several apartments. And his name was Willard Pickard. And we had several dates and then we decided that we liked each other enough to be married but it was in the deep of Depression. It was a risky business and also the rule for the board of education was that if you were married you had to resign being a teacher. You could only be a substitute teacher if you were married. So we took that chance. I was 30 years old and he was older, so we figured if we wouldn't be married now, we never would. So we took

the plunge and was married and were married. And one month or so after we were married, my husband earned \$70 for the whole month.

LD: Oh.

IP: And I got very little substitute work because the girls that got the work had sick husbands or no husbands and children. But we fumbled through those years. And then my husband got an F.H.A. job for an appraisal for F.H.A. and that started us on our financial. . .

LD: Upswing.

IP: Upswing is right.

LD: Well, I want to talk to you especially about those Depression years at more length. I want to kind of take you back further in time before that point and go back to your growing up years in Keystone and ask you some questions about Keystone. First of all, where is Keystone in relationship to Cedar Rapids?

IP: Keystone is about 32 miles west of here.

LD: Okay.

IP: And it's on the main track of the Milwaukee Railroad from Chicago to Omaha. And all the little towns that settled on that road between Marion and Tama were nationality towns. Norway was mostly Norwegian and Newhall was a mixture of Norwegians and Swedes. Van Horne was Irish Catholic. Keystone was German. And Vining and Chelsea were Czechs. It was very interesting to have these national settlements along the Milwaukee Railroad.

LD: We talked about that a bit the other day. Do you have a theory about why those communities settled that way?

IP: No. I suppose somebody settled. . . now, you see, my grandfather came to Keystone because he knew it was a German settlement and he was German.

LD: So, in other words they just kept attracting people from the same backgrounds.

IP: Yes, I think so because as long as even when I left Cedar Rapids I think that Van Horne was still mostly Irish Catholic. But now I think that both Keystone and Van Horne and those are all mixed up.

LD: Right, right. So these were not necessarily folks that came here just to work on the railroad or anything of that sort?

IP: Oh, no, I don't know as anybody that. . . oh, we usually had about one family in the town that were working on the railroad 'cause the railroad was already finished and going.

LD: So they were primarily farming communities then?

IP: Yes, I would guess so. And also the railroad. . . there were no cars. And my sister and I both took piano lessons and I don't remember where the teacher came from but she came by train and she came off at Keystone and she had her pupils in Keystone. And I don't remember whether she stayed all night or not but then the next day she would get on the train and go to another town to teach music. And I liked taking piano lessons but I was always doing something extra and I learned to play "Too Much Mustard In My Soup". And then my sister, little tattletail, she told the teacher that I could play that. And I thought the teacher would be real mad but she wasn't. She said, "Play it for me." So that phase was finished and I just fiddled around with the piano and I never was too efficient but I could always play to accompany myself if I wanted to sing. And I always liked to sing.

LD: Okay. Did you ever take voice training?

IP: No. I took public speaking at one of the classes at Coe from B. D. Silliman.

LD: Silliman?

IP: I think he's still living, I think. Or at least he's a lawyer and his name-plate is on his law firm. So I did. . . was rather comfortable in giving programs over the years.

LD: Okay. Let's talk a bit about your father and mother and their roles in the household. When you were growing up, who was the disciplinarian in your household?

IP: Oh, probably Mother because Father was at the post office all of the time. But then when Mother was the postmaster, why he was there too as her clerk. So I don't remember too much about discipline so I guess we got along all right.

LD: Were there just the two of you, you and your sister?

IP: Oh, no, no. I had six brothers and sisters.

LD: Okay.

IP: Two older brothers and an older sister then myself and a younger sister and a younger brother.

LD: A large family!

IP: Yes.

LD: And you were right in the middle.

IP: Yes.

LD: Okay. What was a typical school day like when you were growing up in Keystone?

IP: Oh, I think it was pretty well as I remembered it when I taught later.

LD: Things didn't change so much from. . .

IP: No, no.

LD: . . . the early 1900's up til the 1920's and 1930's. Did Keystone offer such things as extracurricular activities for the youngsters? Sports activities?

IP: Yes, yes. From their community in Germany they brought with them several social things. Now, for instance, was the Turners. That is very much like the Czechs' sokols here in Cedar Rapids. But this was the Turner "organ"ifiren. And both the men and women had exercising and there was a great big hall that they built called the Turner Hall. And also another thing was once a year we had Children's Day and we called it Children's Day after quite a few years. In the beginning it was vogel schiessen or something like that.

LD: Oh, boy.

IP: Meaning "bird shooting".

LD: Okay.

IP: But that was only one phase of that day. And the boys all had crossbows and up on a high pole was a bird. And the tail and the wings and the

LD: Really a small community.

IP: Oh, yes.

LD: And you could keep pretty good track of everybody that was there, I'm sure.

IP: Oh, yes, uh-huh. And they all had such neat homes and yards. They were very conscious of their yards and homes and gardens.

LD: The people who lived in Keystone then, what did they do primarily to make a living?

IP: Well, a lot of them were retired farmers.

LD: I see.

IP: But there, of course, was general store and implement stores and we had all the stores that would complement any town. I think we had grocery stores and had a dental office and a doctor's office. We always had a doctor and a dentist.

LD: In Keystone?

IP: In the town, yes.

LD: That's amazing for a town that size.

IP: Yes.

LD: We talked earlier too about your home and that you grew up in the days before electricity came into anybody's houses.

- IP: Oh, yes. Our first house that I recall didn't have electricity and it was my older sister who had to wash all the lamp chimneys every Saturday. And also we didn't have any indoor toilet and so she had to take the pots out every morning to the outside privy. And I can remember we had the cookstove in the kitchen and in the wintertime the washing machine was in the kitchen. And in the summertime the washing machine was on the back porch. And my brothers had to churn it, churn it, churn it, churn it to do the washing.
- LD: So you had a hand churn.
- IP: Yes, a hand churn. And mother had to heat the water for that and also for the rinse water. There was a big fire in the cookstove going on on wash days. And then there was a large stove in the next room, which was a very large sort of dining room. And that heated the whole house because there was a chimney going upstairs and that heated the upstairs bedrooms. It got pretty cold. We had feather beds up there in the wintertime. And then there was another room, which was the parlor. But we hardly ever went in there. It was only on Christmas Eve and very fancy occasions when we had the parlor door open and we could be in that.
- LD: Everything was kept just so in there I take it?
- IP: Oh, yes. Well, everything was kept pretty much just so anyway.
- LD: In the house; throughout the house?
- IP: Yes.
- LD: How did the whole routine of your household work considering that you did not have electric lights in the evening? Can you remember when did you go to bed, when did you get up, and how did that affect your evenings?

