

Narrator: Cecilia Paroubek Kluge
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Interviewer: Yvonne Ryden
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INTRODUCTION

Cecilia Paroubek Kluge is a member of an early Skokie (Niles Center) family. Cele tells of living on Lincoln Avenue during the 1920s and 1930s while her father owned the Community Bakery. She recalls the Farmer's Market on Warren Street, the paving of Lincoln Avenue and life with seven siblings in the apartment above the bakery.

Cele had a long interesting career at Baxter Laboratories in the International Division. Now in her retirement she is active again in many community organizations. Most notably, she is serving on the Morton Grove Historical Society committee managing the Haupt-Yehl House.

CK: Cecilia Kluge

Q: Question asked by interviewer, Yvonne Ryden

TAPE ONE, SIDE A

Q: I'm Mrs. Yvonne Ryden. Ceil, are you ready to start?

CK: I'm ready to start and my name is Cecilia Harriet Mary Paroubek Kluge.

Q: Say all that again!

CK: Cecilia Harriet Mary Paroubek Kluge. I was born in Skokie on August 31, 1918.

Q: That wouldn't have been Skokie then. It would have been . . .

CK: Would have been Niles Center. I was born at home. At that time, the women didn't go to the hospital. My father's name was Ivan Paroubek, Jr. My mother's name was Harriet Klinge Paroubek, and she married my dad in 1917.

Q: Would you go back and tell us about your grandparents on each side? What you know and what you want to tell us.

CK: My grandfather was Ivan Paroubek, Sr., and he came to Niles Center. He was very active in the community and starting up the community. He was one of the first firemen in Niles Center. He was on the board of the Niles Center State Bank. My uncles and my father followed in their father's footsteps being very active in

the community. My grandfather had a harness shop on Lincoln Avenue for many years.

Q: About where on Lincoln Avenue, if you're going to place it now?

CK: He was right in the area on Lincoln and Niles Center Road where they intersect. Where the Ace Hardware store used to be. Before the Ace store was there, that was my grandfather's harness shop.

Q: Now, I don't know of any Ace store. Are you talking about south of Haben's?

CK: Well, the store that now has pictures in and then it had furs in. It's on the corner . . .

Q: Oh, all right. That part probably was the original Niles Center Mercantile Company. That building still stands?

CK: Yes. And before that was built that's where my grandfather had his shop.

Q: Now, I see that you have a picture here. It shows the old building, and it was at what address?

CK: This harness business was at 8051 Lincoln Avenue. As I told you before, he was one of the original village trustees and a school director for many years.

Q: This is your grandfather you're speaking of?

CK: This would be my grandfather. This picture is in an article from early Skokie.
It shows a picture of his harness shop with his sons -- Tony, John, and Ivan, who was my father.

Q: Was Ivan the oldest?

CK: No. Ivan was the youngest . . .

Q: The junior came after two others . . .

CK: Yes.

Q: The oldest son wasn't named junior?

CK: My father was the baby of the family. And in his family, there were five brothers and sisters. My grandfather had five children.

Q: All right.

CK: My Aunt Kate, who married a butcher, was born in 1881, died in 1955. My Uncle John was born in 1871 and died in 1907. He was married to Sophie Haupt from the family that first owned the Haupt-Yehl House. Ivan Paroubek was born in 1889 and died in 1947.

Q: That's your father?

CK: And that's my father.

Q: Who were the others in the family?

CK: My Aunt Theresa, who was the oldest in the family -- and I don't have her date -- so there would have been Theresa, Kate, John and Ivan. My Uncle Tony -- I don't have his dates. He lived in Des Plaines, had the hardware store in Des Plaines. His son carried on with the hardware store and it still stands in Des Plaines.

Q: Does it have the family name or . . . ?

CK: No. I think it's just the Ace Hardware Store of Des Plaines.

Q: I see.

CK: My Uncle Tony had two children, Tony Jr., and Lorraine. Lorraine Paroubek, my cousin still lives in Skokie. I don't think I'll go through all the cousins.

Q: No. unless later you want to give it to us as supplementary material, but we won't put it on the tape now.

CK: All right. And then my mother was from Chicago, Harriet Paroubek. She married my dad in 1917. Her father -- my grandfather Klinge -- was from Europe, and I believe it was Germany. He came to this country, married my grandmother and they had five children. My mother was the oldest, and my mother died in 1929 when I was eleven years old, which was very sad. She had five children. I'm the

oldest. I have a sister, Jeannette, a brother, Ivan, a brother, Richard, my brother, Robert. My father was married three times. His first wife was Emma Eiserman from Niles Center, and he had two children by her, John and Dorothy. They were married probably about five years when his first wife died. He had lived in St. Paul, Minnesota -- had a bakery up there. After her death he came back to Niles Center and went into business with his brother, John. Eventually he bought out John and ran the bakery himself until about 1946. They moved the bakery from 8101 Niles Center Road -- it was next to the cemetery -- and went across the street and rented from the Schoeneberger Brothers store and opened up a bakery there, which was called the Community Bakery. My dad went into business with his two sons, John and Ivan, who is Ivan Jr.. He had the bakery there, of course, until he died.

Q: Now, that bakery still exists. It's changed hands several times, but there is still a bakery in that location.

CK: Yes. My brother Ivan sold out to John. My brother Ivan went to Park Ridge and opened a bakery. John sold the bakery when he retired about six or seven years ago, which would have probably been about 1938 or 1984.

Q: The bakery, in 1915 when it was on the east side of Niles Center Road, that building is no longer standing?

CK: No, they tore that building down to make a parking lot for Haben's Funeral Home. And that's where all of us were born in that house there. In about 1930, they

added on to the front of the bakery. We have pictures showing the old bakery and then where they added on to the front.

