Interview with Sue Crane

Sue Crane: My name is Sue Crane. The maiden name was Tremper. I grew up in the village of Red Hook. Went to Red Hook Central School District. I was born in 1940, and was raised here, as I said, with a sister who was younger, and brother who was three years older, and a father who was a master carpenter, and a mother who was a homemaker.

The village, at that time, was a very intimate group of people. Most people knew each other, knew the families. There wasn't a huge amount of commuting on the part of people who lived here. Prior to 1940, people pretty much made their living here. Some people commuted to jobs, but largely it was a self-contained little village.

When I went to kindergarten, I met some of my lifelong friends, who are still friends. I walked. It was a block and a half from school, as did some of the other children that became, again, my lifelong friends.

Chris Klose: Can you tell us what was it about ... I'm sorry. [Inaudible 00:01:39]

Sue Crane: Not getting my voice?

Chris Klose: You were talking about the school and walking a block to that school. Give me the sights and sounds of that time when you were a child. It was just after the war.

Sue Crane: Yeah. As a child, having survived that period of time that was difficult for everyone in a small village, World War II, I was a baby, born in 1940, as I said. Children don't know that they are deprived of anything until after the fact, and then you have memories of things that happened in the kitchen at your mother's feet.

One of the things I remember vividly was my mother was washing the family clothes in the kitchen sink. I remember her saying to me, "Well, this won't be forever, but the part that we need for the washer is unavailable because of the war, and so this is what I have to do." I remember having clotheslines, of course.

She was a full time homemaker, and my friends, as I got to school, always said they loved coming to our house, because my mother was always there. That is my first recollection of childhood at home, is my mother was always there. My father came punctually home at six o'clock from his then job at IBM. When the war struck, people stopped building homes, and he was a builder. He was a contractor, and, as I said before, a

carpenter. He was then one year too old to be drafted or join the effort. He wanted to, but he was one year too old, and IBM began looking for men in the community, who were available, young enough, could commute to IBM in Poughkeepsie, where a lot of manufacturing was going on in the war effort I believe. In any event, that's when Dad started working for IBM and remained there.

Many of the children that I went to school with, their parents lived here in the village and worked here in the village. I went to school with children whose parents, a father who was an attorney, a father who was a radio announcer, a father who was the local plumber, a father who worked for the town or the village. There was a vast diversity in income, but children didn't know that. It was a small class of ... I think there was one kindergarten, and the town kids went one time of day, and the kids who came in by bus went the other time of day, half a day each.

Then by first grade, we were divided I believe into two sections, two first grade teachers, but, as I said, it was a very small school. You quickly got to know all of the teachers who were older or ahead of us, and so you were looking forward to so and so's third grade, or Mrs. Vandergarten ...

Chris Klose: Vanderbogart.

Sue Crane: Vanderbogart. Thank you. Mrs. Vanderbogart was my second grade teacher, who had taught my mother, which is quite amazing.

In that setting of a small school, I believe there was a chance for children to realize a world different from their own home, but not so different that it felt peculiar. I think all of the children felt protected, safe. It would be very unusual for us to have a parent worry about us on a Saturday if we were to take a bike and leave in the morning. Our parents would say, "If you want lunch, be back by noon," and have no concern that we would get in trouble or have any ... I don't want to say that.

Our mothers were not concerned about our safety. We would hop on our bikes and go, and if I went to a friend's house in the village, fine. If I rode my bike to Barrytown, that was fine, too.

There was a whistle that blew at noon at the local firehouse, and that was the time that you'd better be home for lunch if you want lunch.

The summers were idyllic. Summers were absolutely idyllic. Kids learned to fish from each other. Kids learned to play in ways that mimicked what their parents were doing. Some of us had the advantage of more books

than others. Some of us had parents who had the capacity to see ahead and buy gifts for their children that had a long range benefit to the kids, such as a chemistry set, which my parents would have never thought to give me, but Carol's did, and so Carol and I in her bathroom developed smoke and had a wonderful time with horrible smells coming out of that bathroom. I'm wondering if her parents were ready for us, but, in any event, in our house we mimicked my mother by baking cookies. She always had some kind of something going, so my friends loved to come to our house to learn to bake and cook.

As I grew up through school, the question of when did you see that you needed to make something of yourself came to me, and I don't know how. I guess probably through osmosis. Other kids were talking about they wanted to do.

I think in those days for women, for sure, there was a prescripted career that one could look to if you weren't going to be a homemaker. At least this was true for me. It would be either a teacher or a nurse, and in our family, we had a nurse, and I remember the first recollection of even knowing about nurses was seeing her come down the long steps at Northern Dutchess Hospital, where she was a nurse at one point, and we picked her up to bring her home for dinner. She was skipping down those steps, my father's younger sister, in her beautiful white stockings and white shoes and blue cape and the nurse's cap, and I was just in awe. I said, "Oh, that's for me." It was just beautiful.