- IP: Well, I suppose we were all reading. I don't really recall that. I remember when I was too big of a girl to do it, but I still sucked my thumb. And Mother put a cloth cover over it and tied it around the wrist and I especially wanted to suck when I went to bed. And I remember going upstairs and there that thumb was covered and I was such a sweet little thing. I went to the top of the stairs and our parents tried to teach us to remember some of the German words too as well as talking English all the time. And I went to the top of the stairs and I said, "Mama, kanne ich eine klein bischen "neutchen"?" That means, "Can I a little bit suck?" And she said, "No." And so I didn't.
- LD: And so it broke you, huh?
- IP: Yes. And that was the end of my sucking period.
- LD: I have a seven year old who still sucks her thumb, so. . . we've kind of changed in our attitude about that nowadays.
- IP: Yeh. And then Halley's Comet.
- LD: Yes. You would have been nine years old, wouldn't you?
- IP: Ten. I think 1910.
- LD: Okay, when Halley's Comet came through.
- IP: Yeh. And I remember my father waking us up in the middle of the night. It felt like the middle of the night to me. And we all went to the. . . my father woke us up in the night and had us all go to the upstairs east window and look outside and there was Halley's Comet. I remember it very clearly and I'll always remember it. And I know it's going to be sailing around here pretty soon and that we'll be able to see it in a month or two by our eyesight if we get outside at the right time, so I'm looking forward to seeing Halley's Comet for its second time.

LD: Yes, that's right. The second time in a century. Did it have a long tail the way that they describe it now?

IP: Well, I don't know how long but it had a tail.

LD: Uh-huh. It was very visible then?

IP: But I knew it was a star with a tail.

LD: Could you actually see it moving?

IP: No.

LD: It just looked as if it were stationary.

IP: No, we just were at the window and looked but I know if we had stood there long enough it would have moved. Like when you look out where the moon is and if you come out an hour later the moon has moved.

LD: Right. We also were talking earlier about the big hotel in your town and the stage in the hotel. Would you describe that.

IP: Yes. You see, there were no automobiles but we had traveling men because there was industry in Keystone. And they all had to come by train and they would very often have to stay all night. So there was a family there that built a large hotel and I can remember all the rooms in the hotel because I had a friend who was one of the daughters of the hotel keepers. And at the same time they had a large auditorium, in other words a dance hall, but they also would use that as a show place too because there was a stage. And because this was a good place to stop off between Marion and Tama or between Chicago and Omaha, a lot of stage shows came to Keystone because it was so convenient with the stage and the back of the stage and all the dressing rooms. They had everything

that you might want for a large stage show. And I don't remember too many stage shows but I remember the Swiss yodelers one time. And they would sing on the stage and also they had echoes up in the back, which would be what we would call a projection room now. But it was very thrilling. And we had other stage and whenever there were. . . and also it was quite a town for dramatics and the towns people would put on plays. And they, of course, would use the stage for that. And, of course, there was lots of dancing in Keystone, both in this hotel stage. . . and they had the public dining room, by the way, for anybody could come to eat. And they also had the Turner Hall for dancing.

LD: So dancing was really a part of your growing up years.

IP: Yes, uh-huh.

LD: What sorts of dances did you do in those days?

IP: Oh, just waltzing and two-step.

LD: There were not group dances or. . .

IP: Well, I don't remember too much of those, what do you call them now?

LD: Well, there was everything from square dancing and things of that sort.

IP: Square dancing. I don't remember too much square dancing, no.

LD: We had been talking earlier about the Missouri Lutheran Synod Church in Keystone. I think we had not really completed that memory of the large hotel. You were talking about the dining room and. . .

IP: Oh, yeh, the public dining room. Because there were so many traveling men came through and most of them had to stay all night. So that was quite exciting for us girls who had a girlfriend whose parents ran the

hotel--the big kitchen and the dining room and all those rooms upstairs and gracious, it was quite an eye opener.

LD: Was it the biggest building in Keystone?

IP: Yes, I would say it would be, uh-huh.

LD: Sure.

IP: It's all wrecked now but the Turner Hall is still there.

LD: The Turner Hall is still there?

IP: The Turner Hall is still there and they're still having dances there.

LD: I'll be darn. What churches were in the community?

IP: There was one church in the town and that was the Missouri Synod Lutheran. It wasn't too dominating for the membership. It had a very small membership and the rest of us didn't go to church at all. If we wanted to go, we could go and, of course, we were welcome. And most of the sermons were preached in German. And at one time when I was, oh, probably in the grade school, a family moved to town and he was the editor of the newspaper. And he was shocked that there was only one church in town and that was a German Lutheran. And so he started a Sunday school and that was in our public school. And so that was quite a going thing is the Sunday school. And he had classes and he bought literature from the Methodist Sunday school literature. And that Sunday school kept going all through my high school days until I left.

LD: Okay. Oh, yes, we were going to talk about some of the sports that were available or that you were familiar with when you were growing up then.

IP: Well, the only sports we knew in Keystone were basketball and baseball. They always had a baseball team and, of course, everybody played basketball. And when we played against towns, we had to go by train. We didn't have enough cars in town. And I remember when my father got the first Ford and that was pretty exciting. But he didn't drive it but my brothers drove it and everybody else drove it. And we would go to different places in that car.

LD: It was not necessary to have a driver's license in those days, was it?

IP: Oh no, no.

LD: Did you ever drive the car?

IP: No, I never drove the car and I didn't drive a car until I was married. And the first thing my husband said to me even before we were married, he says, "I'm going to teach you to drive." And I drove and I passed the examination and I can still drive.

LD: That's a great thing to be able to do, isn't it?

IP: It's just wonderful to be able to hop into the car and go where you want to go.

LD: Well, since we're on the subject of driving, what were the roads like say between Keystone and Cedar Rapids in those days?

IP: Oh, you didn't want to go very far if it rained because the Lincoln Highway had been built but it was still the nice Iowa dirt, especially Benton County dirt. And if it rained, you would get stuck even though you had a good Ford car and you put on chains. You had to put on chains. So it was pretty dangerous to come to Cedar Rapids when it looked like rainy clouds in the distance. You hurried home.

LD: Did you generally come by car when you came to Cedar Rapids or did you come by train?

IP: Well, yes, we came by train once in a while and we'd go to Marion, you see, and then the offshoot was into Cedar Rapids. You'd have to change trains at Marion.

LD: How often did you come here?

IP: Oh, not too often.

LD: As much as once or twice a year or. . .

IP: Oh, yes, probably so, uh-huh.

LD: For what reasons would you come to Cedar Rapids?

IP: Well, probably shopping. I don't remember.

LD: Were they generally day trips. . .

IP: Oh, yes.

LD: . . . or were they overnight trips?

