

CHRISTINE KRAUSS

An Interview Conducted by

Julia Nutter

May 25, 2003

For The

Department of Human Services
of the
Township of North Brunswick

North Brunswick, New Jersey

INTERVIEW: Christine Krauss

INTERVIEWED BY: Julia Nutter

PLACE:

DATE: May 25, 2003

NUTTER: This is Julia Nutter interviewing Christine Krauss.

KRAUSS: I'm glad we know who we are.

NUTTER: What is your full name, and why were you named it?

KRAUSS: My name is Christine Krauss. Do you want the middle name, too?

NUTTER: Yes, sure.

KRAUSS: Oh, shoot! My middle name is Isabel, of all ding-dong things. I guess the neatest explanation would be that I was named after my father who was Christopher, and Isabel was his mother's name. All the other names had been taken up by somebody else, and those were the two that were left when I was named.

NUTTER: Did you have any family when you were growing up?

KRAUSS: I had a brother. I still have a brother. He's older than I am, and he's retired, a retired educator.

NUTTER: Did you have a nickname?

KRAUSS: Just Chris.

NUTTER: Where were you born and when?

KRAUSS: Well, now, that's rather personal, isn't it? Like I could fool you, right?

NUTTER: It's right on the sheet here, so I can check you.

KRAUSS: I know. Well, you know that I'm 75. That goes without explanation. I was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, January 28, 1928. So we missed my party by three days.

NUTTER: Where did your parents work?

KRAUSS: My father, at the time of his death, was president of Jersey City State Teachers' College. So he was in education most of his life. He did sell insurance for maybe five or six years. But needed to get back into education; and, of course, did the classroom bit and the principal bit, and then worked his way up through the steps in the teachers' college, dean of instruction, that kind of stuff. Oh, you asked about my mother, too.

NUTTER: Yes, your mother.

KRAUSS: Yes, I did have a mother. She was supervisor of music in Richmond, Indiana, and I don't think it's surprising that she was a music teacher, with all of the things that our family has been through.

NUTTER: Did you have any pets?

KRAUSS: All the time. We always had something or other: a bird or a couple of dogs at the same. And the only thing that we never really, really had was a cat. Although we loved cats, why we never had them I just don't know. But my brother and I had two dogs at one time called Snookums and Spot. I don't know why. They were just funny little dogs. And our favorite, growing up, was the Boston Terrier that we had. Her name was Lady of Madrid.

NUTTER: Why was she named that?

KRAUSS: That was her full AKA name, you know, the Kennel Club had her registered as Lady of Madrid. Oh, she was a beauty. What a little sweetheart she was.

NUTTER: Did you feel like there was open communication between you and your parents.

KRAUSS: Oh, yes.

NUTTER: You did?

KRAUSS: Yes.

NUTTER: You were able to talk to them about.... Where did your family buy food?

KRAUSS: Where did we buy food? You mean my present family or then family?

NUTTER: No, when you were young, when you were younger? Not right now, I mean.

KRAUSS: I'm sorry. I didn't follow you at that one, Julia. Basically, it would have been whatever the local supermarket was. And then we would buy heavy supplies, you know, meaning like hundreds of pounds of stuff, at--there was a big market between Elizabeth and Newark called the Big Bear, and that was along one of the major roads. That was a huge warehouse-type thing. I guess that's where they've gotten Cosco's and J.B.'s and that kind of stuff. Because you could get things in huge quantity. During the summers we lived on a farm in Iselin, New Jersey, and we would just buy all these big supplies because there were no markets around. And, of course, we grew our own vegetables, and we had chickens and stuff. So the basic things that we needed we would get in huge supplies so we didn't have to go every third minute

to the market.

NUTTER: Where did your family buy clothes when you were younger?

KRAUSS: All right. Robert Hall. Does anybody remember Robert Hall? Somebody who hears this will remember Robert Hall. And Bamberger's in Newark.

NUTTER: Yes, I heard about that, too.

KRAUSS: Yes, yes. That was the place to shop. That was a lovely store in those days.

NUTTER: Were they like for everybody?

KRAUSS: Oh, yes, it was a full department store such as Macy's or Penney's. But the Bamberger's in Newark was the definitive place to shop.

NUTTER: Do you remember your family discussing world events and politics?

KRAUSS: Well, world events and politics, yes, because, of course, my parents were educators. They were certainly aware of what was going on, and we would read the paper. Then, of course, when World War II started, my brother was just on the edge of

being able to get into the service, and of course we were very cautious and had to know all about what was going on. He eventually joined the submarine service during the war. So, of course, we had to keep up with that. Then things in Jersey City were very "political." And I mean that in quotes.

NUTTER: What do you mean by that?

KRAUSS: Well, I mean by that that a lot of things had happened happened because of politics, or you would do things because it was politically correct. We didn't have that phrase in those days. But it was politically correct to do certain things. Then, of course, Mayor Hague--that's a name that might be remembered by some; he was known throughout the state--he was very political. Sometimes, if you really wanted something done, it was not beyond people to go to him, you know, and then say, "Yeah, sure, I'll support you in the next election." So, yes.

NUTTER: Growing up, what were your favorite childhood games?

KRAUSS: Well, my brother and I loved to play checkers, and we did hopscotch, king-of-the-hill. Does anybody know king-of-the-hill? And kick-the-can.

NUTTER: Yes, kick-the-can.

KRAUSS: You've heard that one before.

NUTTER: Yes.

KRAUSS: And ring-a-levio. The look on your face is telling me that you don't know what I'm talking about. What else? One-two-three, go.

NUTTER: Yes, I've heard of that.

KRAUSS: Okay. Let's see what else. Oh, we loved riding around on our scooters. Scooters were big.

NUTTER: They're doing that now today.

KRAUSS: Yes. Scooters were big then, very big. And kids would make boxcar scooters out of the wooden crates that we could get from the vegetable market. Of course nothing comes in a wooden crate anymore, so there you go. And you could get a 2-by-4, take a pair of skates apart--one of the skates--and put one on the front, the two wheels on the front and two wheels in the back, put a little handle on this thing that you had already put together, and go scooting along in the cart.

Of course in those days we only had the radio. So we had to entertain ourselves, which I think is a lot better than things nowadays. Kids aren't as creative. Well, there are certain kids

who are. There will always be creative children. But the general public is not as creative now as it was then, because we had to. Made dolls out of socks. I have a couple of them. I made my sorority doll out of a sock. That was when I was in college, and we were supposed to be rather intelligent, but I did it anyway.

NUTTER: A sock dolly.

KRAUSS: Yes, yes. They were cute. Because all you needed was one crazy sock and some yarn, sew a face on it, fill it with junk; tie a knot, put the top down, and then it turn it up, and you had a little hat.

NUTTER: What schools did you go to?

KRAUSS: I went to public schools in Jersey City and Elizabeth when we lived in Elizabeth for a couple of years. Then came back to Jersey City, and I finished my high school education at Snyder High in Jersey City. Then I spent one year in Jersey City Teachers' College only because they didn't have any dormitory space. I had applied at Jersey City and Trenton and Montclair. I was accepted at all three, but they didn't have dormitory space in Montclair or in Trenton. And Trenton College was just-- everything was small then, but they still didn't have the room. So since we lived only eight blocks from the college, and my father was dean of instruction, I guess, when I first started

there. So I went there for one year because it was convenient.

Transferring the second year is always so easy. You can get into any school that you want. Unfortunately, I was too young; I couldn't drive a car. So I couldn't drive to Montclair, which would have been easy enough. But I was too young, so I had to make the choice. It was go to Jersey City or wait for something to open someplace else. And that would have been silly, a waste of time. So that's what I did, and then I transferred to Trenton State in my sophomore year. Oh, I graduated, too, by the way.

NUTTER: Yes. Good.

KRAUSS: In 1948 I graduated from Trenton.

NUTTER: When you were in like elementary, junior high school, high school, do you remember any violence or drugs there?

KRAUSS: Oh, no, not in those days. You wouldn't dare. Because that was the time when schoolteachers were underpaid and highly respected. Because if a kid got in trouble, the teacher was on the horn immediately. And every parent knew if a kid looked cross-eyed at anybody during the school day.... So, you know, other than childish pranks and just silly stuff, there was really no emphasis on drugs or smoking or violence. So it was neat.

NUTTER: How did you get to your schools?

KRAUSS: Walked.

NUTTER: No school buses or anything?