The other piece to why I thought I wanted to be a nurse was I didn't feel I had a lot of money or access to money. It was clear to me that because we had a modest family, if there were to be money spent on education past high school, that it would be directed to my brother, who could care less. He didn't want any part of college, and was not a student, but a wonderful guy, very popular and was loved by everybody who knew him, except that he didn't aim his sights high enough, in my opinion looking back, because he's a very bright guy to this day. Nevertheless, my father could not cajole him into going to college or even thinking about it.

I, on the other hand, was the best student of the three of us, and I felt that nursing school would be the place that I could afford to go, that I would make some money while I was going, and I would have a career at the end of it. Through high school, I looked at courses that would prepare me for that. Latin, math, sciences. All the while, joining every opportunity I had to be with other kids to do the social things.

Chris Klose: Such as.

Sue Crane: Such as cheerleading, and hall monitoring. Cheerleading was the best fun, because girls' sports were nonexistent when I was a freshman in high school. The first girls' sports team that was intramural was another town, was established in 1957 or so when Mrs. Ernie became the gym teacher and said we should do girls' hockey, and we began playing hockey. She was responsible for connecting to our girls taking a bus to Rhinebeck and other places to play intramural sports, the first time ever.

Chris Klose: Field hockey.

Sue Crane: Field hockey, the girls field hockey goes back that far. My best friends, we had a very close high school class, and anybody who had sports inclination signed up for field hockey, and some of us were pretty good. I wasn't great. I was good. I wasn't great. Tivy was great. Tivy Smithers Close was great. [Inaudible 00:12:50] was great, and Judy Walsh was a wing, and Carol [Spierhoven 00:12:54] was in the back field, and I backed up Tivy. I was the middle center. I was the center guard I guess it's called. I've forgotten the language for it.

Chris Klose: Anyway how about cheerleading?

Sue Crane: You want to hear about cheerleading.

Chris Klose: [Inaudible 00:13:14] they were apple of everybody's eye.

Sue Crane: That's interesting. I don't know when cheerleading became the epitome of women's achievement at Red Hook Central School, but certainly by the time I got into high school, everyone aspired to be a cheerleader.

We had cheerleading for football. We had cheerleading for basketball. I suspect that all of the young men who have become older men remember the cheerleaders because of the legs, because it was the one place in school you were allowed to wear short skirts, and so it brought on fantasies of all kinds I'm sure for the young guys.

Chris Klose: What were the uniforms like? Do you remember?

Sue Crane: Sure. Sure, I can. The uniforms for women were ... The cheerleading uniforms were ... I was trying to think. There were football and basketball uniforms, two different uniforms. The basketball uniform was a completely red outfit whose skirt came about to the knees I recall, or just above the knee. Pleated skirt, white paneling in folds, so the red and white was there to show off, and maybe a white Peter Pan collar. I don't

remember for sure. I have some old photographs at home. I really think the short skirt was the deal. That was it.

We had pom poms on white sneakers, red and white pom poms. I can remember sitting by the hour with my friends making these red and white pom poms so that we'd look really sharp, very competitive. We were out there head to head with some of the girls from other towns, and we were not going to be outdone. The red and white was very striking, and we had some gals that were very agile, and we worked hard at these little productions that were between games, and quarter time, and half time.

The football aspect was I believe ... It's a terrible thing to say. I cannot be sure I know what the football uniform was, other than a sweater. I do remember a sweater with a big red R on it for Red Hook. Red R, white sweater, and probably slacks, but I'll be darn if I can remember for sure.

Chris Klose: Do you remember [inaudible 00:16:16]

Sue Crane: No. We had a cheer. There was one cheer that always brought the stands down, and that was something called the Clap Cheer. All it was simply clap, stomp, clap, stomp, and the girls came across the basketball court, toward the bleachers in full force, and the stands, when those bleachers were stomped by the kids joining in with this clap, thump, clap, thump, the thump was thundering. The end of the thing was Red Hook, yea, and we would leap in the air and come down in a split. Everyone loved that.

The other thing that I still look for when I go to games, and I'm not sure it's practiced anymore, but it should be. We always, always sang the alma mater. It was important to us. It was a sense of community. It was almost a national anthem kind of feeling, that this is a place where you're safe, you achieve, and you're proud of. I still go occasionally to school and wonder, I don't attend too many sports events anymore, but I wonder if they're still singing the alma mater at those games, and I wish they would. If they didn't, I wish they would because I think it was [crosstalk 00:18:04].