IP: Oh, never overnight 'cause it might rain.

LD: (Laughing) Always had that rain in the background.

IP: Oh, yes, uh-huh. And I remember when the Lincoln Highway was finished and Eisenhower was the first one to drive through.

LD: Dwight Eisenhower?

IP: Yes, uh-huh.

LD: Oh, I didn't know that story.

IP: He just had a caravan.

LD: Christened the highway.

IP: Yes, uh-huh. I didn't see him. I didn't see him. We didn't go to the edge of town to see him.

LD: I see. Would that have been in the 1940's or 1930's?

IP: Well, that was probably 1913, wouldn't it?

LD: Well. . .

IP: Lincoln Highway?

LD: I guess. . . it might have been. But then that was before it was completely paved?

IP: Oh, yes.

LD: I see.

IP: It was Iowa dirt.

LD: Okay.

IP: Nice black dirt.

LD: So that would have been pre World War I days.

IP: Oh, yes, uh-huh.

LD: Okay.

IP: Oh, I remember World War I. I had two brothers in France.

LD: I would like to talk to you about that at length too because it occurred to me that even though you were in Keystone, which was primarily a German town, how did the sentiment against the German people affect you during those days?

IP: Well, I think the German people as a whole were very patriotic and we had a lot of boys enlisting to go. But we had a stranger who had come to town to teach German school in conjunction with the church and he suddenly disappeared one day. So we always felt that he was a spy.

LD: Oh!

IP: But we never knew. But he was supposed to be the German teacher which was part of the Lutheran Church. And then he was just gone. So we don't know.

LD: So personally, though, you did not feel any. . .

IP: No, I never. . . we never felt anything. . .

LD: . . . sentiment against you because of your Germanic. . .

IP: No, but probably they did in other parts of the towns, I don't know. But we had many boys enlisting and my two older brothers were both in France.

LD: When did they go over? Was it before America got involved or. . .

IP: Oh, no.

LD: . . . after America got involved?

IP: Oh, yes. Yes, they were both there. And one was in the trenches and one was in, well, he was a telegrapher so he had more of the communications job. But the other one was in the trenches.

LD: Did they both survive the war?

IP: Yes, they both came back and we heard that they were in this country but we didn't know where they were or when they would come back. And when the troop trains would come through Keystone that were carrying the soldiers back, they would whistle and whistle and whistle from the edge of town and we'd all run out to the street, the main street, and wave when the troop trains went passed--went through. And I remember my father and I, we rushed out of the post office when we heard the train whistles and we were waving. And while we were looking, there was a big bag thrown out of the troop train. And Papa went to the depot and there it was the duffle bag of my oldest brother. So we knew he was back and he was on that train. And we soon heard from him and he came home.

LD: You really had no other way of communicating with him, did you?

IP: No, I suppose he could have telegraphed.

LD: Right.

IP: Telegram, telegraphing was the only communications. We didn't have TV or radio. And I remember in the World Series when my brother and father would go down to the depot and hear the telegraph report on how the world series was coming along because the depot man could always telegraph and he would listen and find out how the World Series was coming

along and who finally won. Otherwise, we'd never know who won until the next morning when the paper came by train.

LD: When the paper. . . that was your fastest news service in those times.

IP: Yes.

LD: How did Keystone celebrate Armistice Day? Do you have strong memories of that?

IP: No, I think we did, though. I'm sure we did because we had a lot of soldiers in Keystone and we had some fella that were killed in France and their American Legion was named after him.

LD: Shifting back to coming to Cedar Rapids when you were a young girl, what did Cedar Rapids look like to you then?

IP: Oh, it looked like quite a large city. And I was quite thrilled at the advantages of the things to see and things to do and especially the entertainment part of Cedar Rapids. Cedar Rapids was a good stopping off of a lot of the big shows and big bands.

LD: Well, let's go back and just maybe track what a typical day in Cedar Rapids might have been like for you. You would have come in. . . if you came on the train, you would have come into Marion.

IP: You mean before I taught school here?

LD: Yes, when you were still a young girl coming in.

IP: Oh, we just come into the town.

LD: Yeh.

IP: And, oh, we'd go into a few stores and whatever shopping anybody had to do, I don't remember much of anything except the Kresge's store. It was a large store on First Avenue and Third Street. And across the street from what is now the Iowa Theater was a saloon called Yes Wet and I remember watching those doors swinging back and forth.

LD: Just like a real western saloon.

IP: Yes.

LD: Tell your story about Kresge's.

IP: Well, it was a large store. They had everything, everything. And there was one section of the store that had a music department. And that's where you could find music books and sheet music. And there was a piano and there was a girl who could play the piano and as far as I was concerned, she could play anything. You would mention a sheet, a piece of music, and she'd play it. And if you liked it, you'd probably buy the sheet of music. But that was her job. She just played, as far as I was concerned, all day long. And I used to just stand there and hang there, you know, along the railing and just listen because it was quite thrilling to have anyone being able to play that many pieces. And sometimes she'd have to get the sheet music and look at the notes but otherwise she could just play them.

LD: Most of it she just played from memory.

IP: Yes, uh-huh.

LD: That's amazing. Where would you eat when you came to Cedar Rapids as a young girl? Do you have memories of particular places that you would go to?

IP: Yes. I don't know whether this was when I was a young girl or not. I kind of doubt whether we ate then. But later on there was a big cafeteria. It was on Third Street between First and Second Avenue, I think, called Harmony Cafeteria.

LD: Harmony?

IP: Uh-huh.

LD: I haven't heard of that.

IP: Uh-huh. It was like Bishop's only it was on that same order and it was called the Harmony. And then, I think, there was always on Third Avenue the Butterfly I think was there.

LD: Yes, it still is, I think, or has been up until the last few years.

IP: And then across there was a drugstore but. . . so it was. . . I never got any farther than First, Third, and. . .

LD: Very narrow downtown.

IP: Yes. Second and Third Avenue probably and Second and Third Streets.

LD: Okay. When you came here as a young girl, and we're really thinking of the years between here, say 1910 probably and 1920, did you go to the movies? Did you take advantage of the entertainment then or was that later?

IP: No, no. We had movies at Keystone.

LD: So you just. . .

IP: Yes.