KRAUSS: Nope. No school buses. When we lived in Elizabeth, we lived about three miles from the school. They had no busing, and we had to walk in-- If we got down the hill in time, there was a family that had a huge car. Not many people had cars then, you know, two cars in those days. So if we got down the hill in time, this one family had this huge Buick, and they could throw about seven kids in that thing. And if we got there in time, we got to ride halfway to school. But if we didn't, we had to walk the rest of the way.

It wasn't much fun because my brother and I both played instruments, and if we had our books and our instruments and blah-blah-blah, it wasn't that much fun. It wasn't much fun at all in the winter. But there was a little candy store on the way back from school. If you were lucky, you had a nickel, you know, and you could go in and buy a Coke or something because soda pop was five cents a bottle in those days. Or a little ice cream cone. You could get an ice cream cone for a nickel, too.

NUTTER: Now it's like a dollar for like....

KRAUSS: Oh, I know.

NUTTER: It's so expensive.

KRAUSS: Right.

NUTTER: It's crazy. What school activities did you participate in?

KRAUSS: Well, let's see. In junior high, of course, I was in the orchestra and the band. In high school I was in the ping-pong club, and the Future Nurses, and the band, and the chorus, and the orchestra, things like that.

NUTTER: What instruments did you play?

KRAUSS: At the time I-- Well, I started out playing violin in junior high. Then I switched to cello when I was in high school, and that was my major instrument when I graduated from college. And it sits quietly under the piano doing absolutely nothing. Which is a shame. I should get it out and play it.

NUTTER: Do you remember any fads when you were younger?

KRAUSS: Oh, sure. Our group-- We had what they called tracking. And they're still tracking nowadays, the kids in the commercial program and the wood-shop program and, you know, the academic

programs. Our tracking--we only had two classes in the college-bound tracking, and we were always coming up with something kind of ridiculous but fun. But we all had cardigan sweaters, and we would wear them backwards with the buttons up the back. And I thought that was so funny that one time I got this pair of red leather shoes that were gorgeous, and they had blue ties and a blue sole going around it. Well, I decided if we can wear our sweaters backwards, we can also put our laces upside down. So I started at the top so that the bow was down at the bottom of the laces. It took me a little while to get dressed, but that was pretty funny. And then one of the other girls took sugar cubes--I don't know if you've ever seen a sugar cube....

NUTTER: Yes, yes.

KRAUSS: Well, you know, everything's in a little bag nowadays. But she took a sugar cube and made a whole necklace. She took a hot pin or needle and put a hole through the sugar cube, and then strung it with yarn, and then tied a couple of knots so the sugar cubes wouldn't slide, and made this whole big thing of sugar cubes. You know, and silly things like that. And we would make bracelets out of paper clips. Anything that came along. Somebody was always creating something or other, so that made it fun. You know, we didn't have much. Everybody had maybe three sets of wild stuff that you could wear to school, and that was it. Then you keep switching back and forth. So we'd do things to dress up or

dress down whatever it was that we had. Or whatever we were lucky enough to have, let's put it that way.

NUTTER: Where did you and your friends hang out when you were younger?

KRAUSS: We had a candy store across the street. Well, it wasn't directly across the street from my house. But our street was parallel to the big street in Jersey City, Hudson Boulevard. On the other side of the boulevard was this candy store. And it was the safest place in town. Kids hung there, everybody knew the proprietors, the proprietors knew every child that was hanging out in their store. They knew where they lived, they knew their parents. Well, that's what made it safe. Because the kids knew if they started anything, Yetta would be on the phone in a flash. And Harry would be outside the store: "Now you kids you're not supposed to do that!" So we were all safe. You know, kids would clown around.

Then in the evenings we would have programs up at the YWCA. We had a couple of real nice clubs up there, and we would invite the different clubs from the different high schools to come to a dance. And we started a writing program that we had pen pals, and we got a bunch of names from--I don't remember where we got them anymore. But we had lists of pen pals, and I am still in touch with my pen pal.

NUTTER: Oh.... That's so nice.

KRAUSS: For, you know, it's been sixty years that Ana and I have written to each other. She lived in England. Well, we tried to get these foreign countries. Well, she lived in England, and she was going through college same time I was. We got married about the same time. We had children about the same time. And it was fun. Then they moved to Canada, and we said, well now, obviously, we have to meet after all these years. And we did, and we just had such a good time.

We met them two or three times. They came down here because one of their friends also moved, and the lady worked for the Baine Ceramics. They do birds, and they hand paint birds and so forth. And there was a big factory in Trenton. So they came over. They wanted to go down to see the Trenton factory and, of course, stopped here coming and going. And so we had lots of fun visiting with them. But Ana and I still are in touch with one another. She's also lost her husband, so we have a lot in common. And her children are married, such as mine are. So that was kind of fun.

I'm trying to think if there was anything else. No. Children were pretty much homebodies, or we would be at someone else's house. My girlfriend lived down the street, and I'd be down at her house, or she'd be up at my house. And her cousin lived right next door to me, so, you know, the three of us had a lot in common. And then Shirley and I went through college together. I tell you, when I get a friend, I hang onto them. I figure I'll

never have another one. Shirley now lives in Florida, and we're still in touch with her. That's fun. I have to laugh at my children: Oh, I've known that one for fifty years. Fifty years! Wait 'til you've know them for sixty years. But it's fun to see the kids stay together.

NUTTER: Was your school segregated?

KRAUSS: We didn't know the word.

NUTTER: No?

KRAUSS: Mmmm mmmm. Kids just went to school.

NUTTER: That's interesting.

KRAUSS: There was just one area that had more black students because that's where they lived. You know, it's like the Italian community. They lived downtown. The Italians all lived downtown, the black people lived up here. And the whatever lived over here, and somebody else lived over there. But everybody went to their local school, and it was not considered-- Well, that's just the way it was. We all went to school. This school that was black, it was 90 percent black and 10 percent white. Our school was probably 90 percent white and 10 percent black. Or other. Not necessarily black, but other.

My father was the principal of this black school in Jersey City. And, oh, it worked out so well. He was very successful there. And there wasn't a lot of this--the open nit-picking that goes on today. Because kids were kids, and you have to treat kids like kids. I always said God was color-blind. He just wanted a little bit of this and a little bit of that. We should respect that. But a lot of people don't, and I feel sorry for them. They miss so much. They miss so much by not knowing other people.

NUTTER: Where have you lived as an adult?

KRAUSS: Right here.

NUTTER: In this very house?

KRAUSS: In this very house.

NUTTER: For how long?

KRAUSS: Fifty-five years.

NUTTER: Oh, my goodness!

KRAUSS: I'm going to stay 'til I get it right. So after we graduated from college, we got married. And this has been it.

NUTTER: It's a nice house.

KRAUSS: Yes, do you like the floor plan of this house?

NUTTER: I do. I like this.

KRAUSS: And it's so interesting to see what each of us has done with the house.

NUTTER: They're all different in like some way.

KRAUSS: Yes. Right, right. But mine is the only one that has the original kitchen.

NUTTER: Yes, yours is. I was just looking at it. Yours is different. I've been in the Pickerings', their house.

KRAUSS: Yes, yes.

NUTTER: And it's sort of different, you know. People have expanded it and stuff.

KRAUSS: Mmmm hmmm. The only thing that's different from the original kitchen, the triple-door cabinet that's on that far wall had a counter space underneath it with a big butcher-block top and drawers and doors. And with so many children, I couldn't use

that back space as the eating area because there wasn't enough room. So my husband took the cabinet out and put it downstairs as a woodworking area. Then I designed that table that goes all the way down, and I had enough for six benches and.... So that was the only thing that I did. And I keep telling my kids: "Oh, I'm going to modernize the kitchen." "Don't you dare! Oh, my goodness!" But it's the original sink, which is that gorgeous stainless steel sink.

NUTTER: It's nice.

KRAUSS: But in those days-- And I have a pantry. Nobody else has a pantry. I have a pantry. But anyway. But these houses are so hard to do something to, you know, breaking through the walls, how they've moved the doors up here. Because it's like a bomb shelter. The house is really built, and it's not going anywhere. So I figured, why bother? Because when the kids were growing up, even though people were doing things like that. But we've put our money into the instruments that we bought for the kids, and that made a difference. So they had a roof over them. What more did they want? Wouldn't you rather have an instrument than a new something-or-other?

NUTTER: Yes, I like my instrument.

KRAUSS: You know they're expensive, and you really want to get a

good professional instrument. And it's not cheap. But if it's something you want, oh, man, it's a pleasure.

NUTTER: Yes. As an adult, what organizations or groups have you belonged to?

KRAUSS: Got about three hours?

NUTTER: Sure. I have two tapes.