Chris Klose: Red Hook community is something [inaudible 00:18:08].

Sue Crane: Okay. [Inaudible 00:18:14].

Chris Klose: The sense of community is something I want to get to, but I want to ... Just one more last, the goods from a home game in June on Friday night. After [inaudible 00:18:36], what happened?

Sue Crane: What's exciting about the memories of basketball games in particular were a couple of images that come back easily. Of course, there was only Linden Avenue School that housed kindergarten through twelfth grade when we were in school. The town had not begun to grow yet in terms of development in the community as a commuter's paradise.

We could do a lot of things that included seventh grade through twelfth grade. After a basketball game, there was a jukebox that was rolled out on the stage, because it was a basketball court and an auditorium. It was set up for an auditorium on those days, so this jukebox was rolled out on the stage, and behind the scenes in the cafeteria was Mrs. Kipp, who headed the lunchroom, and all of the preparation of meals for whatever happened at school, and she and her team, the day of basketball games, had made little tea sandwiches, and there tea sandwiches available. I remember particularly I loved her egg salad. Loved it. It didn't matter how much I had for dinner, I had at least one of those, and tuna fish, simple sandwiches, but I don't remember what we had to drink. I'm sure there were was something there. There was soda or something, lemonade. I don't remember. But the tea sandwiches I remember very well.

We all looked forward to those, and when we did our little snack, we came back into the gymnasium, where this jukebox was ready to go. Because the floors were important ... Everybody was very jealous about protecting those floors, so when gym was conducted in that gymnasium, or we had a dance, we took off our shoes. Everybody pulled off their shoes, and somebody started the jukebox going, and we all had a sock hop for the better part of an hour, I think, after basketball games.

It was a social time. It was a time for some romance to take place. It was a time for kids to gossip about each other. It was time to say, "I wonder if those [inaudible 00:21:20] kids are going to be hanging out downtown when we leave here, and whether there's going to be any trouble." It was that kind of extension of the evening, and the kids loved it. We just loved it.

Chris Klose: [Inaudible 00:21:35] your family has long and deep, deep roots in this village and town. Tell us a little bit about how that has guided you in your life now as town supervisor. That sense of continuity and connection, we want to get a sense from you about what it really means to have grown up and now to be leading this community for a long time now.

Sue Crane: Yeah.

Chris Klose: Why?

Sue Crane: There's a transition between high school and becoming a mother of my own family, and remaining in the community where I grew up, that was one that was dramatic actually. When the Kingston Rhinecliff Bridge was built, I was a junior in high school, and the reason I know that is I was taking driver's ed. One of the first solo trips I took with another kid who had a license, I finally got my permit, was across the Kingston Rhinecliff Bridge, so I was either a junior or a senior. It had to be 1957 or '58.

With that bridge, it became possible for Red Hook to become a bedroom community for a massive IBM installation in Kingston. It changed the town of Red Hook forever. There were large developments built, and a great deal of financial increase in opportunity for families who lived here. The school system grew like topsey. In fact, there was a time before the elementary school was built, children were going to school here in the village in storefronts. It happened that quickly. Change happened very rapidly during that period of time.

I never in my entire life dreamed of politics as a career. I am supervisor of the town of Red Hook, now seven years, going into my final eighth year, and was before that ten years on the town board.

But twenty years ago, I had no notion of politics. I was busy with a number of successive careers, but always felt privileged to be able to have remained in the place where I grew up, and part of it is even though I don't know all of people who live here, I have a sense of a quality of life that exists here where people care about each other. I mean it doesn't matter about, to me, and I don't think to most people, it doesn't matter the value of the property you own, or where you work, or what your children are engaged in as they grow and become adults and have a life of their own. What matters is your sense of connectedness, I think, to your personal past and your expected future. There's a connectedness to those of us who have been privileged to live in the same place.

With that, comes a little bit of confusion, I must say, because I can walk down the street today to see one of my grandchildren's activities on the same sidewalk I walked to school at the middle school when I was a kid. I will get this breathtaking moment of feeling, "Am I really over seventy years old? Can it be that much time has passed," because I can almost have a sense of the little girl who had her books, walking to school, ready to meet her friends. That is such an enormous, and I think in this day, unusual opportunity, and I really feel very blessed to have been able to live here. By many accidents of life, I have remained here.

Chris Klose: [Inaudible 00:26:43]

Sue Crane: With [inaudible 00:26:43], yeah.

