

Interviewee: Ann Keffer
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AK: The Virginia Heights Elementary School had only one building at the time I was there and our fire escape was like a sliding board and it was enclosed. It looked like a silo-type thing. You could only get to it through one room in the building and everybody would come there and we'd have practices once a month. We'd have to get in there and slide around and you'd go around and around and around and come out the back bottom. I don't care how many times I'd get on it, I'd start out get on it with my feet front and when I'd finish I'd come out backwards. Somehow or another, I would get turned around. We never knew how.

KT: But you just couldn't get out.

AK: I couldn't go down straight to save my life. (laughing)

KT: Do you remember did they do air raid or bomb drills when you were in school?

AK: We had a couple of air raids and I don't remember when exactly. I was out of elementary school 'cause that was in the 40s and it would be at night. They would have a big blast, you know just practicing with them and that would be it. I know that we used to save all our grease and stuff and turn it in. You had to get stamps to get gasoline during the second World War and we had that.

KT: Now did that affect your life?

AK: No. We just had the one car and daddy drove it to work and then, like I say, if we went to the farm in Troutville, I did all the driving there. We didn't go a lot just down there.

KT: So that didn't really hinder you?

AK: No, because at the time my brother was in the service and we were trying to do everything we could for the servicemen.

KT: ??

AK: At the age of 24. My mother was 2 and her brother was 4 and her sister was 6 weeks old. _____ and the 3 children were raised by different aunts so they weren't raised together. And her brother, when he, I don't know what age he got to but he moved to California and lived in California until his death. Her sister lived in Richmond until her death. And of course, mother here.

KT: Now you mentioned that your mother worked. Was that unusual at that time for women to work?

AK: I don't think so. She just preferred to work with the public rather than to keep house and raise a family. It was easier on her.

KT: So who kept you during the day?

AK: My aunt and my grandmother.

KT: Were you very close with them?

AK: Very close. Our whole family is close knit.

KT: Can you describe the house of your childhood for us?

AK: Well, the first house we lived in was on Grandin Road and I don't know how long we were there 'cause I was pre-school and then we moved to the 2100 block of Maiden Lane and it was a big 2 story house with 4 bedrooms and one bath and a wrap-a-round porch and its still there on the corner. And we moved up a block, 15 years later or something like that, the house we moved in on the next block was almost the duplicate of it. It just didn't have the wrap-a-round porch on it.

KT: Do you remember sitting on the porch as a kid?

AK: Oh yes. My father raised dogs. We had a farm in Troutville and we used to raise dogs and we'd bring some of 'em home on weekends and I would sit out on the porch and play with the dogs and take care of them.

KT: Did your family have a garden at this house?

AK: No, we had the garden at the farm.

KT: What kind of activities did you participate in as a child either through school or just in the neighborhood?

AK: In the neighborhood, I was the only girl. There were 5 boys on the block. So, I learned to play football, basketball, baseball, kick the can. All the games that the guys played.

KT: Can you describe kick the can again?

AK: (laughing) You'd get an old tin can that was empty and you'd set it out in the middle of the street and somebody would be "it" and they would run up and kick the can and as soon as they kicked the can, everybody would spread around and go hide and whoever was "it" had to go find 'em. And the last person they found became "it".

KT: What kind of work did your family do? I know you kinda made mention...

AK: My father – Let me backtrack. My grandfather on my father's side was from North Carolina and he was in the Civil War. When he mustered out of the Civil War, he went to Rocky Mount, Virginia, because his sister's husband was killed in the war and she had a farm there. He went to help her close out her farm and he was engaged to a lady in North Carolina at the time. When he got to Rocky Mount, he met my grandmother who was 16 at the time. They fell in love and he waited until she grew up and when she turned 26, they married. They had 4 children. Three survived, my father and his 2 sisters. And when the last child was born, my grandfather was 73 years old. He was 37 years older than my grandmother. And after he died, my father used to drive traveling salesmen across Grassy Hill which was the mountain between Rocky Mount and Roanoke 'cause they were scared to drive it. He'd bring 'em to Roanoke to do their business and then take them back to Rocky Mount. After a few months after he turned 16, they sold the farm and moved to Roanoke, his mother and 2 sisters and himself. He lied about his age and got a job at the American Viscos. After he became a supervisor, he had his age changed back so he could retire at the proper age. But, unfortunately, he died at 54 at American Viscos. So he was employed at American Viscos all his life.