Q: But was it originally a house? The first floor was a store . . .

CK: The first floor was the bakery, second floor was an apartment, and we lived up there.

Q: Perhaps it looked something like the building that the young Haben has rehabbed?

CK: Similar, very similar.

Q: All right. Before we continue, do you have written down the spellings of some of these names? Your mother's maiden name and your grandmother's maiden name.

CK: My mother's maiden name was Klinge and my mother's mother was Koeppe. I have a whole history of my grandmother.

Q: Do you? How interesting. Where did you get all this information?

CK: My cousin wrote up the history of my mother's family. The information came from my Aunt Doretta. My mother's father's name was William Klinge. He came from Luxembourg.

Q: Do you know where in Europe your Paroubek ancestors came from?

CK: My grandfather Paroubek came from Austria. Bohemia. And he was born in 1847. Came to the United States in 1867 and located in Niles Center in 1869.

Q: All right.

CK: On my mother's side of the family, they had seven children. William, Jr., was born in 1889, and he must have died at birth. My mother was born in 1891 and died in 1929, and she is buried at St. Peter's cemetery in Skokie. My aunt Doretta, was born in 1893, died in 1982, was cremated. My Uncle Robert was born in 1894, died in 1980, was cremated. My Uncle Ralph was born 1896, died in 1981, is buried in Memorial Park Cemetery in Skokie. My Aunt Helen was born in 1898, died in 1988, is cremated. My Aunt Ruth was born in 1908, is still living.

Q: Now, did you know most of these? Were these all aunts and uncles that were in your family circle?

CK: These were very close aunts and uncles. When I was a little girl, I used to spend my summers at my Grandmother Klinge's all the time.

Q: And where was that?

CK: She lived on Olive Avenue in Chicago. I stayed with them every summer probably until I was in high school, when I'd want to stay home and be with my friends. But I was always part of that family, so that I knew my aunts and uncles very well and was very close to them. Fact is, we're close to all our cousins on my mother's side. I think because my mother died so early and so young, that the

aunts made a special effort to keep the family together, and were always good to us even after my father remarried.

Q: Your mother died when you were eleven then . . .

CK: My dad remarried in 1932.

Q: How old were you at that point?

CK: I would have been fourteen years old. He married Irene Fischer Bronson. She lived in Waukegan. She worked at the el station in Skokie when they had a restaurant connected with the el station.

Q: There was a restaurant?

CK: Oh, yes! There was a restaurant in the el station at Dempster Street and one at Oakton Street. The North Shore came down from Waukegan and stopped at Dempster Street. The North Shore did not stop at Oakton.

Q: But still there was a restaurant there?

CK: But still they had a restaurant there.

Q: A real restaurant or a snack bar or . . . ?

CK: Well, a snack bar. You know, you could have breakfast or rolls. A concession would be more appropriate. Well, that's where she worked and she met my dad when he would deliver bread over there.

Q: I see.

CK: He bought a new car and took her out for a ride and that was it. So I was very unhappy when he was going to be remarried. It wasn't long enough since my mother died and being much older than the other kids, I put up kind of a fuss, and they sent me to my grandmother again. I was going to live there, but they had other ideas and it worked out fine, and we became very good friends. She is now in a nursing home in Des Plaines.

Q: Oh, that's the mother that you're so kind to?

CK: That's my stepmother.

Q: Oh, how interesting!

CK: So everything worked out fine, and she . . .

Q: She was a nice lady.

CK: She was only about -- she's eighty-five now -- she was only about fourteen years older than I was, and it was just like him marrying a big sister. We acted and treated her like she was a big sister. We would go shopping, and if we were

going for a new coat or something we would say, "Mother, how does it look on me?" The salesclerks would all look at us and say, "That's not your mother." "Oh, yes it is our mother," and we'd have them going until finally we would say, "This is our stepmother." But we used to have so much fun with her, and she had a family in Waukegan that we became very good friends with. She had a younger sister, Martha, who was our age -- my sister's and my age -- and we used to double date and had very good times together.

Q: This was her first marriage?

CK: This was her second marriage. Irene was married to a man by the name of Robert Bronson. She had one son. Her husband died. Fact is, when Irene and Ivan started going together, her first husband was still living, and my dad was going to marry her over the objections of the church, because now they were both Catholic and she had been divorced. Her husband was killed in an accident and it was just like the hand of God being there.

Q: Because your father was determined to marry her and . . . ?

CK: To marry her.

Q: Did her son come to be a part of your family?

CK: Oh, yes!

Q: So, your stepbrother was Robert?

CK: I have a brother Robert, so we had confusion in the house with two Bobs. Little Bob and Big Bob, we used to call them because my brother was taller than her son. But my stepbrother, Robert Bronson, lives in Morton Grove.

Q: And did that work out well?

CK: Oh, it worked out fine!

Q: Good!

CK: We had no problems. The only one was me causing the trouble.

Q: Tell me about your living aunts.

CK: My Aunt Ruth lives in Albuquerque. She's very active. She'll be 81. She takes care of her own home. She lost her husband a couple years ago. And when I was growing up, there was ten years difference between my Aunt Helen, my Aunt Ruth, and myself, so I always knew how old they were. I was told not to ever say anything about the ten years difference because they didn't want anyone to know how old they were. None of them ever looked their age.

Q: Oh, good.

CK: My Aunt Ruth is still a blond. She has a little gray hair. I think, it's just a family trait, we just don't look our ages. Now, we really don't have to go into my grandmother's side of the family, do we?

Q: Not really, if you chose not to, unless they play a part in Morton Grove or Niles Center.

CK: No.

Q: If they're not in this area . . .

CK: Locale, no.

Q: Okay. Go on.

CK: Okay. All right, my brothers -- I had a stepsister, Dorothy, who was born in 1913, and she died in 1970. I have a stepbrother . . .