- LD: . . . enjoyed them there. What about Greene's Opera House? Was that a later experience for you?
- IP: Yes. That was when I was an adult and living here.
- LD: Okay. So that would have been in the 1920's. Well, we'll get to that then in just a moment. You came here then as a young woman with a teaching certificate in 1922. How did you hear about the Kenwood Park teaching position? Do you remember?
- IP: No, I don't. I remember applying so I don't have any idea.
- LD: But just were accepted and. . .
- IP: Yes, uh-huh.
- LD: What was Kenwood Park like in those days?
- IP: Well, it was very much the way it is now. They had the Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church and the big school house just the way it is today except that school house is a church now, I think.
- LD: Oh.
- IP: It was the regular school. And we went back and forth by streetcar because we didn't want to live. . . well, the first year or two I lived at a home for board and room. And after that we wanted an apartment downtown and we went to school by streetcar every day. And that didn't seem to be any job. It would be now, wouldn't it?
- LD: Oh, yes! What was it like. . . was there a stretch, really country, between Cedar Rapids and Kenwood Park?

IP: No, it was pretty much. . . 32nd Street was fairly well built up and then right after 32nd was Kenwood Park. But it was more built up now, of course. And I remember that in the country off of 32nd Street to the south, I think, was where Grant Wood family lived.

LD: Was Kenwood Park actually a township?

IP: Yes.

LD: Did it have it's own government in those days?

IP: Oh yes. It was a, what is it called, a consolidated city.

LD: A city.

IP: A city, yes. And we had our own superintendent of schools and our mayor and. . .

LD: Oh! How big would it have been?

IP: I don't know.

LD: Larger than Keystone perhaps?

IP: Probably so.

LD: Do you know why Kenwood Park originated as a separate entity from Cedar Rapids?

IP: Well, it probably. . . there was probably a lot of space between that little town and Cedar Rapids as a whole because that's quite a distance if you go from downtown to 32nd Street. That's quite a long ways.

LD: Was Kenwood Park on the railroad line, so to speak?

IP: No, no.

LD: I'm just wondering what kind of originally got it started as a place for people to. . .

IP: I don't know.

LD: . . . to dwell in and to kind of make into a community. What was a typical work day like when you were a teacher at Kenwood Park? If you could just kind of go back and walk through that day, what was it like?

IP: It was just pleasant because I taught in the fifth and sixth grades and the kids were just great. And I never had any trouble. I was a pretty good disciplinarian but I think only one time in all the years I ever taught that I had to slap a kid's hands. I don't even remember why but that was quite a dramatic thing for me to do. But otherwise I liked 'em. A lot of my friends here, Richard Buresh was one of my pupils and now he has the Buresh Rental Service. Mary Lindsey was one of my pupils and she had that massive carpet and thing now. Johnny Baker was one of my pupils and he had quite a restaurant here at one time. So I had nothing but fine, fine remembrances of my teaching.

LD: So it sounds to me as if your pupils came from a variety of backgrounds. Were they. . .

IP: Well, they all had to live in the Kenwood Park District, you see.

LD: Right. Right.

IP: Because if they were across 32nd, they had to go to Cedar Rapids.

LD: Okay. Do you remember different ethnic backgrounds in the school?

IP: No.

LD: It was really more a homogeneous group.

IP: Yes, uh-huh.

LD: What did people do who lived in Kenwood Park in those days?

IP: Oh, I suppose they were all employed because, you see, that wasn't really a retirement town of any kind. So they probably worked in Marion as well as in Cedar Rapids. And also there were all these industries in Kenwood Park that had to be taken care of too.

LD: Do you remember industries that were there then that are no longer around?

IP: Yes. That row of industry that's there right now, a lot of that there were other things. There was the general store and where the library is now, that. . .

LD: You mean the Kenwood Park Branch?

IP: Yes.

LD: On First Avenue.

IP: Yes, uh-huh.

LD: That was. . .

IP: Those were all regular stores. And I think there were some stores across the street too, which they aren't now. There's a filling station there now.

LD: Would that have been kind of the Main Street of Kenwood Park?

IP: Yes, uh-huh. On the way to Marion, you see.

LD: On the way to Marion. Okay. So there were grocery stores and. . .

IP: Oh yes.

LD: . . . and small shopping stores. Were there clothing stores in those days?

IP: I would guess there was. I just don't recall. Course, living in Cedar Rapids, we did our clothing shopping in Cedar Rapids.

LD: Okay.

IP: And then when Cedar Rapids and Kenwood Park consolidated, then the superintendent of schools was the Cedar Rapids superintendent of schools and he had all of us teachers moved to the Cedar Rapids Schools. I guess he thought we would be too clicky if we all would move together and so he put Cedar Rapids girls and men in the Kenwood Park school and my two years were at Garfield School.

LD: So he really upset the fruit basket.

IP: Yes, he surely did. We all moved into different schools in Cedar Rapids.

LD: Was the Garfield School District very similar to Kenwood Park?

IP: Oh yes. The difference was that they had supervisors, and they don't have that anymore. But she would visit and sit in the back and write criticisms and leave the note on the desk and then walk out, you know. You'd be scared to death of her when she came. And I never was scared when I taught before, but when she came into the room unannounced, I was scared!

LD: I'll bet. So this was someone who came, like from the superintendent's office?

IP: Yes, uh-huh.

LD: Not anybody that was actually in that building?

IP: No. No.

LD: I see.

IP: She always would come unannounced so you couldn't prepare for her.  
Wow! (Laughing)

LD: Do you remember how much salary you made in those days?

IP: No, I don't.

LD: Was the salary, do you remember that it was different for women versus men for a teaching position?

IP: Well, there weren't very many men teachers. Hardly any.

LD: So it was hard to make that comparison.

IP: It was all women. Even our principal at Garfield was a woman.

LD: Many of the principals in Cedar Rapids were women in those days.

IP: Yes.

LD: Which I had always thought was very unusual.

IP: It was very unusual. No, it was unusual to ever have a man in the school.

LD: I'll be darn. Even in the administrative positions? Because now in most of them, you see men.

IP: At the board of education would be the men.

LD: Oh, sure, downtown. Okay. How long then did you teach at Kenwood Park before you moved to Garfield? Was that a period of two or three years or more?

IP: Oh, let's see. I probably taught two years at Garfield before I was married and I was married in 1930, so probably 1928.

LD: Okay, so you were at Kenwood Park then from 1922 to about 1928 and then. . .

IP: Well, that sounds like it's too long but. . .

LD: A longer period at Kenwood Park?

IP: Yeh. Yes.

LD: What subjects did you teach when you were there?

IP: Fifth and sixth grade.

LD: And everything in that curriculum?

IP: Everything. Well, we did have a music teacher that came in for music. That was all.

LD: Did they have a physical education period?

IP: A little bit. I remember going to the gym and teaching a little folk dancing.

LD: Oh! So you got to do that too! (Laughing)

IP: Yes.

LD: What about lunch periods at school? Did they go home for lunch or stay at the school?

IP: Well, either they all went home or else they had brought their sack lunches and the teachers had a sack lunch.

END OF SIDE ONE -- BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

LD: This is Laura Derr and this is side two of a tape on May the 29th, 1985, in the home of Mrs. Irene Pickard.

