

Florene Krumel

Ms. Krumel: My name is Florene Krumel I was born May 5, 1920.

Interviewer: Where were you born?

Ms. Krumel: Putnam County I was not born in a hospital like Grandma Grandma Harman I was born at home on an old farm in a back bedroom.

Interviewer: Is this where you grew up?

Ms. Krumel: This is where I grew up I had never been anywhere until I left that old farm home when I was 18 and had gone into training, nurses training in Toledo.

Interviewer: So you lived on a farm did you like that when you were a kid did you like living on a farm?

Ms. Krumel: Not all the time if I had had a choice I'm sure I would have been somewhere else but when you're a child you're with your parents and whatever they do that's you you know.

Interviewer: So your father was a farmer?

Ms. Krumel: He was a farmer.

Interviewer: What did he raise crops or did he raise livestock?

Ms. Krumel: The main thing that he raised was just like corn and wheat and oats they had a lot of oats then and I don't believe they raise oats around here today. But he didn't have cows for sale he milked cows and he did have sheep for a while that he sold but basically it was mostly corn, wheat and oats and that sort of thing.

Interviewer: So what was school like what was your school like was it small?

Ms. Krumel: What was my grade school like? Well I walked about a half a mile to a one room school house it was just a little square it had outhouses and we had a little shed that had coal in it and we had a little furnace in the corner of the school and a boy would come early in the morning and start the fires he was usually a eighth grader because they had to have someone old enough to be responsible. And I know I remember one thing very vividly one of the girls and I used to climb up in the top of the ole coal shed we call it and eat our lunch on rafters. I would like to see myself today do that.

Interviewer: So did you have a favorite subject in school?

Ms. Krumel: Yes I did I always liked English better than a lot of things arithmetic was never my absolute choice and I don't like it today you know I don't like making out checks too well and things like that. But that was English I think and read was more my speed.

Interviewer: So when did you graduate from high school?

Ms. Krumel: From high school let's see 1938 and I went in training then after that summer then I went in training.

Interviewer: Nurses training?

Ms. Krumel: Nurses training.

Interviewer: What made you decide to go into nursing?

Ms. Krumel: Well in high school one of the girls, I found out later she was related to me and I didn't know it if you can believe that, and she used to talk about her sister who was a nurse in Toledo and talk about uniforms and you know different things that relate to nursing. And gee that struck me as something I felt I had to do I used to sit down and write my name and write RN behind it. And I think it sounds dumb to people now but then they did my aunt and my mother took me to Fort Wayne to a Lutheran hospital but I got there too later for that class I don't whether this was all in the making of things or not but the next Sunday we went to my great aunts for dinner and my mothers first cousin was married to the superintendent of nurses at Riverside Hospital in Toledo and she happened to be there also. And there was my chance and I talked her and she says I'll never forget it she says well I might as well accommodate one of Russell's relatives. I'm not sure now I think much of that but at the time it was a way of getting into nurses training so any way she told me when to report and I did. It was a big adjustment believe me I had never been away from home and I did go through the throws of home sickness and that sort of thing.

Interviewer: Had you not gone into nursing did you have any other plans?

Ms. Krumel: I never had any other plans once I heard about the nursing that was all I ever thought about. I just never thought about anything else and I wanted to do it so desperately and my mother and father didn't have a whole lot of money to give me but my grandmother and my aunt lent me the money and I didn't when at the end of that term I paid my aunt back the money she had lent me Aunt Ruth I'm talking about but my grandmother said that's alright you just keep it and I've always appreciated that from her and I don't think I ever told her so I wish now I had.

Interviewer: What was nursing training like was it

Ms. Krumel: It was different from today we didn't have all these mechanical pieces to keep you living and all that sort of thing. And when we gave injections we had what they call a little Bunsen burner and with a little spoon we had to heat the water and put the morphine pill in there and then wait until it cooled a little bit and draw it up it took a long time to give anybody an injection. But nursing in those days was more to learn how to make a bed and turn the patient without hurting them too much then today that's no long you just flop them over but you didn't do that then you were very careful because we didn't have the mechanical equipment to.

Interviewer: Now where were you doing your training at?

Mr. Krumel: Riverside hospital in Toledo. And my mother's cousin's wife was the superintendent of that hospital or she probably never would have taken me.

Interviewer: Where did you stay while you were doing the training did they have some sort of housing available for students?

Ms. Krumel: Oh yes we had rooms we had we had houses where you know and rooms and you had a house mother and that's where you lived all three years.

Interviewer: It took three years to graduate then?

Ms. Krumel: Three years it would have been a good idea if I had gone on to school when I got out but I didn't. There was just about one year before the nurse cadet school came out you know where the nurses went into service with uniform and all of that I was about a year or two too late.

Interviewer: Did you ever think about going into that like doing the nursing thing in the military?

Ms. Krumel: I never thought about it because when I graduated in 41 this hadn't been established as yet and I was out a whole year before this came into being and I should have gone then and I didn't I just worked in Cleveland and met my husband and that was it.

Interviewer: So the great depression do you have any memories of the depression?

Ms. Krumel: I surely do but I didn't realize it was a depression.