Q: Now, they were your father's . . .

CK: First wife's children. As I said, Dorothy was born in 1913, and John was probably born in 1914 or 1915, and he's still living. He lived out in Colorado until this year and moved back here. I have a brother, Ivan, who was born in -- I'm not sure on all these dates.

Q: Well, he's younger than you are.

CK: Younger than I am. There's not much difference between us children. I have a sister, Jeannette, she was born in 1920. Ivan was probably born in '21 and Richard '23 and Robert was born in '26 because he was only a couple years old

when my mother died. And they're all living. My sister, Jeannette married Bill Bauer. She lives out in California, has six children.

Q: So you really had a half-sister, a half-brother, and a stepbrother. I'm trying to keep it straight.

CK: John and Dorothy are half-brother and sister.

Q: They are half-brother and sister by your father's first wife, and this Robert Bronson is a stepbrother because his mother married your father.

CK: Right.

Q: Did they all have children together?

CK: No. They had enough with all of us.

Q: I think it would be interesting to go back. You mentioned the fact that these men in the family were all civic-minded. That your grandfather -- if you want to tell about what your grandfather did for the village of Niles Center when he moved in. And then we'll talk about your father and what he did.

CK: Well, my grandfather, as I said, was on the first fire department and . . .

Q: It was volunteer?

CK: Oh, yes. All volunteer.

Q: Okay.

CK: The village of Skokie now has quite a history on the old-timers, the original settlers in town, and my grandfather is mentioned there many times. The First National Bank of Skokie now that used to be the Niles Center State Bank has a picture up in their boardroom of the first board, and my grandfather's on that picture. So there's the history of the Paroubek family in town. My father was on the grade school board probably from 1930 until he died in 1950. When they started the high school in Niles Center, he was on the high school board and was president and held all the offices on the board and was still on the board when he died in 1950. He was very active in the Chamber of Commerce. He was in charge of the Niles Center Day Parades when they used to have those. I remember as a child, they used to have this -- I can't think of what it is -- place over on Lincoln Avenue and Oakton Street.

Q: Like a picnic grove on the southwest corner?

CK: Southwest corner. And we would have the hot dog and hamburger stand. As kids, that was out job, working in that stand. And when we had hot summers, you really worked, and it was hot. But those were really fun days. In the parade, we always had a pretty float from the bakery. It was always fun making up this float. My dad -- in the '30s -- he would cater dinners for the different organizations in town. The Chamber of Commerce had a meeting room in the

building on Lincoln and Oakton, which was a bank building which went bankrupt during the Depression. The downstairs used to have big meeting rooms.

Q: Where was that again?

CK: On Lincoln and Skokie.

Q: Yes, but what corner?

CK: Would have been the northwest corner, and the building is still there. There's a restaurant in there now.

Q: That brick building where there's Desiree restaurant?

CK: Right now. That used to be a bank in there.

Q: Oh! No one has ever mentioned that before.

CK: Oh, yes.

Q: Maybe someone in Skokie has but . . .

CK: The building that was originally on that corner was moved further west on the block, now it's been torn down. There is a parking place there now. But it was a big frame, three-story building.

CK: Well, in the new bank building, the first floor was the bank, downstairs they had a big meeting room, and then on the second floor they had the library. That's where the Niles Center Library started.

Q: Where the doctor's offices and insurance offices are now?

CK: Yes. That's where we started the library.

Q: One of those rooms. It couldn't have been very big.

CK: But then we also would have these big dinners over at the high school, and we would have it in the gym.

Q: At the present high school -- Niles . . .

CK: No, no! This would have been at the Lincoln School.

Q: Let's talk about your career, what you did in your life.

CK: Okay. I was born in 1918. I went to St. Peter's Catholic School. My first year at St. Peter's was in the old school, the wooden school which was on Lincoln Avenue. The second year I went to St. Peter's Catholic School with the address on Niles Center Road because they built the new grade school, the brick building. My father went to public school at the old building on Niles Center Road.

Q: So, actually St. Peter's Catholic School has had a building on Lincoln Avenue and the existing building on Niles Center Road.

CK: The school that my father went to is where the telephone office was on Niles Center Road.

Q: On the east side of Niles Center Road?

CK: Yes. They had torn down the old school to put up this new telephone building. I think there's something different in there now.

Q: I think it still belongs to the telephone company, though.

CK: Here's a picture of the bakery.

Q: You're showing me a picture of two men standing on the steps at 8057 Niles Center Road. Is this the building that was torn down to make Haben's Funeral Home?

CK: No, this would have been the original bakery shop -- the old front. Like I say, in the late '20s or early '30s they added onto this building.

TAPE ONE, SIDE A ENDS

TAPE ONE, SIDE B

CK: These two -- little boy and girl -- would be my brother, John, and my sister, Dorothy.

Q: Okay, all right.

CK: I went through grade school, and I graduated in 1933 from St. Peter's. At the time we graduated, they had just started a two-year high school in Niles Center. If we hadn't gone to the public high school, we would have had to go to Chicago or to one of the Catholic high schools in the area -- Mallinkrodt, Alvernia. But we -- you know, during the Depression my father couldn't afford to send us there, so we had to go to the Lincoln School on Lincoln Avenue where they had the two-year high school. Needless to say, we were very unhappy that we had to go to a public school, but we did go there and enjoyed it. While we were there, they made it a three-year high school, so we graduated from the three-year high school in 1936. Then we would have had to go on to finish our high school someplace else. My dad was bound and determined that his kids were going to have a high school education. Then they decided they were going to have the four-year high school, so we all went back to school and graduated from the four-year high school in 1937.

Q: And this was the school that actually was held in the building that's Lincoln Elementary School?