We were talking about, Mrs. Pickard, the end of the school day and the length of the school day for you and your activities after the children left.

IP: Well, we had to stay, of course, til the children were all gone. And there were always some kids there that had to stay after school (laughter) for punishment or do their work, but that was never very important. And then we could go home when we wanted to. It wasn't as strict as when we taught in Cedar Rapids.

LD: What were the policies about dealing with youngsters who would have been failing in their grades? Was there any hesitation? Was there a tendency to send them on to the next grade in those days or was there a . . .

- IP: I don't remember too much about that. And I suppose there would have been some that would have to repeat. But I think that repeating now isn't nearly as traumatic as repeating then.
- LD: There are so many different types of classes for different youngsters nowadays too. . .
- IP: Yes, yes.
- LD: . . . from special education classes to special reading programs and things of that nature. Did any of that exist when you were teaching?
- IP: No, I don't think so. Now, when I taught at Garfield, I taught reading. And I taught reading in several classes. And then there was a math teacher that would come in, switched around, and did the math for several classes. And then the geography teacher came in. So a lot of those pupils had about four or five different teachers.
- LD: Okay. So there was more specialization then. . .
- IP: Yes.
- LD: . . . when you went into the Cedar Rapids School District.
- IP: Yes. Whereas in Kenwood Park, I taught all the subjects. That was fun.
- LD: You get certainly more variety that way.
- IP: Yeh, I even knew where Bangladesh was then.
- LD: (Laughing) Because you had to learn it before the youngsters did.
- IP: Yes.

LD: What would happen to. . . I'm interested in that type of student that, I guess we might say would fall through the cracks. Were there a lot of students in those days who simply stopped attending school? Were there very strong rules about attending up to a certain age?

IP: Well, I think probably if they were 16 years old they could quit. But I didn't have very many that old ever because that would be probably high school.

LD: That would have been beyond. So the truancy was not a serious problem that you remember?

IP: No, no.

LD: Okay. You taught at Garfield and we were talking about what happened to you, the difficult decision you had to make when you and your husband were ready to make the decision to marry. What happened to school teachers, women school teachers, in those days who married?

IP: Well, as soon as you were married you had to resign. You had to resign. And so that was rather difficult because it was in the Depression and my husband was having a hard time. He was an appraiser for Bolton Real Estate Company and his, especially the rental department, and there were very few rentals because everybody was in this Depression and they couldn't afford to have new buildings or even move. And then as an ex-school teacher, you could get supply work but I got very little because I didn't have a sick husband or I didn't have to support some children. So I got a little supply work but it didn't amount to anything.

LD: So it was primarily based on. . .

IP: Yes.

LD: . . . who they thought had the greatest need, then.

- IP: But the Depression would get more serious and more serious. And I had sociology and some of those courses at Coe and then we had more need for the unemployed and the poor all of a sudden. And so the city hired a Director of Relief.
- LD: Oh.
- IP: Before that time, we had Overseer of the Poor.
- LD: Oh, that was the title.
- IP: That was the title. And she just had a very few poor people to take care of. But when it got more and more and more of poor people, she couldn't handle it anymore and so the city hired a trained Director of Relief. And she had to hire women and men to go out, you see, and visit families. And I applied there and I got a job because of the background that I'd had at college because she was a trained person and she wanted the best training she could get. There wasn't anybody there. . . there wasn't even a class at Iowa City for that type of thing.
- LD: To teach you how to deal with social welfare situations.
- IP: No, no social welfare or anything like that.
- LD: What was that lady's name, do you remember?
- IP: Her name was Miss Jacobs.
- LD: Miss Jacobs.
- IP: She knew how to crack the whip! We were scare of her but we sure worked for her too. She was fair.

LD: Now, okay, this would have been in the mid 1930's?

IP: Yes, uh-huh.

LD: And she was hired by the city of Cedar Rapids.

IP: Yes. And her office was in the court house and the basement of the court house is where people would come and make applications for relief. And we had a security officer there all the time because there would be maybe a hundred or more people waiting to be waited on for asking for relief. So it was kind of scary because they would get so angry. They were going to push Miss Jacobs into the river if they didn't get some relief. So we were a little bit frightened to go back and forth there because the men and women were desperate.

LD: The mood of those folks. What did you do in that position? Were you a clerk?

IP: See, I had to interview in the home.

LD: Oh.

IP: We had to interview in the home to see whether they really needed because there were cheaters there too, as there always has been and always will be. And we had to go to the home and if we had in town here, we would go the best we could. And I remember I had an outside of the town territory so I had a county car and I would always have to visit in the homes. And I evidently did a pretty good job because nobody ever got too mad at me.

LD: But people who you would visit would first come down and fill out an application and then you would go.

IP: Yes and then I would visit and then I would come back to the office and make a recommendation whether or not they got help with their rent, their light bill or their gas bill or a food supplement. And there was a little store right down there by, oh, west of the Paramount Theater. There was a little grocery store there and most of our food tickets went there so they could go there and get their food. And that grocery store was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Becker. And they had a little kid there, his name was Becker. He is now president of the Guarantee Bank.

LD: Well, he did all right throughout all of that, huh?

IP: Yes, uh-huh. Well, he had a grocery store.

LD: He had a grocery store.

IP: He had a grocery store.

LD: They were the ones that were taking the tickets, right. They didn't have to have them. What were the criteria for accepting someone for relief?

IP: Well, how much income you had, how many resources you had, whether you were back on your rent, your light bill, your gas bill, whether you had enough to eat.

LD: So each one you evaluated individually.

IP: Whether you had relatives that could help.

LD: Right.

IP: Now, when we had older people it was pretty well a rule that the sons had to help their parents. They didn't ever tackle the daughters, even if they were wealthy.

LD: Oh, that's interesting.

IP: Yeh.

LD: It was considered the male's. . .

IP: But it was the sons that were supposed to help their parents if they needed help.

LD: That's interesting. Who paid the relief funds? Did they come from the city or federal?

IP: County. County, I think. I think it was county relief.

LD: So this was before the days of any federal funds or. . .

IP: I think so.

LD: . . . or relief. And this is different from the W.P.A. and the Federal Work Programs that were available.

IP: Yes. That came later.

LD: That came later.

IP: The C.C.C. and W.P.A. and. . .

LD: This was the county's method of dealing with the problem before they had anybody else come in and help.

IP: Yes.

LD: Do you remember, were the people who came to you, were they primarily people from a particular ethnic background? Were they people from the Czech community? Were they Black? Were they. . .

IP: That I don't remember. I don't remember many Blacks. I don't think there were many Blacks in Cedar Rapids in those days.

LD: Well, I think you're right. Even today, it's a very small proportion of the population.