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KT: Now, for me, I'm not familiar with it. What was American Viscos?

AK: American Viscos made rayon and during the second World War, they started making parachutes for the government and because of that, the government came in and put tunnels underneath the ground over there so if we had any air raids, the people who worked there could go under the ground and be safe. And when I got out of high school, I went to work for 'em. And I worked in what they called the "back engineers office" for several months, maybe a year. Then I was moved up to the front office and in the payroll department in the IBM department and started doing all the payroll. And when they closed the American Viscos in '58 I think it was, it was a guard and I were the only ones left for 2 weeks after it was closed up. We did the inventory and I was doing payroll at the time. So, it was just the 2 of us there and we closed it up.

KT: Did you ever have to use the underground tunnels?

AK: No.

KT: Let's talk a little bit about your school life. Where did you attend school?

AK: I went to Virginia Heights Elementary School and then Woodrow Wilson Junior High School and Jefferson High School.

KT: Did you walk to school or did a bus come?

AK: Walked.

KT: And how far was it?

AK: Virginia Heights is right down at the end of Grandin Road. It wasn't far and then when we lived on Maiden Lane, I walked to Woodrow Wilson and that wasn't far. And then I walked to Jefferson which is downtown now. Once in a while, I'd ride a bus. But we didn't have a regular school bus so you just rode the regular city bus.

KT: Did you ever have to stay home from school for anything?

AK: When I was probably 8 years old, I wanted to take swimming lessons. And my father said the only way I could do that was to have a physical. So my aunt took me down to the doctor for my physical which he gave to me and after he finished, he asked my aunt, "How did you get downtown?". She said, "We rode the streetcar down." He said, "Well, I want you to get a cab and take her home and put her to bed and if she lives 6 weeks we'll be lucky.". I had a heart condition. I was in bed, flat on my back for 6 months. They wouldn't let me put my feet on the floor and I was out of school for 2 years. So I was 2 years behind graduating with my class. During that time that I was in bed, my teacher from Virginia Heights came a couple of times a week and I think we did more listening to the radio than we did class studying or anything.

KT: Do you remember what the condition was called?

AK: I had heart murmur. I originally had Rheumatic Fever when I was younger and that went into the heart murmur.

KT: When did you graduate from high school?

AK: I graduated in 1956.

KT: What did you do after high school?

AK: I went to work at American Viscos.

KT: Did you ever do any college or any schooling after that?

AK: I wanted to be a veterinarian and my mother said, "Ladies aren't veterinarians.", so I decided not to go to college. So I just went to work at American Viscos and after they closed I went to work for Allstate Insurance and worked there until after I was married and became pregnant with my first child and at that time, I quit work.

KT: Now this is kinda going back to the childhood and the life at home. What was kind of a typical day in your life like as a child?

AK: Oh gosh. I would play outside and then when my dad would come home from work, I'd go wherever he went. He taught me to drive a car at 9 years old 'cause he had a heart condition. Whenever we went anywhere, I drove all the time. And to back track a little bit, my mother's father used to drive the streetcar up and down Mill Mountain. And he dropped dead in front of the courthouse in Roanoke in 1933. That was before I was born.

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KT: Oh gosh. Now did you guys have a radio or a television?

AK: Had radios and didn't get television until 1953 or something like that when they got the first television studio here and then we got a TV.

KT: Do you remember any particular technology that was really kind of a big deal like telephones, refrigerators?

AK: No, we had all that.

KT: Did ya?

AK: Yeah.

KT: OK. Do you remember your first television?

AK: Yeah, when we got it – I want to say it was '53. It was before my father died and he died in '54. It was just a standard square TV, black and white.

KT: Did you have a favorite program?

AK: I don't remember having one.

KT: I know we talked about this a little bit but did your family actually sit on the porch in the evenings after work was through?