CK: That's correct.

Q: Was there an elementary school in there at that time?

CK: Yes. The high school was on the second floor and in the basement, and the grade school was all on that first floor. We had a big gym, which served as an

auditorium, and that's where we would have these dinners that I talked about. Or we had our plays there or our dances and things like that.

Q: Did you feel cheated about high school?

CK: Not after we started going there. Never. Fact is, several of my friends who had gone to the Catholic schools quit the schools and came over to the public school.

Q: Good!

CK: But I think we've gotten just as good an education as we would if we'd gone to a Catholic school.

Q: I know some of the people who were on the faculty at that time. You had an excellent faculty.

CK: Oh, yes!

Q: You were very lucky.

CK: Miss Green, Miss Harbert. Miss Grace Harbert.

Q: Right. And Miss Green, Marie Green . . .

CK: Yes.

Q: . . . taught business subjects.

CK: She was our bookkeeping teacher. And I was good in bookkeeping, so we sat in the back of the room and played most of the time. It was a good thing we knew our lessons, but we had a good time. Then Mr. Flagg, who was our algebra teacher. Mr. Contanche was the principal at the time. We had two girls -- two women . . .

Q: Oh, the Ronalds?

CK: The Ronalds, yes.

Q: The Ronalds sisters.

CK: Yes, they taught Latin and typewriting, English.

Q: They are both living over at the Presbyterian Home in Evanston?

CK: Right. In Evanston.

Q: Let's get their first names in here. One was Marjorie and one was Lucille.

CK: Yes.

Q: And Marjorie is now Mrs. Marjorie Schwab and Lucille is Mrs. Lucille Barnes. We've been talking about how the faculty at the high school that met at Lincoln Elementary School. What was the high school called?

CK: Niles Center High School. When we were in our fourth or third year, we went around with petitions to build the new high school. My dad, Ivan Paroubek, and several others from the board went to Washington to get a grant to build that school. The village -- not the village, but the township -- put up half a million and the grant they got was for half a million. So, then they built the high school from the . . .

Q: Which I thought was always such a pretty building. Of course, it's been added and added onto but what is it, the setback from Lincoln Avenue?

CK: Yes.

Q: It's got a nice approach. It's a class design.

CK: One of the girls at our fiftieth class reunion from the high school had movies that her dad, who was on the high school board with my dad. Mr. Kluesing, took of the high school when the trees were being knocked down and they were starting to build. Then when they had open house when they were carrying all the chairs and everything. They had all the kids from school carrying all the stuff over to the new school. Those are excellent movies, you know.

Q: you mentioned your fiftieth reunion, and I know you were very actively involved in it. Talk about that.

CK: Well, we had a reunion from our high school class for twenty-five years. Then we had one . . .

Q: Where was that held?

CK: That was held in Lincolnwood at some restaurant. It was on the south side of Lincoln Avenue in Lincolnwood. Now, I don't remember what the name of the restaurant is. Then we had another one for our fortieth year, and we had one for our fiftieth. Four our twenty-fifth year, we had about fifty-four in our graduating class. Not one in our class had passed away.

Q: How interesting!

CK: We had gone through World War II, which was really exceptional, because we did have quite a few that were in the service. We weren't so lucky when we came to our fiftieth. We had lost five or six members. That's still very good. Everybody comes from all over to come to this class reunion, and they want to have one again in five years. The next one someone else is going to handle. I got on the committee to help run the reunion, and it was our job to make the reservations, take the money in as it was coming in, make up the program.

Q: How did you contact all these people? Have you kept in touch?

CK: A lot of the people have not moved that far from the area. Some of them now are retiring, going to Florida, going out West. Most of the people that live in town kept in touch with their friends. So there were only about two or three out of our whole class that we couldn't locate, which was very good. And, of course, there's always some that after the fact, you find out you could have located

because they are so close. We had it over at The Fireside. A lot of work, but a lot of fun.

Q: Was it just your class or did you . . . ?

CK: No, we had several classes. We took the classes from '36 and '35 that had very few graduates.

Q: And they were two-year graduates anyway, right?

CK: Yes. And they all went and graduated from other schools. Laura Ross was one of them and she graduated from Evanston. Then we took in the class of '38. We could have maybe gone further but then it gets to be too big.

Q: Was the class of '38, it was not the first four-year school?

CK: They would have been the first high school students going to the new high school.

Q: I see. So you never got to go to the new high school after your father worked so hard. But you have younger brothers . . .

CK: Oh, yes. When my brother Dick graduated from the new high school, my dad gave him his diploma, so it was nice. At the first graduation from the new high school, our class was invited to participate, and we all sat down in front, you know, and were honored and things like that. But we really are the first

four-year graduating class from Niles Center High School. The high school does not recognize us as being the first four-year graduating class.

Q: Because you weren't from the township, I suppose.

CK: No, we were from the township high school. We weren't from the new high school. We graduated from Lincoln School. They're just taking the graduating classes from the new high school.

Q: When the high school opened, if there was a graduating class the first year, it had to be people who only had gone there their senior year.

CK: That's right. But they're recognized as the first graduating class. We tried to clarify that when we had our fiftieth. We thought that the township would want to participate in it because we were the first four-year graduating class. We couldn't get anybody to come . . .

Q: You said when you were the fiftieth or the twenty-fifth?

CK: Fiftieth.

Q: Fiftieth. Well, by that time, fifty years have elapsed, and you've got nobody that feels an obligation.

CK: No, we tried to get the president of the school board. We tried to get the principal from the high school and some dignitaries, and they were all going out

of town or had some other commitments. So, we were a little disappointed with that.

Q: So, after you finished your four years at Niles Center High School and were watching this lovely new building being built that was going to be occupied the next year, what did you do?