Interviewer: Right

Ms. Krumel: No one in my neighborhood had anymore than what I did and some that did we never gave that a thought as children you know. And most of my clothing came from my aunt here in Defiance but she had good things my grandmother had bought her good clothing. But I remember my mother sold eggs for 9 cents a dozen can you imagine that? And I can remember of course we were farmers and you had your own meat and you had your own vegetable and we had fruit and we didn't suffer really from lack of anything to eat or anything like that.

Interviewer: Did you have electricity in your house?

Ms. Krumel: We didn't in the beginning but by the time I was I think I was married and had Charlene and my father's nephew came and wired our house for electricity.

Interviewer: That was a pretty big deal to get electricity then?

Ms. Krumel: Yeh it surely was. But of course we didn't have we didn't have TV or anything like that we had little battery radios and that sort of thing.

Interviewer: Did your family own a car in the 30s?

Ms. Krumel: Yes we had a car of sorts but it was nothing out of this world. It probably never got any further than North Crinkly or Continental or Adowa maybe.

Interviewer: Now during the depression were did your family support President Roosevelt or did they talk about politics at all in your house?

Ms. Krumel: Yes not to me personally but I used to listen to my father talk to other men and he was a confirmed democrat didn't know why he was he was just a democrat you know. And he had a friend that was republican and all I heard between the two of them was this you know you're a democrat and I'm a republican and they gave no reasons why and it was just a laugh really they'd go to the poles and vote and they'd say well my vote cancels yours you know that sort of thing. But they didn't know neither one of them they didn't know why they were what they were. But I heard a lot about Roosevelt I remember him dying and all that sort of thing.

Interviewer: So when the war, when Hitler invaded Poland in 1939 how old were you?

Ms. Krumel: I think I must have been about 20 years old I think I was just in my last year in training or getting ready to go into my last year last year of training but you know at that time I don't think any of us really realized the seriousness of what was ahead of us. I know I didn't I had no idea.

Interviewer: So when you graduated from nursing training what did you do did you get like your first job being a nurse somewhere?

Ms. Krumel: Yes I worked in surgery in Riverside Hospital for awhile. And we had affiliated Cleveland City Hospital in Cleveland Ohio and I got the idea I'd kind of like to go up there and work. So I did what's where I ended up when the war really broke out I remember I was working in the psychiatry section at that time and one of the interns came up the next morning after Pearl Harbor and he said my goodness the Japanese might as well have been in my bedroom he said this really gets to me. And I'll bet you that soon after those young doctors were probably all called into the service but I can remember that so clearly he but yes that's where I was.

Interviewer: What do you recall about rationing during the war?

Ms. Krumel: Well I know the same as Gram Harman said we had books for gasoline but then I didn't have a car so that didn't affect me. And as far as the shoe I never bought as many pairs of shoes as what I would have able to buy with the rationing and the stamps and what have you. And sugar I wasn't making jelly and using a lot of sugar so that wasn't a problem. But I do remember I stood in line for cigarettes not for myself but to give to someone I'd get them and then I'd give them to somebody else that did smoke but oh I remember rationing very well.

Interviewer: So you never felt deprived of anything?

Ms. Krumel: Not as far as rationing was concerned no I mean nothing effected me to that extent.

Interviewer: So what was being a nurse like in the 40s during the war? Did you enjoy what you were doing I mean were you glad to be a nurse?

Ms. Krumel: Yes I did of course as far as working a lot during the war you know I married and I became pregnant well I stayed home with my baby there was nobody to take care of her except me so actually I didn't work in the nursing field a lot during the war. But before the war it was different I mean you know like the oxygen today comes out of the wall doesn't it okay we had we had to send the maintenance man down to the basement bring up a great big tank about that high and we had learn how to hook that thing up and turn it on and regulate it and that's how you got your oxygen. Things were I won't say primitive but not like today's world.

Interviewer: Right so how did you meet your first husband?

Ms. Krumel: Well one of the nurses that I worked with worked at Cleveland City Hospital with me and we were good friends and she said my brothers going to pick me up after work you want to go with me home home with me for the weekend you know for the next day oh sure nothing else to do. And there was Chuck sitting out there in the care waiting for us and I can see him sitting there yet. From then on we got along real well.

Interviewer: So how long were you like dating before you got married?

Ms. Krumel: Oh I would say roughly maybe not quite a year.

Interviewer: Was he already in the army when you met him?

Ms. Krumel: No he wasn't he did work similar to what Grandpa did her and three times I think he was deferred and I was sort of getting to the point where I thought maybe he wouldn't be I was kind of young and dumb was the word for it indefinitely but all of a sudden we too got that letter. But he wasn't really inducted into the service until the war was well on its way and as far as I know maybe coming to a conclusion you know more of a conclusion than what I think Grandpa was in it probably at the very start where Chuck wasn't called in until a little bit later. There were certain things he was working on and they didn't want to let him go.

Interviewer: Do you remember what he did in the Army was he in the infantry or?

Ms. Krumel: He was a Sargent in the infantry just but you know I think sometimes these young men made a mistake when as soon as war was declared they should have volunteered into something they would have had a better chance at everything and maybe even coming back. But you know how it was people tried not to as best they could.