AK: Yeah. My grandmother didn't because her bedroom was upstairs and she couldn't get up and down the steps. She had diabetes and wasn't well at all. And she lived to be 94. And didn't die until – but she had an incident with her diabetes in the middle of the night one night and the only doctor we could get was a neighbor who was a surgeon, Dr. Barn. And he came and sat with her all night and he

said, "I doubt if she'll live through the night." That was back in the early 50s, late 40s-early 50s. And as I said, she didn't die until 1965 and she was 94 at the time of her death.

KT: She made it through.

AK: Mm mm.

KT: What kind of chores were you expected to do around the house?

AK: Oh, dust, sweep, not a whole lot.

KT: Nothing too taxing?

AK: No.

KT: Were you treated any different because of your heart condition?

AK: No.

KT: I know we discussed the Civil War story, were there any other stories that have been passed down from generations?

AK: No just the Civil War and my mother's father dying and her mother dying in the early age with pneumonia. One of my father's cousins, I believe, a Webb, was also the police chief in Roanoke for a number of years but I don't exactly when.

KT: Is there any particular family recipe that made it down through the generations?

AK: I have my grandmother's recipe for homemade bread, but unfortunately, it makes like 12 loaves and I couldn't cut it down so I never made it. When she lived in Rocky Mount, she did a lot of baking and stuff and she also was a seamstress and she used to make wedding dresses for the ladies in Rocky Mount. And she made her own clothes and she used to make jackets with wide arms and my father and I did a lot of hunting and one time, we were out hunting and the dog came back with a quail in his mouth that wasn't hurt. He had a bad wing and that was all. So, we brought him home and my grandmother made a pet out of it. It would fly up in her arm and go up her sleeves and sleep. And then at night, she would put him in a cage and when the phone would ring, he would whistle at the top of the steps until somebody would answer it. He lived about 7 or 8 years which was long for a quail.

KT: Never heard of one as a pet though.

AK: I know and nobody else has either.

KT: Did any of your family serve in the military?

AK: My brother was in the second World War. My father was too young for the first World War and too old for the second World War. But my brother served in the Navy.

KT: And you said your, was it grandfather or great-grandfather that was in the Civil War?

AK: My grandfather was in the war. My father's father.

KT: In the local area, what businesses and shops did you frequent?

AK: Oh, I went to the Grandin Theater all the time 'cause you could go for a quarter and on Saturdays, they had the serial shows. You'd see those and stay for the regular movie. Pugh's, it used to be Pugh's downtown on the corner of Campbell Avenue and 1st Street. Across from them was Heironimus before they moved and across on the other corner was Leggett's. My mother worked for Leggett's. I went to all of 'em. And John Payne was born in Roanoke, the movie star.

KT: Mm mm.

AK: And grew up in Salem and when he would come to town with one of his wives which was Gloria de Haven, they would go in the shop where my mother worked at that time, a dress shop, and buy clothes from her. And where the Patrick Henry High School is now, that was called Shriner's Field. When we were growing up, my dad used to go up there and shoot skeet on the top of the hill.

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KT: What would you say is your most fond childhood memory? Do you have any that stick out in your mind?

AK: No. We used to go to the Roanoke Red Sox baseball game. They were a farm team of the Boston Red Sox and my dad and I would go to a lot of the baseball games. Anything I did with my dad was a

fond memory. I was very close to him.

KT: Were there any stories about raising dogs?

AK: Yes. When he died, I had 100 dogs to find homes for. We had all kinds, hunting dogs, pet dogs, whatever you want. He found a dog in a magazine that was for sale out of California that was a Setter and he decided he'd like to get it for stud purposes so he bought it. It was very expensive when he bought it. He had it shipped to Roanoke. We picked it up and took it down to the farm. There were about 4 boys that lived at different sections down in Troutville and he more or less kinda help raise them. Made sure they stayed in school, taught 'em how to drive a car. He just was there for 'em. And this particular day we were taking the dog down. We took it down and left it at the farm and was driving back down the road and we passed these boys at one of the boy's houses and they were playing. And all of a sudden, one of their dogs jumped the fence and hit the back of that car and broke its neck. And of course we stopped and the boys were crying and everything and daddy said, "Get in the car. We'll go up to the farm and find you another dog." So we went back to the farm and we got out and they looked at all the dogs and ended up taking the one that he'd just got. He put it in the car and took it back to 'em and said, "Y'all have a good time." Never saw a child he didn't like or a dog he didn't like.