CK: I got a job at Lakeview Roofing Company in Chicago.

Q: As a bookkeeper?

CK: As a bookkeeper and made ten dollars a week. I had to take the el to go into Chicago every day, and I got to work on time when I got the right train and the train didn't go right past Belmont Avenue and take me to the Loop. Then I'd have to turn around and come back.

Q: Wouldn't you know when you were getting on whether they were going to stop?

CK: Well, they had different numbers, you know. Everybody's rushing, and you get on the train and oh, my God . . .

Q: Where were you living at that point?

CK: I was living at home.

Q: And where was home?

CK: Home was at the bakery shop upstairs.

Q: All right.

CK: We all lived at home until we got married . . .

Q: Upstairs?

CK: Upstairs over the bakery, which is now the one that's torn down. I worked at Lakeview Roofing for a year, and then I left there and I was going to go work for the telephone company, which was the biggest mistake of my life. I said I didn't want to work at night because it was too important to go out for dates. So I got a job . . .

Q: You mean you could have started with the phone company?

CK: Sure, they called me up, and I could have started and I refused the job.

Q: Well, we all make mistakes.

CK: We all make mistakes. Anyhow, I got a job at Cream Crest Farms Dairy. It was a new dairy up on Skokie Boulevard in Skokie. I worked there from 1938 to 1942 -- now wait -- I worked there from probably 1939 until 1946. It was seven years.

Q: As a bookkeeper?

CK: As a bookkeeper.

Q: What was the name of this dairy?

CK: Cream Crest Farms. They delivered milk all along the North Shore.

Q: How did you get up to that job? I mean, you couldn't take the el up there.

CK: Oh, how did I get up there? My brother had the bread route for the bakery, and they delivered bread to all the different restaurants and the different farms in the area. So, every morning he would drive me up to the dairy and then and start his route. I worked there until 1946. I got married in 1942 to Albert Kluge, who lived in Morton Grove.

Q: He is from Morton Grove?

CK: He was born in Skokie, so we're all old-timers. Al's father, Herman Kluge, went to school with my father, Ivan Paroubek, in Skokie, so that our families go back quite a ways.

Q: Had you known Al? Did you go to school with Al?

CK: No, I didn't go to school with him. He was born when his mother and dad lived on a farm with his grandfather and grandmother.

Q: In Niles Center?

CK: In Niles Center on Niles Center Road and Touhy, up in that area.

Q: Okay.

CK: Then his father quit farming and went and became caretaker over at the Leaning Tower when they had the swimming pools there.

Q: When it was Ilgair Park?

CK: When it was Ilgair Park. When he left there, he came back and moved into Morton Grove and had several jobs but ended up working at Baxter's Laboratory. So his dad was a custodian at Baxter's. When I met Al they were living here in Morton Grove. I met him at a party a friend of mine from high school had. I was going with this friend's brother, and I met Al. Her brother was going with another girl -- I think he was going with many girls. One night, on my way from the el when I worked at the roofing company, they stopped me and asked me if I wanted to go to a party with them. I said sure. So, then that meant I was going with Al. On our way home from that party, we had an accident. My future brother-in-law was driving the car and feeling no pain. He had been sleeping at the party because he had too much to drink. No one wanted him to drive but he insisted he had slept and he could drive. Well, we ended up in a lamp post. He was badly hurt. His face was all crushed in. I was sitting in the back seat on Al's lap, and I hit the roof and broke my nose, and we all ended up in the hospital.

Q: Now, this was like near the first time you met Al?

CK: This was the first night I was out with him.

Q: The very first time you were out with him. Okay.

CL: Needless to say, we were going to meet another friend. We were all going to go out and eat after this party. We never got to the restaurant that we had planned on meeting at. Irv went to my house to see if we came home instead. Well, my dad says, "No, she's not home." So, then my dad knew something had happened. The hospital kept saying, "Come on, let's call your father" . . .

Q: What hospital were you taken to?

CK: We were at Edgewater Hospital. They kept saying, "Call your father" and I said, "No, no way. I'm not going to call my father," which I probably should have. But anyhow, we got home, and my dad come out and met us and looked at Al and he said, "Were you driving?" And Al said, "No." He looked at me and said, "Come on, get to bed. What did the doctor say?" I said, "I should go to my doctor tomorrow and go to the hospital for x-rays." So, that's what I did then the next day. Then, the next day Al came over with flowers and he's been bringing me flowers ever since.

Q: That was a bad start for a happy marriage.

CK: It sure was. I had one son, Albert Edward Kluge, Jr. My son is married to a lovely girl by the name of Mary Kay Phillipp, and they have one son, Jeffrey -- the love of my life.

Q: How old is Jeffrey?

CK: Jeffrey is now twenty years old. What else can I talk about?

Q: When you talk about dating, where were some of the places you went at that time.

CK: Dating through high school, we used to go to roller skating rinks, we used to go to Riverview, we used to go to the Aragon dancing, or we'd go to taverns.

Q: Taverns around here?

CK: Taverns around here. We used to go to Puggy Meier's on Waukegan Road. It would have been near where Weller's was. Fact is, Puggy's place is still standing there, and it's still a tavern.

Q: I think it's Rusty's Tavern now.

CK: It might be Rusty's. We used to go to the show a lot. We used to see a lot of movies. We'd go to the Howard Theater, or the North Shore.

Q: Both on Howard Street?

CK: Both on Howard Street. Or we'd go to the Niles Center Theater. That was there when we were young children, and we would go there. We used to go all around to different theaters.

Q: Were there restaurants in town where you would eat?

CK: We used to go to Kreier's Restaurant. They always had such good hamburgers. We never went to expensive places to eat. Of course, we never could afford it. A date used to cost maybe a dollar, and that would be two theater tickets and stopping for a hamburger, something like that, which was cheap. The theaters were like ten cents apiece to go to a movie or twenty-five cents, I think.