KRAUSS: Oh, yeah, right. Well, I started to write them down, didn't I, someplace? Over here. Did I write them over there on those sheets? Oh, I belonged to so many things, Julia, it's disgusting. I guess probably one of the first things that I did after I was married, I was a member of the New Brunswick Symphony, and I was also a member of the Flemington--Hunterdon County Symphony--playing cello, of course. Of course, of course. Well, let's see what else do I have here? Member of three different musicians' locals, 204, 373, and 746; 746 I served as vice president for a number of years.

I was active with the Democratic Party for many years. Then I was elected to the-- Oh, well, PTA's of course. Of course all kinds of PTA--Parsons and Linwood. And of course that's all we had in those days, so there was only a choice of two. And I have been a professional musician. So there were organizations that you belong to as a result of doing that. Then, of course, I was a

member of the board of education for over 18 years, and president of the board when we had our big fight as to whether we would ever have a high school in the township or not. And those were some pretty frightful years. But we all lived through it.

With the board of education I was on the country board, served as president there for two years. And worked with the state school board association as an instructor for weekend activities that they had for new board members to get them interested in the right way of proceeding as a board member. Because some people would run for the board and say, "I'm going to go in there and clean that place up!" Well, you can't do it because you're only one of nine or one of seven, and you just can't do it. You have to learn to work together. I was busy with that.

I served in the township. Of course I was a Heritage Day Award winner in 1995. And it was all kinds of things. Let's see. Oh, I was a Brownie co-leader, too, when the kids were little. And I worked with the Diversity Committee in the township. I was on the Senior Housing Commission. I work, of course, now with the Food Bank; I'm very active with the Food Bank. And president of the Friends of the Senior Citizens. I'm very active at church. I'm on the consistory as an elder. I've also been a deacon, but I'm on the consistory now as an elder. And I write a lot for the church paper. And I take care of signs, making all kinds of funny, silly signs. And running dinners and that kind of stuff, you know. So I'm very busy at church. You know, don't retire.

There's no time to retire. Oh, and I was the first woman installed in the New Brunswick Rotary Club.

NUTTER: Oh, very nice!

KRAUSS: Prestigious, you know. Yeah, right. And we had a group called the Citizens' Council for Good Schools, and I was president of that for a number of years. Our main goal as to get qualified, really qualified and interested people to run for the board of education. And of course once we got that, we knew how to do that, then we got involved in supporting bond issues. And I'm sure that it was with our help that we got the extension at the Livingston Park School and at the John Adams School. Because those two schools needed it so desperately. And the people in the township were against it. Unbelievable, but they were against it. And both of them got through with like 30 votes. I don't remember exactly what it was, but it was a very, very small margin. And we were very active in promoting that also.

Let's see, what else did I do? Oh, I was on the board of the We Care Nursery School, which was run by our church. It was a Christian nursery school and not a day-care center. It was a real school. So we were qualified by the state, and we had to have certified teachers and blah blah blah. Oh, yes, and it says I was a charter member of the Baccalaureate Committee, and that was about seven years ago.

NUTTER: What did you do for that?

KRAUSS: Well, they wanted to have a religious ceremony just prior to the graduation. And we worked with all of the people in the township of the different religious and so forth, and had these services at Our Lady of Peace, that being the biggest church in town. And that was the point of that. Those are called Baccalaureate Services. And I have been active with The Company Theater here in the township. We did three plays, and the money went to the--was it the Heritage? No. I've forgotten what club, or what organization it went to. Well, anyway, we did three plays.

NUTTER: What year was this? When was this?

KRAUSS: Oh, let's see. We did the last one maybe four years ago. And then before that it was two years and two years before that. They were very successful. It was called The Company because there weren't tryouts. It was these people that did it, did all three. There were people in and out, but it was the basic core that did all three of the shows. So it was called The Company. I was delighted to have been part of that, you know, hambone. Let's see. Oh, yes, and of course we played professionally--concerts, band concerts in the parks in the summertime. My husband directed the band.

Then we also had a small dance band specializing in German

music. We were called The Alpiners. And The Alpiners _____, we would do all kinds of German stuff. [last sentence in a sort of German accent] And I would zing in German, and then the people, then we would do-- What, are you laughing? Then the people, when we played the German societies, they would come up, and they would talk to me in German. Bitte, bitte, _____ sprechene Deutsche. And then they'd go, Oye! Because they'd think I would speak. Julia, you're going to come home, and your mother's never going to let you come back.

NUTTER: I can see that, too.

KRAUSS: Well, we had our full costumes, you know, and we had our elk horns. And I had cow bells and played them. So we had lots of fun.

NUTTER: Oh, that's so cute.

KRAUSS: Oh, yes. It was fun. So that kept us pretty busy and off the streets most of the time.

NUTTER: Yes, with the Germans.

KRAUSS: It was fun. We got to know so many wonderful people, and so it was fun. I enjoyed that thoroughly. And I really got to hambone it up then. Well, let's see, did I leave anything out? Is

that enough.

NUTTER: Let's go over it again.

KRAUSS: Forget it. Oh, let's see. Oh, Cultural Arts Committee. It's too much. I can't remember all this stuff. I had started to write down some notes to see if I forget any. Oh, no, these are notes about the town.

NUTTER: Oh, yes, we'll get to that last. We wait until the end to do that.

KRAUSS: All right. That's probably enough. Yes, so I've been around for a while. I've done a couple of things.

NUTTER: A couple. What is the scariest thing that has ever happened to you?

KRAUSS: The scariest thing? My heavens! I haven't been scared in a long time. I bet this would probably be it: When we lived in Jersey City, we lived in an apartment house up on the top floor, five floors. No elevators, of course, but I was young, and it didn't matter to me at the time. We had an earthquake. This was back in the thirties. There was an earthquake. And for some reason I guess it must have moved by bed enough that it woke me up, and I got up, and for some reason I stood in front of my

dresser which had a free-hanging mirror. You know, it was hung from the edging of it. You know the kind of stuff we have upstairs. You could hang things on that, and it would.... Not these downstairs. Can't do them downstairs.

The mirror was going like this, moving back and forth, back and forth. I had no idea what was going on. I'm going, Why am I standing here, and why is that mirror doing that? My mother finally came in. You know, at first they had no idea. My parents had no idea what was going on. But then they realized that that's what it was. It was a minor earthquake. Fortunately-- And of course being up at the highest part of the apartment, that took a bigger swing. I'm sure the people downstairs never even knew it. But it was enough to make that top floor because of the height of that apartment. And I guess that was probably the scariest thing.

And, oh, man, I thought of another one. When I was about 18, a bunch of us had gone down to the Shore at Seaside. I knew how to swim. I was pretty confident. I don't like the ocean, but I went in, and I got caught in the undertow. I think that probably scared me more than I realized--more than this poor mirror which scared me good enough when I was like eight. Then ten years later I got caught in the undertow, and that scared me good. I never went in the ocean again up in that section of the Jersey Shore. Down in Wildwood, ah, walk around down there because you could go out like 200 feet, and it'd be as high as your kneecap. So there was no danger down there particularly. Yes, I think those-- I've never been in any serious accidents or falls that were worth

thinking about. I've never been seriously ill that everybody panicked. I think those are probably the two things. When you go home, I'll remember something frightening. But I can't think of anything other than that.

NUTTER: Those are pretty scary, actually.

KRAUSS: Well, I guess hearing them right out loud, it is different.

NUTTER: Religion. Describe your religious beliefs.

KRAUSS: My religious beliefs are that there is a God, and that there is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that Jesus died to save mankind.

NUTTER: You attend church regularly?

KRAUSS: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

NUTTER: Even when you don't have to.

KRAUSS: Well, this morning I didn't because my hip just totally gave out Monday. I make the refreshments every Sunday morning, and I couldn't carry anything and use the two canes at the same time. But that's what I do on Sunday morning. I go roaring out of

here about quarter of ten, and get all the food out because I have to make the juice for the kids. They get cookies between Sunday School and church, and the adults come earlier, and they come in for a cup of coffee and whatever cake or cookies-- whatever I put out for them. So that's always fun. I get to see everybody before everybody else does and catch up on all the gossip. So I do have that opportunity.

At church also I'm involved in being a lay reader, which means that they read part of the service where it's not necessary to have the minister do it. And we also do the children's sermons. You know, everybody takes turns. It's not that I do it all the time because I don't. Because everybody loves getting involved in that. So it involves the congregation a great deal. And that's fun to do, too. I'm know as the "bag lady."

NUTTER: The what lady?