KT: Do you remember a favorite holiday event in your house?

AK: Christmas was always a big deal at our house.

KT: Was it?

AK: Mm mm. Not so much a lot of presents because we didn't have a lot of money but just Christmas. And when my brother got out of the service, he moved to Reidsville, North Carolina and worked for the American Tobacco Company, he and his wife. My dad would not let us start trimming the Christmas tree until they got to town because my sister-in-law loved to trim the tree. So we couldn't do anything until she got there.

KT: When would you put your tree up?

AK: Christmas Eve.

KT: So not before?

AK: Not before. And we'd take it down New Year's Day.

KT: What was Christmas morning like?

AK: Fun. Couldn't go down until everybody was up and we'd go down and open our packages and have breakfast.

KT: Did you have a big dinner?

AK: Not real big, no.

KT: Do you have a family vacation that sticks out in your mind?

AK: We didn't take vacations. Daddy always worked and if he took any time off, he would go hunting for the day or something like that. So, it wasn't until 1945 that my mother and her sister and myself went to California to meet and see her brother. That's the only time I ever met him. We rode the train out and while we were on the train, war was declared over and there was a group of troops on there and they just partied the whole time. We just had a ball. We went to California and spent about 2 weeks in California and then came home.

KT: OK. Any other vacations that you might have taken or ?

AK: Well, my mother and I used to go what they call the Billy Sunday Bible Study Class in Winona Lake, Indiana. We'd go there maybe once a month, once a week – one week out of the summer with the bible study group.

KT: Any travels abroad?

AK: Went to Egypt. My mother's brother at that time – Her half brother. Her father remarried and had another child. Her half brother was with the Misirayon (??) which was like the American Viscos here only they operated outside the United States. Their main office was in New York but they had all their

plants outside of the United States because the American Viscos. He was in Egypt at the time that my father died and he came for the funeral and everything and convinced my mother and I to go back with he and his wife. So we went to Egypt in January or '55 and stayed until the end of May. And on the way over, we went to Rome, Italy, Madrid, Spain and then coming back we went to Athens, Greece and Paris, France. But the most of our time was spent in Cathay el Dawar (??), Egypt which is right outside of Alexandria, Egypt, like Roanoke and Salem. We spent a week in Jerusalem. One of his men that worked for him took us to Jerusalem for a week and then he took us to Cairo and showed us his Cairo and things like that.

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KT: Did you see the pyramids?

AK: Saw the pyramids. Saw the Sphinx. Rode a camel. And they had just dug up a boat and we road the camel up next to where the big hole was where the boat was and the camel is going sideways the whole time I'm sitting there. And I can see myself going over in this hole.

KT: Was that a pretty neat experience?

AK: Yes it was.

KT: Do have a favorite gift that comes to mind that you've ever received?

AK: I can't think of one off the top of my head.

KT: OK. If you think of it, just shout it out. What are some of your memories about the community of Grandin itself?

AK: It was a close-knit community. Like I said, we used to walk down Grandin Road and go to the ice cream parlor and go to the movies and *Gone With The Wind* was playing at the Grandin and I remember there was a line all the way around the block. The firehouse was down there and it still is. Just a lot of fond memories growing up there.

KT: Was your life effected by segregation or the Civil Rights Movement in any way?

AK: No. When I was growing up of course we were segregated but it wasn't effected because my father had quite a few colored gentlemen and women that worked under him at American Viscos and they were all his friends. One gentleman would come to the house and do work around the yard for us and his name was Charlie and I always referred to him as Charlie. He would sometimes bring his little children with him and I'd play with the children. Segregation never bothered us per se because I was used to being around the blacks and the ones I was around were very, very friendly and nice.

KT: Do you remember if it had a different effect on the community or do you remember?

AK: I don't remember. I just remember when they started lettin' 'em – there used to be fountains that said Whites and Blacks and restrooms that said Whites and Blacks and then they started use all of them together. And I can't remember any problems here in Roanoke. The big problems were in Danville. They marched in Danville and everything.

KT: I know you brought some notes. Would you like to go over some of them?