Q: I see. There was the drug store near the theater. I don't know if they had a soda fountain or not.

CK: They had a soda fountain in that drug store and another confectionery store that was next to Shoeneberger Brothers. They had stools in there. It was an old-fashioned ice cream parlor. That was run by Mr. Brown. Fact is, he would have been my aunt's brother-in-law.

Q: Would that have been where the pizza place is on the corner or would it have been the other direction?

CK: It's near where Marge's Flower Shop is now.

Q: I see. That would have been an ice cream parlor?

CK: The one next door to it, where it's an antique place now or something.

Q: Well, a drapery shop . . . yes.

CK: Across the street from there was Beck's. Remember Beck's, where they had the stairs going up?

Q: Oh, yes.

CK: They used to sell ice cream and candy. We used to go there a lot as children and buy candy and buy ice cream.

Q: Now that building was torn down a couple of years . . .

CK: That was torn down and is now a card shop there. There's a lot of places in Chicago. I've got a scrap book of things with all . . .

Q: Things that you remember. You mentioned that you got married during World War II.

CK: I got married in 1942, and I was married at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Skokie in the rectory because Al is not Catholic, and at the time, you couldn't get married in church. We had our wedding reception over at the high school, and that would have been in the new high school auditorium, which my dad rented for the night. We had one of the women cater it and the food was just -- everybody raved about the food.

Q: Well, I'm sure it was excellent. Was Al in the service?

CK: Al never went into service. He was always deferred because of his job. We moved to Morton Grove, and we lived in the apartment on School Street and Capulina. We

rented that from Helen and Carl Eckhardt. Carl went into service, so Helen moved back home. And then we rented their apartment for \$25 a month. Fact is, we rented all her furniture except the bedroom set. We bought our own and Helen took hers home. When Carl came home from the service, we rented an apartment and lived on Louise Avenue in Skokie. So, that worked out real fine.

Q: Was that apartment that you mentioned at School and Capulina . . . ?

CK: It's a house. Now they made it a home. There was two apartments -- one downstairs and one upstairs. At the time, we lived downstairs, but now it's a one-family home. We lived in Skokie on Louise Avenue until 1951. We moved into Morton Grove . . .

Q: To the home you have now?

CK: 5933 Capulina.

Q: When you mentioned that Al was deferred because of his job, what did Al do?

CK: He worked in manufacturing and he was a foreman of the department, and they made the parts for guns and things like that. He was called. On D-Day he went down for his physical. Because the war was nearly over, he didn't have to go in but he came that close to going. I think people we knew resented the fact that he was one of the few that didn't go in service, and that was not an easy time. We were almost -- why does he stay home? And really it wasn't fair either. But

someone had to stay home and do it. I had five brothers and all five brothers went into service.

Q: Did all five come home?

CK: All five came home. One almost didn't make it. But my father tried to go to the board and say, "Look it! Let me have one boy home." And at the time, "No, no, we need them all." So we had all five in service. My brother, Dick, was on the SS *Indianapolis* when that was torpedoed, and he was floating in the ocean for a week before they picked him up. His ship took the atomic bomb over to one of the islands, where it was flown from there and dropped on Japan. So, he was in the hospital for almost a year. He had a lot of problems and still has problems to this day.

Q: Physical?

CK: Physical problems, yes. I think he gets a hundred percent disability. We were very fortunate that they all came home.

Q: Let's talk about having fun.

CK: When my stepmother came to live with us, she was more like a sister than a mother, and we would sit at the lunch table after my dad left and we'd start a tea war. We would take a teaspoon of tea and hit it across the table?

Q: Flick it like?

CK: Flick it at one of the other kids. Then, from there we'd run to the sink and get a glass of water and throw it. We'd be outside with the hose, throwing the hose.

Q: Were you considered rather undisciplined?

CK: No, only when my father wasn't around . . .! When my father was around, we were all angels but when he wasn't around. He would come home from his route, and my mother would hear him come in, so she'd run up to bed and we would all try and hide. He'd run through the house and say, "Irene, Irene, where are you? Did you see what these kids did? Do you see the yard out here?" And she'd pretend she was sleeping. "What are you talking about? I didn't see anything." And here she was right in the middle of it all. One night we had a water fight. My brother had a friend over, and we took the hose and we squirted it in the bedroom window and he went screaming through the house. My father was going through, "Ceil, Jeannette, where are you?" I'm saying, "I'm right here," and Jeannette is underneath the bed and she sticks her head out and she says, "Here I am." My dad had laughed so hard, he'd forgotten he was mad. We would run around the bakery shop, too, trying to hit somebody with some water.

Q: Did your father actually do the baking? You mentioned a route. Now he couldn't have gotten up at three in the morning and baked . . .

CK: No, we always had bakers.

Q: You had other men come in and do the physical work of baking, and your father ran the business end of it.

CK: My dad -- the only time he baked was when the bakers were off, which was Friday night. I used to like to go in the bakery and help because I could roll up the sweetrolls and make the coffee cakes. I enjoyed doing that. So when my dad worked on Friday night, he would always say, "Ceil, come on." So, I would have to help in the bakery shop for a couple hours. I'd make the sweetrolls.

Q: What time did the bakers start?

CK: Well, the bakers started probably about four or five in the afternoon, and then they would work all night. When you got a fresh bread, it was fresh bread in the morning.

Q: What time did the bakery shop open?

CK: The bakery shop opened at six o'clock in the morning for people that went to church, and they would stop after church to get their sweetrolls and bread.

Q: And some of the men who would be on their way to work.