KRAUSS: The bag lady.

NUTTER: The bag lady?

KRAUSS: Yes.

NUTTER: Why?

KRAUSS: Well, when I do the children's sermon, I always have a

bunch of garbage that goes along with me. So I'm always carrying this stuff. "Oh, here comes the bag lady." And I pull stuff out of it, and tell them a little story.

NUTTER: How old were you when you started dating?

KRAUSS: Probably fifteen because.... Well, my problem was that I was younger, and when I was fifteen, I was finishing up my junior year in high school. So the end of the junior year and the beginning of the senior year in high school, I was fifteen. My parents accepted the fact that I guess we have to let her out of the house without the leash. But of course a lot of it was gang dating, you know, a bunch of us would go together. There'd be like three boys and three girls. We had our own individual dates, but we would all go together. There was very little-- Because the kids never had cars. The young boys didn't have cars in those days, and there was plenty of bus traffic all over the place. So we would go places on the bus and come home on the bus. Big deal!

NUTTER: Do you remember your first date?

KRAUSS: My first date.... See how important that was?

NUTTER: Obviously not, right?

KRAUSS: Oh, dear. Well, I know the one that I enjoyed the most

as a first date--I don't know whether it was my first date or not--but I was madly in love with this fellow that was in our class, and he was in our track. So, of course, I saw him every day. And he was just as darling as the day is long. We went to a party together. Again, it was one of these--we all went to the party. And, oh, that was something else. Whew! I lived on that one for quite a while. Young love.

NUTTER: You were married.

KRAUSS: Yes, that's what we told our kids. Who's going to hear this tape?

NUTTER: Well, people are going to transcribe it. And then it will be announced. So, yes.... How did you meet your husband?

KRAUSS: We met in college. He was in the service, he was in the Navy, and he came home one weekend, and then came down to the college to visit his girlfriend. And his girlfriend introduced him to me. We were all music students. We were all in the same class. His girlfriend and I were in the same class, and George was, of course-- When he came back, he still would have been in our class because we would have moved up by then. But he always told her after, after we started going together, he told her that it was very important for him to meet me. Because when he first came back to campus, we were having an orchestra rehearsal, and I

was playing cello, of course. And there were only two of us playing cello. He just looked over and didn't know either one of us. And he said to his girlfriend he just wanted to meet me. And that was her mistake for introducing us.

NUTTER: Oh, my gosh!

KRAUSS: So when he came back to campus, it was too late. He had already made up his mind that he wanted to go with me.

NUTTER: That's so nice.

KRAUSS: And it was a little strange. Because when he came back out of the service, he was a professional musician most of his life before then since he was twelve years old. So he had private students on Saturday afternoon and they played up at the _____ on Saturday evening--or Friday evening, Saturday evening, and Sunday. So he was gone all weekend when everybody else was out dating, you know. But there I sat, saying, oh, it's all right. He's coming back on Monday. But of course in those days we went to college from eight o'clock Monday morning until noon Saturday. Five and a half days a week, it was worse than high school.

NUTTER: How long did you know him before you got married?

KRAUSS: Well, about a year and a half. But of course I was

seeing him day and night in college because we were all in the same class, and we all had to go to band rehearsal, we all had to go to orchestra rehearsal, and we all had to sing in the choir, and, you know, that silly stuff that goes with a college education.

NUTTER: I have to turn the tape over. [Change to Side B of Tape]
Where were you married?

KRAUSS: We were married at Our Lady of Lourdes in Milltown on December 27, 1948. And it was very interesting because in those days--George was Catholic, and I'm Protestant--and in those days they wouldn't allow us to get married in the Church. It was shortly after we married that they changed their minds. So I had this funny little dress wedding. I didn't have a big thing, and I didn't have a gown, and I didn't have a veil and all this stuff that goes with it. And then it was snowing like mad. It was a snowstorm that you wouldn't want to talk about.

Then, of course, we were coming down from Jersey City, and we got inside the rectory, and everybody's checking, you know. I made sure that my matron of honor had the ring that I was to give Dan[??], and he's checking around. His brother was supposed to be holding his ring for me. And how did that work out now? Oh, I guess his brother was holding George's ring because I said I wanted to make sure that everything got there. So he was holding his ring, and I was holding my own ring. So that when we got

there, I was able to give George my ring, and then his brother was supposed to give the other one to me so I could give it back to George.

Well, his brother started looking for the ring, couldn't find it. You should have seen us, all dressed up, crawling all over that _____, looking for the ring. Figuring that in all the heavy clothing, you know, it could've popped out or who knows? We were all over the floor, under the desk, under the radiators. We looked and looked and looked. Could not find the ring. Then we decided, well, this is silly. We're here to get married. Let's do it. So George borrowed his brother's wedding ring. So we had to get married with his brother's wedding ring. And, of course, mine was okay.

Then, oh, maybe a month later it decided to thaw, and the ring was outside under one of the bushes. And all we can imagine is that maybe Charlie might have put it on his own hand and might have taken off a glove and pulled off and just fell outside. But there was the ring. So Charlie got his ring back, and George got his. But other than that it was quite uneventful.

NUTTER: Did you have a honeymoon?

KRAUSS: Oh, yes. We went to a honeymoon up in North Jersey at Lake Swananoah[sp?] which many, many years ago was a very prestigious place, a huge country inn on a lake and all that stuff. And we were able to have the 28th, 29th, and 30th, three

big days, because George had to come back to play on New Year's Eve. But that was okay because I had spent, you know, almost two years in college with him away on the weekends. So it was just another night out.

NUTTER: How many children did you have?

KRAUSS: Four.

NUTTER: Do you remember anything about your children when they were small that like amazed you?

KRAUSS: Well, they were all brilliant, of course.

NUTTER: Yes, of course. What did you find most difficult about raising children?

KRAUSS: Probably keeping up with them. And wondering how I was going to live through the next day if I didn't get any sleep. But they were all good eaters, so I didn't have a feeding problem. You know, some parents do have feeding problems where they just can't get the kids to eat. My kids were good. The only big problem that I really had with them was bath time. When I had two of them, I could put them in the tub at the same time. Then I got the third one, and they could all go in the tub because they were like the same age kids. And I'd get them in there, and I could

never get them out. They were water babies. Oh, man! That was really tough, getting them out of the water. So they didn't run screaming and yelling when I'd say bath time.

NUTTER: Well, that's good.

KRAUSS: They'd beat me to the bathroom.

NUTTER: What did you find most rewarding about being a parent?

KRAUSS: Oh, just seeing them grow up and have them become friends with me and with George. And they were always friends with each other because they were always so busy they never had time to pick at each other. The house was full of kids all the time. And they just decided they--they were so busy they never fought in front of their friends, and they all had the same kind of friends. All the music people, you know how they hang together. You know how cozy music people are. So they had so much in common.

And then our side lot out there was known as the dirt track because all of the kids in the world played out there in my yard. And that was fine because I knew where the kids were, I knew who they were playing with, I knew all of their parents. And when the kids were little and Parsons School was right there, this would be their first stop on the way home. No matter who it was, they'd come in the backdoor into mine. And they had specific rules. They

knew that they had to call home. They'd line up by the phone there, and they'd have to call home. Then they went to the bathroom, then they washed their hands, then they could get something to eat.

NUTTER: There was a whole system going here.

KRAUSS: Oh, yes. It cost a fortune to raise the kids because we raised so many of them. But even when they got into New Brunswick High School, the kids would have a band rehearsal. Of course, George was the band instructor. But they'd all follow him home. They'd all follow him back. Oh, well, here they are again. So it was real neat, and it was just such fun knowing the kids. And so many of them still come here to say "hello" to me or they call me on the phone. There's one gal who lives out in Oklahoma. She calls up like clock work, "Hi, Mom! How are you doing?" And she'll talk to me for twenty minutes. That to me is very rewarding. Not only did I gain the respect of my own kids and enjoy them, I enjoyed their friends.

NUTTER: Moving on to your career: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

KRAUSS: Oh, I wanted to be a nurse. Oh, that was--I was going to be a nurse. Then when I recovered from that, I wanted to be on the radio. They used to have little soap operas, little fifteen-

minute soap operas. I wanted to be on one of those. Oh, man! But with the career path that I finally chose, you had to be an actress to do the things that I did, you know, hambone. As a musician, you know you have to be a little hambone.

NUTTER: Yes.

KRAUSS: You've heard that, haven't you?

NUTTER: What was your first job?