AK: Yeah. I was just going to tell you about Wasena Bridge. This is a story that my brother told me. When they were building the rails on the side of it, people used to go by and put coins in the wet cement so the sides of Wasena Bridge are full of money. There's a cavern that runs – The caverns or tunnels under the old American Viscos as I told you earlier where the government put them in in case of an air raids because of them making the parachutes. There's a fault that runs from Shawsville to below Hollins College under the ground. I went to work for a friend after I was divorced and he built a building right outside of Shawsville and I told him when he started building, I said, "Now you be careful 'cause there are faults under there." And he hit one of 'em and he had to fill the ground up with dirt before he could put his building there. And there's a creek that runs – Or there used to be a creek that runs under the old Ponce de Leon Hotel on Campbell Avenue. It ran all the way down below the N&W shops and you used to could go down to the Ponce de Leon in their basement floor. They had a beauty shop and things like that down there. And they had the creek open so that you could sit down

there and drink tea and watch the creek go by. Over the years, they have since closed that up.

KT: Did you mention something earlier about going to the Ponce de Leon when you were a kid?

AK: That was the one where I went down to the Patrick Henry Hotel which is across the street. That's the one I meant. In around '42, '43, '44, somewhere along in there, maybe a little bit later, I was very young. It might have been in the late 40s. Wes Moreland who was a Hollywood make-up artist had come to the hotel to give demonstrations. They had a ladies beauty shop and barber shop down in their basement. _____ (??) And my aunt that lived with us, Aunt Blanche, took me down there because she wanted to go down and see his demonstration and he ended up showing me how to put make-up on myself. So that was very interesting.

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KT: And how old were you when you did that?

AK: I was probably about 7 or 8, somewhere along in there.

KT: OK.

AK: The first DMV office was down on 8th Street Southeast and they moved it to 8th Street off of Campbell Avenue in Southwest a number of years later. That's where I got my permit back in '57 I think it was. I wouldn't get it any earlier than I should have. Then it was moved to Peters Creek Road and now its at Crossroads. We had several hospitals in Roanoke. We had the Jefferson Hospital at the far end of Jefferson Street which is where the Hayes, Seay, Mattern and Mattern Building is now. And going back towards town, we had the – that was the Jefferson Hospital – Downtown we had the Shenandoah Hospital which was between 7th and 8th Streets Southwest off of Campbell Avenue. That's where I was born. And it was open until around 1966 when they tore it down. Then we had lots of movie theaters downtown. We had the Park Theater which was right up the street from the Patrick Henry Hotel and then we had the Jefferson Theater down one more street. Then we had the American Theater down one more street where the bank is now. Then around the corner on Campbell Avenue, we had the Roanoke Theater which had a big stage and we'd have a lot of stage acts there. And the movie start that I remember was Lash Larue a Western movie star came one time and performed there. And then we had the Rialto Theater which was down Campbell Avenue where the parking garage is now. They were mostly Westerns and my friends and I used to go to the Rialto and see the Westerns and then we'd go over to the Hotel Roanoke and have lunch. And of course, there was the Grandin Theater on Grandin Road and there was the Lee Theater on Williamson Road. And Salem had a Salem Theater and we had lots of drive-in theaters. We had the Lee-hi Drive-In on Apperson where the bowling alley is now. We had the Shenandoah Drive-In on Shenandoah Avenue. There was another drive-in next door to it but I don't remember what it was called. Then we had the Trail Drive-In which was on 460.

KT: Did you go to the drive-ins often?

AK: Mm mm. When I was a teenager in high school, we would go to the drive-in on weekends.

KT: Did you ever sneak anybody in?

AK: Oh no.

KT: Never did.

AK: No, no, no, no.

KT: OK.

AK: (papers rustling) My grandfather, my mother's father, drove the streetcar up and down Mill Mountain – and Shriner's Hill - and the Roanoke Dairy used to be on Franklin Road at the lower part of Franklin Road and then they moved it over off of Melrose. Its no longer in business but they used to have ice cream and they'd fix their ice cream cones and they would dip their ice cream out with a spatula and it would be an ice cream cone sideways. It wasn't round, it was sideways. I remember things like that that impressed me.

KT: Was it good ice cream?