Interviewer: So how did you find out he had been killed in action?

Ms. Krumel: Well it was very simple we saw the what do you call them the telegram boy that delivers and he was coming to the door see I had had one of those before where he was injured and taken to the hospital. Well I the second time he came I just assumed he had been injured again but this time it was

the real thing. It was you know you'd been suffering for so long it was just kind of hard to believe that was true. But as time went on little by little you learned that was it. You got educated we'll say in a hurry.

Interviewer: So how did you cope with that having a daughter and your husband just being killed how did you cope with that?

Ms. Krumel: Well I think very well you did the best you could do you know you had a child to take care of and one thing lead to another. All of a sudden one day of course I lived in Cleveland at the time something seemed to tap me on the shoulder and said go home and I can't tell you for the life of me why but I did. I came home to mom she took care of Charlene while I went back to the old hospital to work and well that was in 40 that must have been 46 or 47 because we were married in 48 here. And I don't know I just worked a while and I had a friend who said I know a man you should meet and so here we are. I don't know whether he got wood winked into this or not.

Interviewer: So during the war what did you do for entertainment?

Ms. Krumel: Actually we were not entertaining ourselves too much. We were only concerned with who was the man Edward R Mir who would say "there's good news tonight" who was that man Earl? Edward R Mir yes I know we would always listen for him to see what kind of new he really had it wasn't always like that but.

Interviewer: So you remember hearing about President Roosevelt dying?

Ms. Krumel: Oh yes

Interviewer: What was your reaction were you sad?

Ms. Krumel: No I knew he with his condition these things could happen to him he was not exactly a well man to begin with.

Interviewer: So how did you keep up with events of the war did you read the newspapers papers did you read newsreels?

Ms. Krumel: Mostly radio we would turn on the new and see what you know would take place that day and we were pretty well informed that way.

Interviewer: What about when the war ended how did you hear how did you hear about that?

Ms. Krumel: Well of course that was by radio also but I'll tell you I probably had a little different reaction I wasn't jealous of the people who had reason you know to and I felt good for them that their people were coming home but there was a little resentment in a way that I had to squelch you know. Because you know I remember that particular night I was in Ashland, Ohio at his parent's home and everybody went uptown to celebrate the end of the war this was the year the end of the European war I'm talking about. And I thought well good for them I tried to tell myself you've got to feel good for these other people because they might you don't want everybody to feel like you did but you got over it little by

little. You didn't get over it exactly you just adjusted to it you know you knew you had to take care of yourself later.

Interviewer: So how do you think WWII affected you in the long run?

Ms. Krumel: In the long run I think it had a lot of bearing on how I react to things today. I really think if we hadn't had WWII come along I don't think I would have been as sympathetic today to other people and their problems that left an awful mark on me. Then I was too that I was young and dumb and really wasn't paying enough attention to what was going on in the world as much as I should have been as far as you know I was more within my own little circle. But when you're raised on a farm like that well you know you don't get out much you don't go many places and you don't really sometimes you don't really know what's going on around you.

Interviewer: Did you have any other relatives in the service?

Ms. Krumel: Yes I had an Uncle Dale Bock he is deceased now but he was in France most of the time but I don't remember what he did in the service but I don't think he was ever in actual battle or anything like that. But now as relatives my father's brother died in WWI but not from battle from the flu.

Interviewer: Right

Ms. Krumel: But a lot of them died from the flu in WWI but as far as any other relatives if I had them I don't know who they are.

Interviewer: Do you think about WWII often something that's kind of just in the back of your mind?

Ms. Krumel: Not constantly but off and on I do I think of different flashbacks you know of different things that happened something may be on the radio or TV and especially since channel 56 the History Channel their giving all this I'm getting an education things now I know that I didn't know then and I do often watch that. And I enjoy it eminently because I'm really learning things that I things that I should have known then that I don't you know that I know now put it that way. I enjoy history I always did.

Interviewer: Well is there anything you would like to add or anything I forgot to ask that you would like to add.

Well as I listen to Grandma Harmon I thought she did very very well and even your grandfather here he remembered more than what I thought he would but I think he had a little help with his little booklet and all that sort of thing. But no I think I fared out fairly well but I'll tell you one thing these people that talk about WWII sometimes to you and they'll make remarks you know like well maybe you don't remember what it's like to lose who don't know what it's like to lose somebody in the service that kind of bothers me sometimes. And they do it occasionally but they don't know. But yeh I think of it often you can't help it he belong to the BFW and I run into people that you know and but I'll tell you one thing you don't ever forget what has happened to you it's just in the back of your mind and time when they say time takes care of everything it does. But you don't forget don't ever think you forget. WWII in my

estimation what was it a friend of mine said there was a book out that you probably should read it's called the Greatest Generation and I think have you read that?

Interviewer: I know what you're talking about.

Ms. Krumel: Yeh well I'm going down to the library and get that and read it. Apparently maybe we are the greatest generation and don't realize it. But I thought I would tell you she said well if you wanted to read it she would get it for you.