KRAUSS: My first job was in high school I worked part time on Saturday in Hoboken. I lived in Jersey City, and, of course, didn't have a car or anything to get to Hoboken, but there was a trolley line that went-- We could get on that trolley, my girlfriend Shirley who is down in Florida, she and I both got this job in a place called the Camera Corporation, and they developed films. It was our job to make sure that the films were in the right packets and make sure that the pictures were developed well. You know, we were final inspection. But we could go two blocks over from where I lived and get the trolley car, which went all the way to Hoboken. Now that was maybe a ten-mile ride, and it was a whole nickel. A whole nickel! Yeah, that was a whole nickel. Then one summer I worked in a radio components parts organization, and we made little transistors. We did all kinds of little things that were component parts of making a

radio, and that was kind of fun. I enjoyed that. And that was just summertime.

Then I worked for the state. I'm trying to think what it was, what the name of the group.... I haven't thought of this in such a long time. I'm looking at your garage. I don't know why I think it's written over there.

NUTTER: There it is!

KRAUSS: Yes, that's it. Workmen's Compensation. See, it was right there by the back of the basketball hoop. See, it says it, right there. Oh, dear. What we did was to take claims of people who were hurt at work and set them up with the individual judges, and I worked for a Judge Mobias[sp?]. I wonder why I remembered that name. That's silly, isn't it? But he was the only judge that I worked for. Then from there I guess I was in college long enough. And of course at college I had--I worked in the music library, which paid just enough for my tuition.

NUTTER: Well, that's good.

KRAUSS: Yes, yes. Well, don't forget tuition in those days was almost nothing. Tuition--are you sitting down?

NUTTER: Yes.

KRAUSS: I'm looking at you, but are you sitting down? Was one hundred dollars a year. That's what tuition was. So I got twenty-five dollars a quarter for working in the music library. Julia, want me to call 9-1-1?

NUTTER: That's horrible! That's so mean.

KRAUSS: Isn't that wild?

NUTTER: It's like thousands of dollars.

KRAUSS: One hundred dollars a year. Then, of course, we had to pay the dormitory fees because I lived on campus when I was in Trenton. Lived at home when I was in Jersey City. So I had three years of dormitory life. One hundred dollars! That sounds ridiculous, doesn't it?

NUTTER: Did you say you were in a sorority during college?

KRAUSS: Yes, Gamma Sigma Sorority. That was mostly--in those days it was mostly music students. We had some phys eds and some el eds. But I think probably those were the three groups. El eds are elementary education majors.

NUTTER: How did you decide on your career?

KRAUSS: Well, it was just one that I guess must have realized that there's only one thing to do: teach. With my background, what do you do? You teach.

NUTTER: And you were a music teacher, right, for how long?

KRAUSS: Well, I didn't teach full time. I taught in two summer schools in Flemington and in New Brunswick. Because in the meantime I was working for George's brother who opened a music store in Bound Brook. And since he didn't have a lot of money to open with, they decided for me that it would be a good thing for me to work in the store since I had a music education and could handle most of the questions while he was out doing something else, you know, promoting the business. So really I didn't teach in a school system other than the two summer schools, but, oh, I did that for many years, which was fun.

NUTTER: And then you were president of the board of ed.

KRAUSS: Right.

NUTTER: What did you do, what accomplishments?

KRAUSS: Well, during my tenure, and people claim that they are responsible for-- No one person is responsible for anything. I happened to be president of the board to help them, and I feel

that I was a good leader because we never got into a lot of big arguments and stuff with the community. Because we were having such a problem with New Brunswick. We had a lot of violence in New Brunswick, and I had three older kids in that building. And when anything would happen, they would call my husband, no matter where he was in the town, because he taught in New Brunswick. And he'd have to go up there and help settle some of the arguments that were going on.

So not only did I have all of that to worry about, we were trying to get our own high school because New Brunswick never did a thing to expand their building, and they had money in the bank to do it, but they wouldn't do it. Why? I have no idea. To this day I don't know why. It was the kind of thing that our parents in the township were very upset about their children going there. They would come to the board meetings. We'd have a thousand people at every board meeting screaming and yelling: My kid! My kid! My kid this! And my kid that! And I would say, "We certainly understand. Our children are going there, too."

But I would say to the board before we'd ever have a meeting, "We are not going to argue with these people because the questions would be, 'Why aren't you doing something about it?'" And those are fair questions. If I wasn't on the other side of the table, I probably would have been asking those questions, too. Because they're important. They're important to the families, they're important to the health and welfare of the children.

So I would tell the board, "We are not going to try to argue with them. We're not going to try to appease them. We are going to let them talk because that's what they need to do." So I never allowed the board to get into a confrontation individually, an individual board member and an individual member of the public because that wouldn't have solved anything. It would have made a lot worse. So I figure that's a big accomplishment, to keep fighting out of the public domain. You know we all understood. We all knew what the questions were. We all knew that individually nobody could do anything about it.

And that's what kept us on track, keeping to push for the high school. We had, oh, at least one hundred legal meetings, court settings, about whether North Brunswick should be allowed to get out of the contract with New Brunswick. We had a ten-year sending-receiving relationship contract, reviewable at five years, and it just happened the five years was during the time that we were trying to get the permission to get our high school. And we went to all kinds of meetings in Trenton. We would go to any legal meeting that they had going on down there. All of the elected officials, they knew us so darn well, there was, "Oh, here comes North Brunswick!"

But we did have a lot of support. And though the good offices of Jack Borris and his legal associates, they really kept us on track and gave us good information, gave us good direction, had us well prepared for all kinds of things that we had to answer in court because they called all the Milltown Board of

Education members, all the New Brunswick Board of Education members, and all of the North Brunswick Board of Education members so that they could make some kind of a decision: Is it right for North Brunswick to pull out? That was the big question. And we were so well prepared that they realized that, you know, they're not just waving a flag and saying--t's riots. But it's kind of helped us stay on track.

But we were interested in getting a full education for our students, and it wasn't happening. There were great things going on in New Brunswick, but that's not what the headlines said. But, you know, I served for over eighteen years and four years as president and served on all of the major committees, associations and blah blah blah.

NUTTER: If you could just talk about like the building of the actual high school? My mom was talking to you about, I think, the architects and that the architects wanted something differently. Just that whole experience.

KRAUSS: Well, there was just one thing in the high school. When we finally got permission to go ahead to examine the possibility of a high school, we were in the midst of getting read to put to a vote a second junior high. And the second junior high would have been in the southern part of town. Then all of this stuff happened at New Brunswick. So we were up to here in architects. And then we got the permission to go ahead, and we got the

architect, and it was wonderful because we took trips all over the state looking at high school buildings, brand new, looking at some old things that had proven themselves to be worthy.

We chose an architect based on the Parsippany High School, Parsippany-Troy Hills. He came up with a plan which made it possible for expansion at the high school. We were going to build it quite big. But we knew that it would have to be expanded at some time in the future. The only thing that I ever had an argument with anybody about was the auditorium.

NUTTER: Oh, yes.

KRAUSS: Which was the worse thing that ever happened in that high school. There were a lot of new ideas, you know. I had never thought of them. And that's fine. Things were really coming together. But I was the only one on the board who had ever had any show experience and working in pits and working backstage with the play going on in front of you. But they wouldn't listen. I said, "You need a pit. The stage is not big enough the way it's designed to have the orchestra in back. You need a pit."

One of the members of the board, who was an engineer, said, "Well, aesthetically, a pit wouldn't look well." And don't you know, they all fell into that trap. And I said, "Don't you realize that I'm the only one who can tell you what it's like?" "Oh, well, no, we probably won't have too many musicals." You know. Every time we turn around there's a cotton-pickin' musical

at the high school. I'm over there looking at them. For all of these shows, I got to them yet. I see the poor orchestra is jammed over there in the corner. And if it had not been that way, it would have been a wonderful auditorium. But they did it so badly that that's the only thing that absolutely drove me nuts about that high school. But the rest of it I think is well put together. I love the Commons. That dresses up so beautifully.

NUTTER: It does, it does.

KRAUSS: We used to have a lot of county meetings and state meetings, and people would say, you know, it's your turn next, it's your turn.... Every time it was our turn, they would come there and say, "Oh, this building just drives us nuts." You know. Because we could dress the place up or we could dress it down. We could do anything we wanted with it and have such an advantage of the floor and the bandstand up there. Oh, that was such an exciting room. But that auditorium! I have no idea what the new one's going to look like, but I hope that it takes into consideration that there had better be a pit or it will be going to the pits again.

NUTTER: I know the last musical they had, they had mats set up behind it, a little area, and they were all scrunched in.

KRAUSS: Right, right.