AK: Very good ice cream. And then the Elk's Club used to be downtown on Jefferson Street where the

Blue Cross Building is now. And I told you about John Payne. The Greyhound Bus Station used to be on Church Avenue where the K&W was. They tore it down and put the K&W in there and then put – after them I think there's a gym there or something down there now and they moved the Greyhound down the road on Franklin Road and then they moved it up on Salem Avenue. I think that's where it is now. And I told you there was Pugh's Department Store on Campbell Avenue that had wooden floors. I used to go in there with high heels on and walk around. Heironimus was across the street and then when they built their new building, Miller & Rhodes came in there. Across from them, on the other side, was Leggett's. Those are the only big department stores I remember. We had Woolworth's dime store. That was a nice store. That's about it.

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KT: I know you mentioned a lot of theaters. Do you remember any of the musical venues or places to see and hear music?

AK: We had the music hall. It was called something else. It was on Salem Avenue. They would have programs and things like that. I think that was in the paper the other day. (papers rustling) Roanoke Academy of Music is what it was called and they would have shows there. And after they stopped using it, they started using the place over where the Roanoke Civic Center is now. There was a building there before that was like the music hall and we would go there for different things. Elvis Presley performed there but it was before he was known as Elvis Presley. He was playing the drums for a Country and Western group.

KT: Did you see it.

AK: Mm mm. I'm a very big Elvis Presley fan. I have all his records and I went to see all of his shows when he was in Roanoke.

KT: Do you remember one that sticks out in your mind?

AK: They all stick out.

KT: Do they?

AK: And when my little girl was about 3 or 4, I guess 4 years old, I took her and he gave her one of his scarves.

KT: Do you still have that?

AK: Mm mm.

KT: Framed?

AK: No. Just had it put up. Now my daughter has met Mohammad Ali. She met him on the airplane and got his autograph since he's been sick. She met the big basketball team out of California. I can't remember what it was but Magic Johnson played for 'em. She met him and shook his hand and everything. She's a big sports nut.

KT: Do you remember any other musical shows that you went to?

AK: No. I went to see – He just died recently. I can't think of his name now – Johnny Cash. He was here and he was at the Victory Stadium. That was before he and the lady he married but she was with him though. He was there. Gene Autry came one time. That's about all I can remember.

KT: You made mention of your daughter. How many children do you have?

AK: I had 2. My daughter is with Bell South which is now AT&T I think. She's older. I don't want to give out her age. And then I have a son who is the golf pro and general manager at Botetourt Country Club. Their father was a big golfer in the state of Virginia up until his death. He was well known in the state of Virginia and Roanoke.

KT: Do you have any grandchildren?

AK: I have one little granddaughter. She's 4 years old and she's named after her grandfather. Her name is Dani Cassel Keffer. Very spoiled.

KT: Is she?

AK: Speaks Spanish some and eats with chopsticks.

KT: At 4?

AK: Mm mm.

KT: Good for her. I still can't do those things. (laughing)

AK: I can't either and her doctor, when she was in for one of her examinations, she was 7 weeks early. He asked her father, "How is she with her silverware?". He said, "Just fine. She manages a fork and spoon. She eats with chopsticks.". The doctor said, "She does what?". He said, "She eats with chopsticks.". He said, "Well, I can't do that.". And Charlie said, "I can't either.".

KT: It sounds like she's doing alright. You made mention that your brother was 15 years older than you. Do you have any memories of maybe visiting him? How was your relationship?

AK: The very biggest memory that I have that sticks in my mind like crazy – Of course, when I came along, he was in high school and then he went into the service. I can remember the day he left for the service. Then when he got out of the service, he went to the University of North Carolina to get his college education. Then, he was married and lived in North Carolina and I would go down to visit them. Then, he went with the FBI and they transferred him to several different locations over the years and he ended up in Elkins, West Virginia, his last location. And he has 2 daughters. One is married to a neurosurgeon and they live in Iowa City, Iowa, and the youngest one is a school teacher outside of Washington.

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KT: Do you still see him?

AK: Oh yes. And as I said, he's 15 years older than I am. He will be 86 at the end of April. In fact I talked to him last night.

KT: Is he in Elkins still?