CK: Oh, sure! Kids on the way to school always got their sweetrolls. They went to communion and could have that afterwards. We used to work in the bakery shop. We'd have to scrub the floor and clean all the cases. We worked hard in the home, too. My sister, Jeannette and I would take turns cleaning the house. One week I'd have the upstairs and the next week she'd have it and I'd have the downstairs. The downstairs meant scrubbing the kitchen floor on your hands and knees.

Q: The bakery shop was really on the first floor.

CK: And the apartment was upstairs. It had six bedrooms. What probably would have been a dining room, we used as a sitting room and then a big living room. And we had one bath with these eight kids and two adults. We did have an outhouse out in the back. If you had to go you could run out there. That's usually what the bakers used -- the outhouse. Years later that was put away. We had chickens, and I remember my dad killing the chickens.

TAPE ONE, SIDE B ENDS

TAPE TWO, SIDE A

Q: Now, you were talking about chickens.

CK: Early recollections are that we had the chickens. We had pigs out in the back, too.

Q: Now, this was right in the heart of beautiful, downtown Niles Center?

CK: This was right in Niles Center.

Q: Right across from the church, really?

CK: Right across from St. Peter's Church.

Q: But before you got to the cemetery?

CK: Right next to the cemetery. And then we had rabbits. We had a big garden out in the back. It took almost a fourth of an acre or a fourth of a block, it was so big. Then, I remember in the '20s, where we would have Farmer's Market Day in Niles Center, and all the farmers would come with their produce and their pigs and their chickens and sell them.

Q: Would that be on Lincoln Avenue?

CK: No, not on Lincoln. Down this side street where . . .

Q: Warren Street?

CK: . . . Warren Street, where the bank is now, where you drive into the bank. You know where the gift shop is. Where Beck's was, you know . . .

Q: Yes, you mentioned that, which is where Louise's Gift Shop is.

CK: They had a big garage or big barn in the back and that whole area was taken up with all these farmers. That, I remember. I remember the feed store, Schoeneberger's, with the feed store and people coming with their horses and buggies. I remember that.

Q: Well, now this feed store -- I thought Schoeneberger's was a grocery store?

CK: They had a grocery store and on the corner where the pizza place is now used to be a big barn, and that was their feed store.

Q: Okay.

CK: They would sell hay and feed and people would come with their horses.

Q: Okay.

CK: And then down the street from us next to Hoetzers, next to St. Peter's School, there was a blacksmith shop. We used to go there and watch them put new shoes on the horses and things like that. That would be it. I remember when Lincoln Avenue was paved.

Q: I wasn't picturing it not paved.

CK: I remember when they put down those metal bars and poured the cement.

Q: What was it before then?

CK: Just a dirt road, gravel road.

Q: Gravel, maybe?

CK: Then Niles Center Road was paved. After it was paved we used to roller skate on it. One time a car was coming and I didn't see him. He just hit the tip of my dress, so I almost had it that time. It was nice living across the street from St. Peter's Church because we would just climb out of bed and run across to church and then go get in line to go to school, so we had it nice and convenient

as far as going to school. We'd hear the bell ring at recess time or at lunch time we'd have to go home and when we came home, we'd have to fix the lunch and do the dishes before we went back to school. So, when you hear the bell ring, you ran out of the house, ran across the street and got in line. We never had much time to play on the playground. All the other kids were playing, and we would be home working. But I guess it never hurt any of us.

Q: We didn't talk about -- you said you were working at Cream Crest Dairy. Is that when you quit work?

CK: I quit work when we were having the baby.

Q: Okay. And . . .

CK: And then after the baby was born, Mr. Ostrom, who was my boss, called and wanted to know if I wanted to work at home. So, then I did book work at home for many years until I went in for surgery again. Then I quit. And then I didn't go back to work until about 1960. I went over to Field's and worked part-time in the toy department there as a saleslady. So then I went full-time, and then they wanted me to take a bigger job and I said no. Didn't make any money there. In 1965, I left Field's and went to work at Baxter's. Al kept saying I was wasting my time at Field's, you know. So I went to Baxter's and got a job there.

Q: Now was that Baxter's right on Lincoln Avenue? You were very close to home.

CK: Yes, I could walk to work. I don't remember walking to work very much but I . . .

Q: Yes, but physically you could. The distance was not too great.

CK: Well, then I worked at Baxter's until 1981 when I retired from there.

Q: By that time, were you still working at Baxter's on Lincoln Avenue?

CK: No, we went from Baxter's on Lincoln to Baxter's on Oakton Street. They transferred the International Division to the Lake-Cook Buildings. From there, we were transferred up to Deerfield at the corporate headquarters, and we worked in Building Five on the fifth floor, which was lovely. Then they moved us from there over to Lake-Cook Avenue to the Cook Buildings again, and we worked there for years until I retired. So, I was transferred many times.

Q: Well, you were still always in the same division.

CK: Yes.

Q: What did you do in the International Division?

CK: I was a senior accountant. I handled all the Letters of Credits, Drafts and payments of accounts for our foreign customers. Paid commissions to our distributors overseas. The company gave a luncheon each year for employees who had a tenth, fifteenth and so forth anniversary. My tenth anniversary luncheon was held at the Marriott Lincolnshire in 1975. At our table was a Mr. Abbey who is the corporate lawyer for Baxter's. when he was introduced to me, he said, "Do you know that you are known all around the world?" When he, with other company

Men, visit our distributors and they asked who paid them their commissions, they all said, "Celilia Kluge." They were pleased to get a good report for our department. Out of a family of eight, I was the only one who paid room and board. I made ten dollars a week and gave my father five. I took the el everyday to work. Sometimes I would buy my lunch, and I would buy my clothes out of that. Then I worked at Cream Crest and I started making more money, and every time I had a raise, I would give my dad half of it. I was the only one who ever paid room and board. My sister got married and left home, so she didn't pay room and board. Dorothy never paid room and board because she never made that much. Fritz was in service, and when he came back he got married and he moved away. Dick went into service, got married, he moved away. And the same with the two Bobs. My brother, John, worked in the bakery with my dad, so he never paid room and board.