IP: And as far as Czechs are concerned, I don't know. They're very thrifty people as a nationality, so I don't know.

LD: You just don't have a real dominant memory there whether it was one group or another.

IP: No, I don't.

LD: It was just whoever was in need. Okay. You mentioned that at one point in the Depression you survived on a monthly budget of about \$70.

IP: Yes.

LD: Can you remember how you allocated that money to get by?

IP: Well, I know that my husband's income from rental purposes was \$70 that month and whether I had any supply work for teaching, I don't remember. But I know that pork chops were a nickel a piece and I remember a loaf of bread was a nickel and we could eat pretty cheap and yet never be hungry. And I don't remember. . . milk was cheap too.

LD: Did you actually raise a garden during that time?

IP: No, because we were in an apartment.

LD: Sure.

IP: That was the cheapest thing and there was. . . the rental, it was a little apartment on First Street and First Avenue West. There was a large building there. And it was a small apartment but it was new and it was very thrilling. And then a little bit later, through the Bolton Real Estate Office, a lady had a house on Bever Avenue and she said if my husband would take that over and take some of her property rentals over, we could live there for nothing!

LD: Oh my!

IP: So then we moved to 1900 something, Bever Avenue and we had a lovely home there and a garden and a yard and everything. And so that helped to get us on our road to wealth. (Laughing)

LD: Oh, yes, to great success. So this would have still be in the 1930's then that you were able to do that.

IP: Yes, yes.

LD: A number of people have remarked that the weather during those years was an extreme; that the summers were extremely hot, the winters were extremely cold. Do you have memories of that period at all?

IP: Well, when I was in Keystone I remember it was so hot that all of us kids would lie out in the grass on blankets until we just had to go upstairs. And, of course, the upstairs was always hotter than an oven even though all the windows were open because there wasn't any insulation between the attic and the upstairs.

LD: Sure.

IP: And we had a nice screened porch at Keystone and a lot of them just stayed out on the porch all night. And in Cedar Rapids, we always had a window fan. So we could always get a breeze through, even if it was warm.

LD: Always had electricity here.

IP: Yes.

LD: One thing I didn't ask you about earlier, but did you have a telephone?

IP: Oh, yes, we had a. . .

LD: During the Depression years?

IP: Oh, yes. We had a telephone in Keystone too.

LD: You always had one in Keystone as well when you were growing up. A crank?

IP: Oh, yes.

LD: But it would connect you with many of the households in the town?

IP: Oh, yes, we could call anybody, uh-huh.

LD: Okay. We had talked at some length before about some of your wonderful memories of entertainment in Cedar Rapids.

IP: Oh, yes.

LD: We're talking here about the period probably in the 1920's as well as into the 1930's after you were married. Describe your memories, if you will, of Greene's Opera House.

IP: Well, I remember going to Ben Hur. And they had real horses. And, boy, did they run. And the. . .

LD: Was that on a treadmill on the stage?

IP: They must have been on a treadmill, yes. But they were beautiful, large horses and they just ran and ran and ran. Of course, it was even hard to imagine that to having that stage setting. And Greene's Opera House had box seats on the side and then they had the first balcony and the top balcony and they were all according to price and it was quite a thrilling opera house. Although I don't remember seeing many more shows there but I remember seeing Pavlova. Now, I think she was. . . I don't know whether it must have been the Iowa Theater and the Paramount Theater. It would be that long ago. But I remember seeing her dance the Swan Song. And I remember George Burns and Gracie Allen were there as part of a vaudeville act.

LD: And you're thinking this was probably in one of the theaters rather than Greene's?

IP: Yes, yes. And they were such a delightful couple. And then I remember seeing John Barrymore in a play and the acting was terrific. I heard later he was drunk, but I would have never known it the way he could play.

LD: What kinds of things would he do? Just readings, dramatic monologues. . .

IP: No, it was a play.

LD: He was in a play.

IP: He was a character in a play.

LD: When you went to these performances, where would you sit?

- IP: Well, I never got the most expensive seats ever. I was too. . . I didn't think that was necessary. So I often would sit in the back or in the second balcony.
- LD: Now we're talking here about Greene's Opera House versus Paramount or. . .
- IP: Well, yeh.
- LD: In the Paramount, you would generally sit up in the. . . above the loge area. . .
- IP: Yes, I guess so. I guess so because. . . and I don't remember too many plays I went to at the Greene, although I'm sure I did but I just don't recall them.
- LD: Were there generally refreshments in those days? Did you buy something to eat while you. . .
- IP: I think there was always something to eat. I don't think it was like sandwiches though. I think it was just. . .
- LD: Was popcorn in in those days?
- IP: Yes.
- LD: How long did the shows last? Were they as long as a typical movie now or longer?
- IP: Oh, I don't know. I think so.
- LD: Pretty much the same.
- IP: Uh-huh.

LD: Okay. What would you pay? Do you remember what was. . .

IP: No, I don't.

LD: You don't have a memory of that.

IP: No. I remember going to the box office and getting my ticket ahead of time.

LD: Okay. We also talked about movie houses and silent movies and that you actually attended movies before the advent of sound. Can you describe what that was like?

IP: Yes. That was in our Keystone large hotel. And they were the regular silent movies and we had a piano player that would play the music according to what you could see on the scene--the love songs and the sad songs and the racing songs. She was pretty apt at how she would play and that was exciting.

LD: Picking up the rhythm, huh?

IP: Yes. She would always. . . she could see and she would change her music according to what was shown. And then the first talk, sound, show was at the what is now the World Theater on Third Avenue. That was Al Jolsen.

LD: How did you feel when you saw that?

IP: Well, that was thrilling, yes.

LD: Sure. And was there. . .

IP: And part of that was, I think, silent too. And then I remember him singing "Mammy" so I'm not real clear on that either.

LD: Okay. That was here in Cedar Rapids when you were living here and teaching?

IP: Yes, uh-huh.

LD: What other things did you do for amusement in those days in the 1920's in Cedar Rapids when you were here as a young school teacher? Did you go to dances?

IP: Yes, uh-huh. There were a lot of dances in Cedar Rapids too. And there was where Barlow Store is now was a ballroom out there.

LD: Oh, really? In Marion?

IP: Well, I guess that would be Marion. It was still Cedar Rapids, I guess.

LD: Yeh, I guess so.

IP: And I don't really remember but my husband, he was raised a strict Methodist. And he was never, never could dance. And he just learned to dance after he left home. And so he never could whirl around like I was used to but he could keep step because he was a musician. He had. . . his background was music all the way--violin and recorder and piano and organ.

LD: So he had the rhythm. He had the sense of rhythm.

IP: Yes. He knew how to step off the music but he never could swing like we could at Keystone.