NUTTER: And they had so many musicals. I mean if you look on the back wall behind the stage, it has all the names of the plays they've done. And it would have been so much better if we'd had a good pit.

KRAUSS: Yes. Oh, yes.

NUTTER: I think they're going to add one this year.

KRAUSS: Well, the kids that were in all those shows--and Michael Riggs was one who started when he was a student and started a student director, and of course he's done the community plays down there ever since. And all of his friends and I, I won't miss one of his shows. And then the high school shows and, you know, I try to get over there as much as I possibly can. Because I think it's great. And I think the kids are doing a nice job. And you don't see that in the headlines anymore. That drives me nuts. But that's, you know.... At least the newspaper is doing that little teen page.

NUTTER: Yes, that helps.

KRAUSS: And that helps. It makes the people realize you kids are great, really. And all you see is, well, this kid shot this kid, or this kid that. That's not what it's all about. It's the good

kids that don't get the credit for keeping things going. You know I know there are problems over there. But you put a bunch of kids together, and there are going to be problems. But I think things have worked out well. I particularly appreciate the cooperation between the township and the school, because the schools are used for recreation; there's a senior swim over there, and it's during the school day. Now how many schools are going to open their high school to let a bunch of old people in, you know, creeping in like this, using the pool? And every once a while Mr. Anderson would walk past and into the pool, and we would all go [said in a high falsetto voice], "Oh, look at him! Oh, wow! Oh hoooo!" That would be fun because, you know, he was a young stud, and we were all old. We could pick on him. Oh, dear....

NUTTER: I was going ask because you live right next to the lot where Parsons used to be, do you remember what it looked like? Was it--?

KRAUSS: Of course. Oh, my goodness.

NUTTER: You worked there, didn't you?

KRAUSS: No.

NUTTER: You didn't work there?

KRAUSS: No.

NUTTER: What school did you work at?

KRAUSS: I didn't work at any schools in the township.

NUTTER: Oh, right, you worked at the....

KRAUSS: I was on the board, so I was in and out of every school in the whole township. Oh, sure, it was a nice, big, old friendly building. Then when the township came in, and they used it as the township municipal building, people would wave, you know, I'd be out in the side yard. Then I'd be walking the dog. "Hey!" Waving out the window.

NUTTER: How long did you work at the job for the board of ed?

KRAUSS: I was on the school board for over 18 years, and that was an elected position.

NUTTER: And when did you retire?

KRAUSS: From what?

NUTTER: Well, from that.

KRAUSS: I don't know that I've ever retired from anything.

NUTTER: You never really retired. Military. Do you know anybody who has been in any branch of the military?

KRAUSS: Yes, my husband, and two of his brothers, and my brother. And lots of friends. Of course all the guys that came back when we were in college.

NUTTER: How would you describe yourself politically?

KRAUSS: Politically, locally I've been a Democrat. And beyond that I have always voted for the person. I don't think I've been a loyal anything other than local. And, of course, years ago when I was busy with the Democratic Party, it was such fun. We never won. We were defeated year after year after year. And it got to be so funny that we enjoyed doing it because we knew we were going to be beaten, and it didn't really matter. And there would always be a party over at Firehouse 1, which was over here off Georges Road. The parties would always be up there, and we would have such a good time.

It was just the camaraderie of everybody working together and working together, and it really was hometown stuff. And it was fun. Oftentimes the Republicans would come to our parties. They'd say, "Your parties are more fun than ours." But we knew what we were up against. It was a machine. We knew we weren't

going to win until it finally broke through. I didn't continue actively in politics when I ran for the board because, I don't know. I never said that I was not a Democrat. But I was not a member of the Democratic Party. I see that as a big distinction.

I wanted to be a board member representing Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and I was an Independent as far as the board was concerned because, you know, people would call and say, "Hey, Chris, what can you do about--?" "Well, I'll see what I can find out, but I won't guarantee anything." And I felt much more comfortable in that role.

NUTTER: What U.S. president have you admired the most and why?

KRAUSS: Well, let's see. Boy, over the years, historically, there would be so many. Well, start right out with George Washington; he did his thing. And after that I guess the next biggest one would have been Abraham Lincoln for all that he did. I think he was right, and I'm glad he did what he did. Not being shot, but you know.... Tell him to stay out of that theater. In current, strangely enough, and I was young, quite young, when Franklin Roosevelt was president, and I always remembered....

You know, you had asked earlier about politics being talked about at home. I can always remember my father talking about Roosevelt. And I think some of the things that I remember are because we heard them at home. And he had some very, very good substantial programs. He wasn't always the brightest thing in

town, I don't think. But I think his main thrust, to help as many people as possible, impressed me, as I recall the things that I was hearing. And then, of course, well, I thought Eisenhower was a great president.... Well, there's a lot of dead air.

NUTTER: That's okay.

KRAUSS: And I guess John F. Kennedy, unfortunately, I wish historians would leave these people alone. Because he did so many great things, and now you pick up the paper, well, Kennedy slept with this one, he slept with that one. It just destroys whatever they did. You know, whatever they did in private life, if it didn't interfere with their presidency....

NUTTER: It doesn't matter.

KRAUSS: You know, I couldn't care less. He could have slept with me for all I care. My kids had made a picture for my seventieth birthday. Well, it's on the TV set, and they put my picture on the Time magazine: "Celebrating the seventieth birthday of Christine Krauss." "No, I did not sleep with President Kennedy." And that's the picture I want them to put on my casket when I die. Set it right there. Okay. These are the facts. Oh, well, I guess we've destroyed the presidents enough now. Oh, and good for George W. because he had guts enough to say what he wanted and guts enough to do it.

NUTTER: Where were you for Pearl Harbor?

KRAUSS: I was in Union City. We had a-- The Reformed Churches had youth groups, and they would meet occasionally, like two or three times a year. Well, this was our meeting up in Union City, and we were all up there, and, you know, having the meeting and blah blah. On the way home, we heard it on the radio. In the afternoon we heard it. And there we had just had this wonderful meeting of all the young people. Some of them were old enough to be involved. Most of us weren't. But that's what I was doing when I heard about Pearl Harbor. And I'll never forget it, and I don't know why. It's just that I guess it was so amazing that I wasn't at home, you know, cutting out coupons or something silly. I was going to say something else, but I realize other people are going to hear this.

NUTTER: Where were you when you first learned about the assassination of President Kennedy?

KRAUSS: Out in front of the house. The neighbor next door and I were out walking my youngest. It was about twenty after two, and I guess she had a portable radio with her or something. All of a sudden it came over, and we just stood there and stared at each other. We couldn't believe it. Then pretty soon the kids would be coming out of Parsons School. You know, some of them were old

enough to understand what it meant because it went up to fifth grade at that time.

NUTTER: How did this affect your community?

KRAUSS: Well, I think everybody was terribly upset. You know, they were all saying, How could a thing like this happen? And it did.

NUTTER: Where were you when you first heard about the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.?

KRAUSS: I don't remember.

NUTTER: Do you remember how you and your community were affected?

KRAUSS: Well, I was certainly terribly surprised because he was such a straightforward and honest, outgoing man, and he had the guts to stand up and tell it like it is. So I was terribly affected by that, and I think probably because of religious reasons. Because he was an honest, God-fearing man, and that was the kind of home that I was brought up in.

NUTTER: How do these events influence your opinions on the war with Iraq and the war on terrorism?

KRAUSS: Well, I think the war on terrorism has to be continued until there is no time left. Because there are always going to be people who unfortunately have something missing in their brain power, and it makes them crazy. And so we have to continue doing that, watching out for it, and we have to protect ourselves, too. And I think the Twin Towers really brought the attention home. You know, we'd been sitting here all of these years, oh, nobody's going to do anything to us. We're perfectly safe. Rah rah. But it's not true.

And then when they get all of the information and found these people had been living here all this time! It makes you crazy. So it's something that has to be done. And the war in Iraq, those people had been so subjected to tyranny, they had no idea what life was like outside. But people shouldn't live that way. So I think America's right, and thank goodness for England and a couple of the other little countries who jumped in. And France should take a flying leap for all I care. But it's their opinion. They have a right to their opinion.

NUTTER: What changes in technology have occurred during your lifetime?

KRAUSS: Well, my goodness, child! Well, of course, when I was growing up, it was the end of the horse and buggy era.

NUTTER: Yes, horse and buggy....