AK: Still in Elkins. They decided just to stay there when he retired because they had so many friends there at the time. He had a quadruple bypass a number of years ago and has a pacemaker. In fact, he just had a new pacemaker put in around Christmastime and he's doing great. Knock on wood.

KT: Did you ever go to visit him when you were little?

AK: I went to visit him after he was married and when he lived in Reidsville, North Carolina. I went and spent a week with him. Then, when they moved to different places – when my father died, I went and lived with him about 6 months. And that was in Chillicothe, Ohio.

KT: Where is that?

AK: Chillicothe, Ohio. I stayed there about 6 months. I can tell you a funny story. He had to take the bureau car in to have some work done on it and when it got ready, they called and told him that it was ready. He asked me if I would like to go with him to pick it up. He said, "We've got to walk about 16 blocks or 18 blocks. I said, "Sure, I'd love to go.". And I wasn't familiar with the city 'cause I hadn't lived there that long. We walked the 16 or 18 blocks to pick up the car and when we got there, they had it ready. He was getting in. I went over to the door and opened the door and started to get in. He said, "What are you doing?". I said, "I'm getting in the car.". He said, "I'm sorry. You can't get in.". I said, "Why?". He said, "It's the bureau car, you can't ride in it.". I had to walk back the 16 blocks by myself and when I got home, of course he was there. He was standing on the back porch just dying laughing because I had to walk it back by myself.

KT: So he got you?

AK: He got me quite often. I'd come in while I was living there 'cause I finished out the school year there and I'd come in some days and he'd be home and he'd drop bags of water on my head as I came up the steps. He was a big tease.

KT: Was he? You said you had some schooling while you were there?

AK: Yes. This is right after my father died. I went to live with them. Daddy died in April and I finished out that school year there with them and then moved back to Roanoke 'cause I missed all my friends. That's when my mother and I got an apartment together. I went to visit him in Elkins before I

was married and I got to Covington. At that time, I went up through Hot Springs and around that way and it was 5 mountains to cross. Since then, I have found a better route. I got to Covington, and it started snowing on me and I didn't have enough sense to stop and get chains put on my car and I kept on going. I got to the point where I started to cross the mountains and it was just one lane. Snow was built up on both sides of me and I had to maintain a certain speed and if I got too slow then I'd start spinning. If I got too fast, I'd start sliding. So it took me a while to get there and I finally got there and I got into his driveway and got stuck. I had to wait 2 weeks for it melt enough that we could dig me out. When I went to the door and he opened the door, he said, "What in the world are you doing here?". I said, "I told you I was coming.". He said, "Yeah, but the roads have been closed.". I said, "Nobody called and told me this.". He said, "The roads have been closed for a couple of days."

KT: But you made it there?

AK: Yeah. And then another story – I went up to stay with his oldest daughter when his wife had their second child and I had a tendency to drive a little fast. I started up there and when I got to the West Virginia line, a county sheriff pulled in behind me, or a state policeman. I can't remember which it was. He followed me 'til we got to the next county line and he pulled off and another one pulled in behind me and so I had to take my time driving. I had a policeman behind me all the way to his house. So when I got there, I told 'em, "I'd have been here at least an hour or an hour and a half sooner but I had cops behind me the whole way.". He started laughing. He said, "That's my fault.". I said, "What do you mean that's your fault?". He said, "I happened to mention to the captain when I was down there that my baby sister was coming in and keep an eye out for her."

KT: So they really kept an eye out for you.

AK: They really kept an eye out. And he always referred to me as his baby sister. And I was up there one time. He and I went out to dinner and my sister-in-law had a meeting somewhere and she didn't go with us and one of her friends saw us. And the next day, she called my sister-in-law to tell her that she had seen him out with another woman. And she said, "Well, that's his sister.". She said, "No. His sister's a baby.". She said, "No, that his sister.". (laughing)

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KT: Small town.

AK: Small town.

KT: Well, is there anything else that you can think of to share?