LD: I see. Now, we're talking here about memories of. . . was this before you were married or after you were married to your husband that you would go to dances together?

IP: Oh, at Keystone the girls would all go.

LD: Okay. At Keystone you would go as a group.

IP: I don't know in Cedar Rapids whether the girls would go to a dance or not. Maybe so. I don't recall. It wasn't too important to me, I guess.

LD: Were there big dance halls then?

IP: Yes, uh-huh.

LD: Like Danceland is one that I have heard of.

IP: Yes, that's right, uh-huh.

LD: Okay. You mentioned too that you had been involved with one of the early park recreation programs.

IP: Oh, yes, the first recreation program that they decided that they'd have a supervisor in the different parks of the city. And they had a man and a woman and I was one of the first women directors of that park for the summer.

LD: What was the park?

IP: I think it was Daniels.

LD: Daniels Park. And what did you do there?

IP: Well, just plan on games and supervise the kids so that they don't get into fights. And, of course, we got suggestions from headquarters, that was in the City Hall, and Mrs. Nickels was the head of the recreation department then. And her son later was the recreational director for years. But I

worked under Mrs. Nickels and I think I was only there one summer, maybe two. But I'm not real sure about that.

LD: Was this during the 1930's again when. . .

IP: It would be early, yes.

LD: You were here and were married, right?

IP: Yes, uh-huh.

LD: Okay. That means then that Cedar Rapids has had a recreation program for quite a long time.

IP: Yes, I was going to call and find out about that and I forgot.

LD: Well, that's something we can always check too. When you were here in the 1930's, well, we talked about the 1920's and riding the streetcars. Did you own a car then? Did you and your husband own a car?

IP: Yes, he always had a car. And, of course, he loved it and he took good care of it because he had to. When he would show people different houses to rent or to buy, he'd have to go out and show. So we had a car.

LD: What kind of car was it?

IP: I don't remember.

LD: You don't remember?

IP: No.

LD: What were the streets. . .

IP: I never knew a thing about cars and I still don't.

LD: You didn't care a whole bunch about them either.

IP: No.

LD: What were the streets like in Cedar Rapids in the 1930's?

IP: Oh, I remember when they tore up First Avenue and all the bricks in First Avenue and put down the cement or whatever it is. And I have a brick that came from First Avenue in the garage here and I'll have to give it to somebody, I guess.

LD: You thought it was important to have for a memento.

IP: Yes, it was fun.

LD: So before that they had been primarily brick streets.

IP: They were all brick streets and there are still brick streets in Cedar Rapids.

LD: Yes, I've seen some of them.

IP: They never. . . and it bothered my husband to have them pull up all those bricks because they were just as sound and as strong as could be. And he knew that a pavement would never last as long as the bricks. But he, of course, was right but that was. . . the bricks would probably disintegrate. But the bricks that we have around here now, they're still there.

LD: They sure are. We have some that, I'm sure, go back to that period of time. What are your memories of the Union Station and traveling by train? Did you and your husband enjoy train travel?

IP: Well, there wasn't much train travel. Of course, you could go from Keystone to Marion or to Cedar Rapids by train. But after I knew my husband, he had a car and most of our traveling was in the car.

LD: So you did not, during that time at least, take vacations that would have taken you on a train?

IP: No, no.

LD: Okay. I've pretty much covered most of the things I was interested in but didn't talk to you about. . . Oh! I know what we need to talk about--the medical community in that time and we had been talking. . . the medical community in those days. I don't know, you had a story about a friend who had a baby in the 1930's, I believe.

IP: Oh, yes, 1932. And she had a normal birth. Everything was fine but she stayed in bed for ten days after the birth. And then they said she could go home. Well, when she was ready to go home, she could hardly stand up. She was weak. And they got her to her husband's car and he got her to their home but she couldn't get any farther. He had to pick her up and carry her into the house. She had had no exercise whatsoever for ten days after the birth of her baby. And it was pretty hard for her to take care of a new baby and be in that weakened condition when everything else was normal. But they got through all right.

LD: Now, that was considered fairly the routine thing to do though?

IP: Yes, yes. Ten days in the hospital when you had a baby. Wow!

LD: That certainly has changed.

IP: And the first walk you had was probably the day you were going home.

LD: Yeh, as they got you out of bed. What are your memories of doctors during that period of time?

IP: Well, we always had a doctor, I suppose. Dr. Barthel, I remember - we had him. We had Dr. McQuiston as a doctor first and then we had a baby doctor for Charles and then when we thought we didn't need a specialist anymore so we changed to Barthel. And we were always satisfied with the doctors.

LD: Did they primarily come to you in those days when you were ill or did you go to them?

IP: No, well, they made house calls, sure. But I guess we never were too ill to. . . I had some dramatic things. I had cancer of the colon at one time and it was a successful operation and I haven't had any recurrence of any cancer and that's ten or fifteen years ago. And that's pretty lucky. And I've had a cataract implant for my one eye and that was successful. And I can do all my reading without glasses but I need glasses for driving.

LD: Yeh, it is wonderful the things that they can do nowadays especially. Do you have strong memories, and this is a period that came later because I remember this when I was growing up, of the polio fears.

IP: Yes, yes.

LD: You would have had a young child during those days, wouldn't you?

IP: Yes, and we all got polio shots.

LD: You also.

IP: Yes.

LD: That would have been in the 1940's, I presume.

IP: I don't know.

LD: Or the late 1930's.

IP: But we all got polio shots.

LD: Do you remember actually changing plans or restricting your son from what he could do because. . .

IP: No, I don't and that. . . my first vaccination was by my grandfather in Keystone.

LD: Oh, really!

IP: Yes.

LD: That's right, the doctor!

IP: Yes. And he vaccinated for I don't know what but whatever he vaccinated for, I never had those diseases. I suppose it was measles and whooping cough. And then when I was vaccinated again when I was older they never took because that first vaccination was still okay. But, of course, the polio shot was different.

LD: Right. What memories do you have of epidemics or quarantine situations?

IP: Well, the flu. The 1918 flu. That was all over the country and I was in Cedar Falls at the time. And I was in a boarding house at Cedar Falls and I didn't feel very well and I didn't go to class that day. And I went to the bathroom and the next thing I knew, my face was on the floor.

LD: Oh.

IP: I had fainted. And that is probably the only time in my whole life that I ever fainted. Well, I got myself up and went back to bed and it was this boarding house and nobody was there to take care of anybody. So evidently I didn't have it too bad because I got over it and then went back to class. But people died, just died and died all over the country.

LD: It was a vicious flu, yeh.

IP: With the flu.

LD: And there were no antidotes or antibiotics for it in those days.

IP: No. And I still get a flu shot every fall. Even today.