KRAUSS: Well, sure. When my mother was a schoolteacher, she had to buy a buggy, and she had a horse, and that's how she went from school to school because that's what she had. And of course the improvement in cars and airplanes. And television. I remember the first television I saw was in the 1939 World's Fair. They had a display set up, and you could go up, and you could talk, and do all kinds of things. Then you could see yourself on the screen. And that was television. That was television! That was television! And that was the wildest thing. Then when I was in junior high in Elizabeth, one of our assembly programs was about television. Our family had already been to see the one at the World's Fair, and then we saw it again in junior high. My brother and I were both in junior high at the same time. And it was so funny. We said, "Oh, we've already been there. We know about television." La-de-da. You feel that when you know something before anyone else.

And then of course the phones. Well, when we were first married, we had a four-party line here. There were four people. Westlings down the street in the fourth house down, the first _____ house, and two other people. We didn't know the other people. But there were four people on that party line. Then it got so bad that the Westlings and--we just couldn't stand it any longer. So we got a two-party line. I mean we're moving right up in the world. Hot stuff. And then eventually, of course, it went

into the single. And then, of course, the technology with computers and Web-TV and all kinds of communications things. And I still don't know a darned thing about a computer, but I have Web-TV so I'm in touch with the world.

NUTTER: Oh, wow! It's this neat thing anyways.

KRAUSS: Right. I can--

NUTTER: It's probably even easier.

KRAUSS: I can surf everything.

NUTTER: Is that connected to the TV?

KRAUSS: To the television.

NUTTER: Oh, well, that's easier.

KRAUSS: It's right on the television, right beside there. And it's very cheap.

NUTTER: How has the role of men and women changed in the community and then in the home?

KRAUSS: Well, in the home-- Let's do it backwards. I'm not

clever because that was the last thing I heard you say. In the home things have changed dramatically. Because when I was raising my children, very few women worked. We were at-home moms. And that was the way society worked in those days. It doesn't work that way anymore. And then it got to a point where some of the women would take a little job at the school, you know, lunch program or whatever. So they would be home when the children got home. Or they could stay there and bring the children home. Whatever was best. And then they could get little part-time jobs working at McDonald's, you know, ten to two, something like that.

Then it became a full-time industry for women to work full time. And, of course, it meant finding something to do with the children. Are they going to be straight latch-keys or a program for them to go to? Is there a neighbor who will take them in off the streets? And it causes other problems. Because you have to depend on somebody else to raise your child for a couple of hours during the day beyond school. Oh, there was something else you had asked. What else did you ask?

NUTTER: In the community.

KRAUSS: In the community. Well, more women were getting involved beyond PTA. With all the commissions that are in the community now, and they have the Friends of the Library, the Friends of the Senior Center, the Friends of something else. And there's a new program started in the township, ARF. Have you heard of ARF?

NUTTER: No.

KRAUSS: It's an animal rescue program. And all of these things are now available for women to do during the day and also at night. Some of the women who are not working are involved in that. And if there's something available in the evening, they're more involved in the community rather than just being the PTA structure that everybody depended upon. I can't tell whether you're getting tired of my answers or tired of the questions.

NUTTER: No. I have to time the tape because it's old. I have to time it. That's why I'm looking at the watch. I'm not bored or anything.

KRAUSS: You'd better not be.

NUTTER: I'm not. Describe North Brunswick when you first moved here.

KRAUSS: North Brunswick was nothing.

NUTTER: Nothing?

KRAUSS: Here we go. Are you going to change it now?

NUTTER: We've got three minutes, and then it stops.

KRAUSS: Is there a shorter question?

NUTTER: Yes. I'll stop it now if you want to talk about it.

KRAUSS: Oh, this is going to be a long one. [End of Tape #1]

NUTTER: Describe North Brunswick when you first moved to the township.

KRAUSS: North Brunswick was totally unknown to me other than a thing on the map, North Brunswick being south of New Brunswick, which, of course, is very clever. This block had seven houses, three on your side, four on mine. And these six houses that are "identical"--the outsides are very different. Not very different, but none of them are identical outside. The roof structure is different on all of them. This was probably the first housing development in the township.

NUTTER: Oh, that's cool.

KRAUSS: I mean, you know, the houses were identical, the same floor plan. And then the house that belonged to the Westlings, which is the fourth house down on this side. The house that you're in had the two lots next door to it. The house that's

there now was owned by the people who owned the house, such as I have the extra property out here. And Westlings had the extra property next to their house, between Ricardos and their house. Then the rest of it was just plain fields. You know, there wasn't anything. No houses. And the big Quality Market, which was up on Georges Road at the end of Milltown Road. Over where the shopping center, that whole area over there, was all just land. And there was a big hill back of what was the old McDonald's. Back up in there was a huge hill, and it had a big old house up on top of that hill. Everybody said the house was haunted, you know, and this was fun, you know. Big deal.

So, of course, there was nothing over there. The apartments didn't exist. The shopping center didn't exist. It was all just fields with this one big hill. Then, of course, across the street was the Hermann Trucking Company. Then down 130 there were houses. There were no big shopping centers, no strip malls. So it was basically just housing and whatever farms were over in that area. Down Route 1 there was nothing like--everything that's in back of the old Boy Scouts, there was nothing back there. The Webcore[sp?]---what is the wire company down there? Well, that was there, but nothing beyond that. It was all open fields, and then there was some stock housing. Then across on Route 1 was the old Adams School, and that was a little two-room school. Route 27 was just housing. There were not a lot of stores or anything over there. Of course the developments around Carlisle and those roads down there, there was none of that. So it was a lot of farmland.

This was all farmland back here.

NUTTER: Where Linwood is now?

KRAUSS: Where Linwood is, yes. Then when they built Linwood-- Well, does that take care of how the community has changed, basically? Because that was basically what the township was in those days, not much of anything. But when they built Linwood, for some reason--and I wasn't involved in too much because I was still working, and I hadn't had Eddie yet--they took out you know the David's cutout over there where there's a level and then it goes down, all that topsoil was dragged away, because that used to be level field all the way across. And so all that topsoil was taken away. But it was this end of the farm was an asparagus farm. They had a lot of asparagus. So the man down below and my husband would be out there when asparagus was growing, early in the morning they're reaping a harvest of all of this asparagus that was still out there. Because asparagus grows for years and years and years. So we all had fresh asparagus all springtime.

Let's see. Oh, and Route 130 was just a little two-lane thing. And at that time Hermann Road had several different names. It started out as Mill Lane, and then the other end of it over toward Livingston Avenue was Old Mill Lane. Then it was all Mill Lane. Then it was Mill Lane, and that section down there was Highland Avenue until they changed the whole thing to Hermann Road. And every once in a while I'll be telling somebody

something about North Brunswick years ago, and I'll say, "Well, you know, out on Mill Lane...." Wake up! Wake up! Smell the coffee! It's Hermann Road.

Down on 130 there were like a couple of homes, and one was a big white house that was the-- Well, it wasn't that big, but it was, I guess, bigger than some of the others. But it was facing 130, and that was the Buccleuch home, and the Buccleuchs had farms and owned-- Everybody was a property owner, really, in those days. Actually he was, John was, one of the policemen. We had two policemen and a police chief. So, yes, North Brunswick has changed a bit. The policeman that worked this area, as a part-time policeman, was also our milkman. He delivered the milk in the morning. Then when I'd go over to the Quality Market in the afternoon with the kids, "Oh, Mommy, there's our milkman." You know, he'd be over there in his uniform. So they thought that was real neat.

NUTTER: That's funny.

KRAUSS: That the policeman was our milkman. Also down on 130 there was a place that they referred to as the Gingerbread House, and I was believe it was back on Kearney. You know Kearney runs parallel to 130.

NUTTER: Yes.

KRAUSS: And it was a rather fancy place. That's why they called it the Gingerbread. And, of course, there were no homes over on the other side around the lake, over on that side. There was nothing over there. That was strictly farmland. And then the first apartments were over here on Laurel Place. Right over here. They put them up for the veterans who were coming back. Then the next apartments were the ones that were off Leary Drive. And so that meant that we were going big time. We have apartments.

And the fun things that happened: The big tree that is over in front of the Chinese restaurant over here, that used to be a private home, of course. Every Halloween that tree was decorated with toilet paper. And the people who lived there just loved the idea. I mean that was their tree, and every year the kids would go and take the rolls and throw them up. Somebody would go way up into the top of the tree. So that was fun on waking up--they would do that Mischief Night. So waking up on Halloween Day, everybody would ride over there to see the tree. And then some nut complained. Gee, I tell you, nobody has any sense of humor anymore, except me.