AK: No. Like I said, Roanoke was a wonderful place to grow up in. We could walk most anywhere we wanted to. We used to leave our front doors unlocked. We'd even walk to Victory Stadium to the football games some Friday nights, high school games. The gentleman I married, Dan Keffer, we went to high school together but didn't know each other. And when I went to work at American Viscos, he was co-oping. He was going to Tech at the time and co-oping over there and we met there and started dating and that's when we got married. At the time, he had flunked out of school 3 times. He majored in Bridge one time, Pool one time and Golf one time. And when we got back off our honeymoon, his mother was sitting on the sofa with a letter from the dean and he had become on a first name basis with T. Marshall Hahn (??) that he'd flunked out again. I said, "Danny, if you would please go back, I'll work and put you through college.". So, of course, I was working at the time at Allstate and continued working and put him through college and he made the Dean's List. He had 2 ½ years left and he made the Dean's List every year. Very smart man. He just didn't use his brain. He ended up as a mechanical engineer and went to work for Hayes, Seay, Mattern and Mattern and then went to work for _____ (??) (??) and became a partner with them and then opened his own business later on, Charleston Keffer and then after 23 years, we were divorced. We remained friends until the day he died. In fact, he sent me cards every holiday, birthday, everything.

KT: So you still had a good relationship?

AK: We had a very good relationship because we had 2 children together and we did everything where

the children were concerned. We'd go to all their school function and athletic functions, whatever, together. And we were always there for the children at all times.

KT: Did you play golf together?

AK: Several time we did. He remarried but we still played golf together several times. And we'd win our tournaments and everything.

KT: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

AK: I can't think of anything. I probably get out of here and start thinking all kind of things. Like I said, I don't know how much of this stuff would be interesting because its just stuff that I did.

KT: Oh, its all very interesting. So I'm going to stop the recording right now and we can always come back if there is anything else. We're just going to add some information about Ms. Keffer's trip to Egypt.

AK: My uncle lived in Cathe el Dawar (??) which is outside of Alexandria and he lived on what they called the Canal Road and you drove up and down the Canal Road to get back and forth. And at night, the cars would drive with their lights off until they met somebody and then they'd turn 'em on. You'd go to a movie downtown in Cathe el Dawar, I mean in Alexandria, or anywhere, and when the movies let out, the people would walk out in the street and the cars would have to drive on the sidewalk to get around them. The men back in the 50's when I was there, were the long dress-like tops and they'd be walking along the Canal Road and if they had to go to the bathroom, they'd just raise up their clothes and go. At my aunt and uncle's home, they had servants and they were men. And they had a man that worked for them that did all the cooking. At night, he would run our bath for us every night and turn the beds down for us and put our clothes out for us to put on. It was just a treat. Very, very friendly. The women had to kinda take a back seat to everything and you didn't – And if somebody came to your house, especially a man, if you were there alone, you didn't invite him in because that was a sign to them, “Hey, she's ready and willing.”. And while we were there, one of the gentlemen that worked for my uncle got married and he made arrangements for us to come to the wedding. I even have an invitation all in Arabic and the ladies had to stay in one room and the men in the other room during all these weddings. But we were allowed to go in where the men were, my mother and I, because we were guests of theirs and we got to see the wedding itself. They served what I called rose water. It was a little cup with the strongest red water you ever tasted and it was rose colored, rose tasting. You had to drink it or it was an affront to them. But it was horrible. Like I say, the gentleman took us around, showed us his Cairo and we went a lot of places that normal tourists wouldn't have gone.

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KT: How were you treated when you were there?

AK: Marvelous. Just really, really nice.

KT: The people were friendly?

AK: Yes, very friendly. In fact, my uncle had asked my mother to let me stay and go to school over there. He'd put me through school and she wouldn't – didn't tell me until we were on the plane coming back home because she knew I would've stayed. I loved it and I would love to go back. We had sandstorms a couple of times and the sand would even come in under the door at the apartment and we weren't close to the sand at that time but it just blew so hard.

KT: Was that scary?

AK: Yes. I rode the camel and saw the Sphinx and the pyramids and went down the River Nile on a sailboat with 4 Greeks who couldn't speak English and I couldn't speak Greek. I couldn't swim. (laughing) They were friends of my uncles and they took me down the River Nile. I spent my 18th birthday on the River Jordan. Brought back water from the Jordan River to baptize my children with when I had 'em.

KT: And you did that?

AK: Mm mm.

KT: Well that's very special. OK, we're going to stop again and we can always restart.