LD: Well, I think that's extremely smart. Do you have memories to share of either of the local hospitals? Did you have experiences with them during that time?

IP: No. If I had to be hospitalized, I always went to St. Lukes. And I don't have any. . .

LD: Anything that has changed tremendously?

IP: I don't think so. I don't know.

LD: Okay. We mentioned Coe earlier when you were talking about earning your degree from there in 1940. Do you have any other memories to share? What was it like to be the only person in a college classroom who was over the age of what, 22 or 24?

IP: Oh, yes. (Laughing) Well, the two girls were there. I'll always remember them, a Salter girl and a Gage, the president's daughter. And then there was a Safely boy, you know, he just would say, "(made teasing noises with mouth)" you know, and he thought it was kind of funny that I was there.

But they were all sweet to me and it was real nice. But as far as I know, I was the only old person in the whole college still a student.

LD: Nobody tried to talk you out of doing it then?

IP: Oh, no, uh-huh. And my husband was the one that really urged me to go and get my degree.

LD: That's great.

IP: And I walked. We were on Washington Avenue then and I walked to Coe. And I walked back and forth to town too because he had a lot of jobs that were out of town. So I would walk downtown and back and thought nothing of it.

LD: Yes, I think people walked a lot more in the past.

IP: Now you only walk for exercise.

LD: Yes.

IP: Not for the joy or necessity.

LD: Or for the necessity, yeh.

IP: Never.

LD: It seems kind of something you would do only when you have spare time. Okay. I did want to ask you about your memories being a working woman in a period when there were not that many women who actually practiced professions outside of the home and I think we've covered that fairly well with the memories of Kenwood Park.

- IP: Yes, but when I had a job in the Depression times, it was resented because there I was married and had a job and there were married men who were unemployed. There was some resentment there for a woman working.
- LD: A strong ethic that that should have been a man's. . .
- IP: Yes.
- LD: . . . a man should be employed first.
- IP: Because he was home and unemployed and there I was married, even though my husband wasn't earning hardly anything, but I was getting a salary.
- LD: And it didn't have anything to do with your background or your ability for the job or anything of that sort.
- IP: That's right.
- LD: Women's suffrage came in and the vote was passed for women in, I believe, 1919 or 1920. Do you have any memories of that in your own life?
- IP: No. I just knew that I've always voted.
- LD: You've always voted.
- IP: Even if it was a school board election. I'm very conscientious about voting.
- LD: Okay. In some families it was a matter of controversy so I thought I'd just check and see if you had any stories about that. Famous characters in Cedar Rapids. We mentioned the other day that there are a number of people in the community that have gained national and a lot of at-

tention, Grant Wood being one of them. You said you lived very close to Grant Wood. Do you have any personal memories of him?

IP: No, no. He had quite a lot to do with the church that I attend and, of course, I remember seeing his exhibits and I remember having seen him too. But I have nothing personal with Grant Wood.

LD: What about the Cherry Sisters, the famous Cherry Sisters?

IP: I remember them. Now whether I ever saw them or not, but my husband wrote quite a story about them and it was very interesting. And he had pictures. Where he found those pictures, he got some pictures at the Masonic Library and from the Public Library and he has quite a write-up about the Cherry Sisters.

LD: The community was also. . . there were a number of, I suppose we would call them catastrophes or events that often affected everybody in the community. One of them occurred before you moved here but I believe you have a memory of it, and that was the Douglas Starch Works explosion.

IP: Yes. We, of course, heard that this Douglas Starch Works was burning and whether I really saw it or not or whether the rest of them did, but we felt that we saw the light in the eastern sky that night from the fire of that burning building.

LD: That would of been, well, it would have been possible.

IP: It would have been 30 miles away but I guess it was a mean one.

LD: Any other events or experiences that were unusual that stand out in your mind during that period in the community? And I guess I should say are there any things that you wanted to share with us that I have not covered in my questions that I have asked you already?

IP: Oh, I don't recall of anything special. I think we've covered a lot.

LD: I think we've done pretty well.

IP: Yes.

LD: Well, I am extremely grateful for your sharing. . .

IP: Do you want that song?

LD: Oh, yes, I'm coming right up to that.

IP: Okay.

LD: You know, we had talked earlier about the fact that you love to sing and that you used to sing for, I presume, for company that would come or family events and things of that sort as a young girl. Am I right?

IP: Well, the first time I sang this particular song was for Santa Claus.

LD: Oh, it was for Santa Claus.

IP: For Santa Claus, yes.

LD: That's right.

IP: We all had to do something for him and then it was later on that evening that I happened to walk into the dining room and there was Papa and Santa Claus in the kitchen drinking beer. And I never could figure if he had so much to do and so many places to go how he could take time to stop and visit and drink some beer. But I sang this song for him and I've never forgotten it. It's a song that I don't know how it ever came to Keystone but, oh, not many years ago, just a few years ago someone said

their grandmother sang it. Well, that peeked my imagination so I asked the library if they would look up the history of this song. And they did and they found out that it was first originated about 1500 in Wales and Scotland. And then the next they heard of it was in the Kentucky Mountains and how it ever got to Keystone, I'll never know. But my sister and I both could sing this song. It's a sad, sad song.

LD: And the name of it is?

IP: "Babes in the Woods".

LD: "Babes in the Woods". And will you sing it for us?

IP: (Singing)

"Come my dears, don't you know  
Of a long time ago.  
Two dear little children  
Whose names I don't know  
Were stolen away  
On a bright summer's day  
And hid in the woods  
I heard the folks say.

And when it was night  
So sad was their plight.  
The sun it went down  
And the moon gave no light.  
They sobbed and they sighed  
And they bitterly cried.  
Poor babes in the woods  
Layed down and they died.

And when they were dead  
The robins so red  
Gathered strawberry leaves  
And over them spread.  
And all the night long  
They sang their sad song  
Poor babes in the woods  
Poor babes in the woods."

LD: Did you have everyone in tears when you finished that song?

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Poor babes in the woods."

LD: Did you have everyone in tears when you finished that song?

IP: I didn't. I never was sad. When I sang it for Santa Claus, my little brother cried.

LD: How old would you have been then?

IP: Oh, I still believed in Santa Claus.

LD: Nine, ten.

IP: I still believed in the Easter Rabbit, so I was probably ten.

LD: That, I think, was a tradition that was so common that children always had things, pieces that they did for either for company or in the parlor or whatever.

IP: That wasn't in my best voice.

LD: Actually, I think that it's amazing that you can even sing in that high of key.

IP: Well, it was a little high. I should have started lower.

LD: Well, I thank you for sharing your memories with us. And I know that there are going to be people in the future who are going to take advantage of these through the library and will be very grateful to have them.

IP: Well, I was very glad to do it.

LD: Thank you again.