Q: Because he figured he was working.

CK: Out of all these kids, I'm the only one who ever paid room and board.

Q: I've been calling you Ceil, if I've referred to you at all. Your name is Cecilia. Was Ceil always a nickname?

CK: My nickname used to be Snooks.

Q: We won't publicize that.

CK: It was always Ceily is what I was called.

Q: Ceily?

CK: Ceily and I was called Cec and then I was called Ceil. So I'm now Ceil.

Q: Now, do you really sign your name . . .

CK: Cecilia. Very rarely people will write ceil on something, if I get a check . . .

Q: I think St. Cecilia was a saint of music.

CK: Yes.

Q: Are you musical?

CK: My mother was. My mother, Harriet, played the organ in church. When I was born, she named me after the patron saint, St. Cecilia for music. My mother played the piano and organ. I never took it up. My sister, Jeannette, plays. My brother, Bob, plays. I had a chance of being in the orchestra in grade school and I was very bashful as a child.

Q: The oldest?

CK: I was very bashful. My brother was taking the clarinet, and they said, "Ceil, you can take the clarinet back because he doesn't want to take it anymore and you could take up what you want." I got half way to the school and turned around and went back home. I wouldn't go so I just never took up a musical instrument.

Q: Can you think of anything you want to say or anything more? You haven't really told us about the new generation. What does your son do, and what does your daughter-in-law do?

CK: To keep up with them, my son is an engineer for International Harvester, and my daughter-in-law has her MBA and right now she's working as a stock broker for Dean Witter. My grandson is going to St. John's University up at St. Cloud taking business administration and that's it. That is my family.

Q: You and Al are enjoying retirement. What are some of the trips you've taken?

CK: Well, we've taken lovely trips. We've gone to Greece, and we've gone to Australia, New Zealand. We've taken a cruise to the Caribbean. We've taken a cruise to Alaska. We have driven practically around all the states in the United States.

Q: All this since you've retired?

CK: Oh, no. The riding trips have been all before we retired. Since we've retired, we've taken the foreign trips and the cruises. Now we are staying home playing golf, swimming and working for non-profit organizations.

Q: You've worked very hard in the Haupt-Yehl House. Why don't you talk about that?

CK: I retired and wanted something to do so I got involved in Morton Grove Woman's Club again. I started as a charter member for the Morton Grove Woman's Club.

Q: And then while you worked, you had sort of taken a little leave from the activities.

CK: Yes, and I was active over at St. Martha's Church. I was president of the women's group over there in 1956 to '58. Something like that. I was very active over at St. Martha's. Then when I went to Baxter's, I just quit all club work and now that I am retired, I got back to Woman's Club and have been active there as finance chairman. I got active in the Historical Society and had been treasurer for the Historical Society for four years. Now I'm a director. I am also a director on the house Committee for the historical house. My duties here now are recording artifacts as they come in and keeping a record of all things for the house and helping Jayne Barry with displays and things like that. And working with the Park District to make sure we're doing what they want us to do for the house. We keep changing exhibits and participating in community activities so that our name is before the public.

Q: So you are very active even though you've retired. You certainly haven't retired from activities.

CK: I bought a typewriter, which was the wrong thing to do.

Q: Why?

CK: Because I got so much typing to do all the time which was great. I was going over to the library each day. I read a lot. I go to the library and I go to the Y, swimming a couple of days a week, and I play golf with the Morton Grove Woman's

Club and I play golf with friends and with my husband. And we like to go out for dinner quite a bit.

Q: So, you really keep busy. Well, I think we have covered everything that might be of interest to all the generations to follow. I thank you very much.

CK: Oh, you're welcome. It was fun.

Q: It didn't hurt, did it?

CK: No -- just if I could remember things. I just can't remember anything. Like during the Depression years.

Q: Some of the things on that outline are really not for you.

CK: But my father lost his house. He was probably a well-to-do man at one time. He had a lot of property in Skokie and through the Depression, people would come in and buy groceries. But they weren't paying their bills, so he never had any money to pay the grocery bill with. I remember, I had a savings account at the Niles Center State Bank. We always wanted to transfer our money to the new bank. I think that was called First National. And my dad would never let us transfer our money there. Thank heavens because that bank went bankrupt and we still had all our money. So, at one time, my dad borrowed money out of my savings account so he could pay for the flour to run the business.

Q: But he lost his house?

CK: He lost his house. He couldn't pay the mortgage payments.

Q: Then, where did he go?

CK: He rented the house then.

Q: He stayed on.

CK: He stayed there, but then he rented it. The owner was going to sell it to Haben's to tear the house down, then he went across the street to the Shoeneberger building and started a business there, and he rented there for a while. Then, my brother, John, bought the property from the Shoeneberger brothers. So when John retired and moved away, he sold this property. He was the only one on the whole thing that ever made some money out of it.

Q: Did your father work in the bakery until his death?

CK: Oh, yes, sure! My dad was only sixty when he died. He had a heart condition, and today he probably would have been able to be saved with heart surgery and stuff. But he was a man who was heavy, ate everything, loved anything with fat on, and why all us kids don't have a heart condition, I don't know. He'd never cut off any fat on anything, and we kids would cut off fat because none of us like it. "Oh, some day you're going to wish you had that to eat," but it was the worst thing in the world for us to eat. I really lost both parents very early. So, I'm doing pretty well by living as long as I have in good condition. That makes the difference.

Q: Thank you.

CK: Well, thank you.

TAPE TWO, SIDE A ENDS