Well, let's see what else. Asparagus. Oh, and Maple Meade. Down in back of Judd School was the Maple Meade area. They did have little homes, and actually they were like little cabins. And that was the vacation spot of the world. People in New York owned these little places, and they would come down here for vacation. Then people started to buy the little places, you know, and then they would make them into bigger houses and bigger houses. But

that was a vacation spot, if you can imagine.

NUTTER: That's weird.

KRAUSS: Why would anybody go to North Brunswick for a vacation? I mean either you like it or you don't like it. But I guess it wasn't-- We would take maybe-- Well, in those days nobody drove over 35 miles an hour, so it took an hour and a half to get down. Because when we'd go down the Shore, it would be 35, 40 miles an hour was the best you could do. It would take us quite a while, but everybody went down the Shore anyway.

I mentioned before the Adams School, and that was a little two-room thing. The John Adams School is not named after the old Adams School. Adams was that section of town, and that's why it was called Adams School. And John Adams-- It was just a popular-- they decided let's go for a president. And the Judd School, of course, was named after our first school superintendent. I don't know if anybody remembers that anymore. And Parsons School was named for Mr. Parsons who owned tons and tons and tons of land. And what else?

NUTTER: Livingston Park School?

KRAUSS: Livingston Park, well, of course, it was Livingston Avenue. So they named that Livingston Park. And there was a Red Lion School, which was over on 130. Was that on 130? Or was it

the one out here on Milltown Road? I don't remember. Well, anyway, that's close enough. And then the Quality Market was the only thing in town.

NUTTER: The _____?

KRAUSS: Yes, I just crossed that one off. I don't know. Most of the other stuff I covered. I didn't know how far you wanted to go on any of this stuff about North Brunswick. So I thought if I don't write something down, I'm sure to forget it. And I've probably forgotten a lot of stuff. But I did do the Milltown Highland Avenue thing. And then over the years, houses started to grow. Somebody'd come and put a cement seed down, and then there was another house.

NUTTER: A cement seed....

KRAUSS: Well, I don't know where these houses come from. I didn't want them. Because this was really a very nice, quiet block. And of course back when the kids were growing up, at five o'clock everybody was home. All the men were home from work. And the kids played. We'd sit in the front yard. The kids all played in the street because it was safe. There was no more traffic once the men got home because it was not a thruway to anyplace. And the kids of all ages. We had them from real little kids--and I guess the Kola[sp?] kids were the oldest, maybe twenty, twenty-

one. But all the kids played together. You know, the big kids thought it was a riot having the little kids outside. Home plate was like outside here, and first base was down by Arbeiters', and second base was someplace else down the street.

But it was a nice community, and we all enjoyed each other. And that's one thing I can say: When people started to move away or even died off in this little middle section here, I was always so afraid, what is going to come in here? What kind of families are we going to attract? You know what? They're exactly the same kind of families who lived here before. It is such a pleasure, you know, that everybody minds their own business, but that doesn't mean anything. You could not see somebody for two months, it doesn't matter. Or if you need something, you just call up and it's there. But it's a warm, friendly community. And everybody cares about everybody. I was just so afraid that that would not happen again. And now we're getting all our new little babies on the block. So it's going to be just kind of fun again seeing all the babies and walking up and down the street with the baby carriage. That's neat stuff. Real hometown stuff. Hokey stuff.

NUTTER: After settling down here and living here and having a family here, why did you stay? After all these years that you've lived in North Brunswick, why didn't you leave?

KRAUSS: Well, I think I've just described one of the reasons: the neighbors. Of course the neighbors were very supportive when

I lost my husband. Everybody went to everybody else's affairs. If there was a wedding, everybody went to the wedding. If there was a party, everybody went to the party. Does that sound familiar! It's that kind of thing. And I often think, where would I go? I couldn't sell my house and buy a house of this quality. I just couldn't do it because they don't make them like this anymore first of all. You can't even punch your hand through the wall!

NUTTER: I know.

KRAUSS: It's pretty disgusting! And, you know, it's convenient. I think if I would move, it would have to be in someplace that somebody eventually would have to be taking care of me. You know, one of those places. And I don't like that because that's where old people go.

NUTTER: Exactly!

KRAUSS: And I think I'm still young enough to-- Then when I have my hip fixed--the operation's June 24th--and so I'll be back in shape again. And I'm involved, I know people, I'm busy doing this, I'm busy doing that. If I moved, I'd have to reinvent the wheel. Let's see now, how can I get involved? Who do I really want to know?

NUTTER: Years ago, like sort of when you first moved here, take

this house, was there like a sense of unity among the neighbors, or did we discuss that?

KRAUSS: Yes. Oh, yes. Because there were so few of us. I think we had to get along or else.

NUTTER: Did you have like get-togethers?

KRAUSS: We would as far as enjoying each other, yes. Because when the kids were little, it would be somebody's front yard that time. Then we'd move to somebody else's front yard some other time. And then we'd have barbecues. We had a beautiful fireplace in the back, and, you know, my husband would fire that thing up. And the neighbors, okay it's Krausses' tonight, you know. Yes, we did get along very well.

NUTTER: I know the people who used to live in my house fixed theirs.

KRAUSS: Right.

NUTTER: And I was reading something about them the other day, one of those old articles from like the fifties.

KRAUSS: Oh, yes, yes.

NUTTER: And it had an advertisement.

KRAUSS: Yes, the clothing store.

NUTTER: Right. He owned a clothing store.

KRAUSS: Right, right.

NUTTER: My mom was really interested. She wanted to know if you knew them.

KRAUSS: Oh, of course. Of course. And that was another thing. If anybody had a business or a something, we would all--well, we'd all buy clothes at Fixler's[sp?], and my husband would get his shoes down there and everything. It was a very prestigious place. The clothing was A-Number One. If George needed a new suit, a good suit--because we couldn't buy all of his suits there because George was only a schoolteacher--but Fixler's would be the place to go because that was the definitive place. Young's Department store was in town. They had nice things, too. But Fixler's was a specialty shop.

NUTTER: Let's see. How is the township now different than-- Well, you described that. But do you think that the township has changed, since you've moved in, for the better or worse?

KRAUSS: Oh, I don't know whether I'd call it better or worse. It is different. So that's the gray area. That's the middle of the road between worse and better. But I would call it different because we have so many different kinds of people. Years ago virtually everybody was related to everybody--or they were the dearest friends of everybody in town. Then we'd get people from New York and Newark and some places that were not the same kind of background that we have here.

I hate to use the word, but some of it was cutthroat. They'd come from cutthroat communities or a cutthroat area from their community. And people coming from that kind of a background, you don't blame them for it because that's what they know, and they would find it, some of them, a little difficult to say, "Oh, give them a chance." Let's say it was a little squabble in the neighborhood. "Oh, give them a chance. It'll all work out." "No, this is not right!" Or you know. And they want to continue on this aggravation.

That's not the way the township worked in those days. Sure people squabbled with each other because they're people. But, you know, these big, long wars didn't go on, and they would give everybody a chance. And I think it was more friendly because everybody knew each other. We knew that they did, we knew where they worked. We knew what they liked to do in their spare time because we all did what everybody did in their spare time.

But having so many different people makes the community different. And I don't think it's any worse or any better. It's

just different because North Brunswick will always be North Brunswick. It'll always have some kind of a sense of community, and I think that's the important thing. And to get people involved, and that does a great deal for the community. Get new people involved. So they learn what we're all about. Then pretty soon they're giving of themselves, too, and it makes things better. So it's an opportunity for a good education.

NUTTER: That's it.

KRAUSS: That's it? I haven't finished talking!

NUTTER: Thank you very much.

KRAUSS: Oh, did...? [BREAK] We're not leaving.

NUTTER: We'll have to transcribe this tape. They're going to be annoyed.

KRAUSS: Oh, that's all right. They'll never find me. I'll move. When the old Parsons School was being taken down, our board secretary at the time was a brilliant woodworker. And the old classrooms had this real wide wooden strip around the whole classroom about three and a half feet up. About the height of a ledge for the chalkboard. He took a lot of that wood, when they were tearing the building down, and he made trays and things out

of that wood. He made a beautiful little tray for me, and he gave it to me, and I'm just so proud of it. In fact it's in the front hall so I can show you it on the way out. But that's my memorabilia from the old Parsons School.

NUTTER: The old Parsons School, the one that was right here.

KRAUSS: Absolutely. And they had quite a controversy trying to decide exactly where to put the new building. That took quite a while but they finally decided to put it where it is, and I guess it's all right because it's still there. Okay, this may be thirty. Over and out.

NUTTER: Thank you. [End of Tape #2]

[End of Interview]