Chris Klose: [Inaudible 00:26:48]

Sue Crane: This sense of past and present and future has been mine, especially because my great-great-grandparents lived in Red Hook. My great-grandparents lived in Rhinebeck. My parents fell in love in Red Hook, and my father built a home for my mother on property my grandparents owned, where I grew up. I am now living in my grandparents' home that we bought from them when we were in our late twenties, and could ill afford a home, but you take risks and you don't even know you're going to get in trouble until it's too late, and then you find your way out of it.

In terms of contributions that people make to community and why do they do it, and the kinds, I don't know that they can be weighed in importance. Having been at this politics on a local level for almost eighteen years, I've come to realize that you don't have to have the past here to be committed to doing good work.

I think that what has been a great compliment to me is that local people seem happy and to trust the leadership in the town, which is ... When you have a sense of it, it's not only a compliment, but it's a requirement that you continue to do well on their behalf. It's just a little thing. It's just a little town. I'm just a little town supervisor. It's not unusual ... There are many of us. There's thousands, hundreds of thousands of us across this country, and I have a sense that this is where it is that makes a difference for people.

While we count on the federal government for some protections and for some back up when we need it for vast storms that come our way that we can't afford to take care of, and the state government for keeping infrastructure that we can't afford to, pave roads or replace bridges, the fact is that it is neighbors who help neighbors that makes a difference in the fabric of this country's life, I believe. It particularly is easy to see in the small town.

In larger areas, larger more metropolitan areas, it may be just the floor of an apartment house that all know each other. Do you know? In a more suburban area, it may be one block of people who watch out for each other. But the fact is it goes on, and without it, without that caring for community, whether it's your neighbor, or Great-aunt Tilly who lives around the corner and down the street, or somebody else's Aunt Betty

that because you're their friend you concern yourself with them when they're out of town.

The fact is that Americans take care of each other, I believe, and I once in a while have an opportunity to speak to a high school class, and sometimes it's hard to know what to start off with one, so one day I hit on something that I thought was powerful, and I'll do it now. I say to them, "Listen," and they get a little bit edgy when there's no sound. I say to them, "Do you hear bombs going off? Do you hear screaming in the street? Do you hear gunshots? Do you feel that's possible here?"

They have to think about it, because in their living room at night, is something that I didn't experience. I never had that. I wasn't worried about it. I remember discussion about World War II. I remember blackouts, where my mother put dark curtains over the windows, and we huddled in one room on one bed, all four of us. My father went out and went to watch for airplanes in the dark. He was a ... What was it called? Civil Patrol? Civil Air Patrol. Everybody covered their windows, and it was all very mysterious. We were aware that there could be planes. There could be danger, but it was far, far away really. It wasn't ever present.

I don't know how to get the innocence back. If I had to give a gift to the children today, that's what I would give them. If I had to make a wish for them is that there is an innocence that is somehow lost with so much information. I worry that they don't know what fun ice skating is. I don't know if they appreciate walking in the woods without a sound and then a bird appears, or a sound of rustling suggests there's a bunny in the brush. We had time to do that, and I hope that parents will realize and make that opportunity available for their children, because it's a lifelong joy that you can take with you from childhood.

Chris Klose: It's often said that people love to go to Rhinebeck, but they really want to live in Red Hook. Tell us about that. What is it that we've been talking about, what it is, how do we maintain that sense of this for the future? [Inaudible 00:34:11] and what do we do? Is it person to person? Because we started from the lack of a community newspaper.

Sue Crane: There's a connectedness today, in today's world, that those of us who are seventy and maybe a little bit younger, are not as comforted by as people younger. It's not to suggest there isn't connectedness. I just think that it's different. Certainly with technology, the connectedness is ... The ability to connect worldwide is instant. If we have a conversation at our family dinner table and the grandkids come up with a word or I say a word, and they say, "What does that mean," somebody grabs a cell phone, plugs it

in, and within thirty seconds gives the definition in all of its glory to all of us.

I think the generation of people between my grandparenting, my children's parenting, and their children, who are now of an age that they probably won't because of the economy, won't parent when we did, but nevertheless, could. The difference between where I am is looking forward to simplicity and doing things that are satisfying to me, that may not come back, and that concerns me a little bit. The reading of a good book may not be where ... Or any book, that's certainly subjective, isn't it? May not be something that is part of what they do with their time. It's not to say that what they do with their time is not important. It's just different. Technology has changed everything. It truly has.

Chris Klose: How do we continue this connectedness to Red Hook? How is it ..

Sue Crane: Well, you're doing it.

Chris Klose: [Inaudible 00:36:56] The spirit of volunteerism is alive and well in Red Hook.

Sue Crane: That said, the spirit of volunteerism is a large topic. As I am looking forward to retirement, I am thrilled with the number of people I've come in contact with over the almost eighteen years that I have worked in town government, and in Red Hook we could have never have accomplished what we have accomplished without volunteers.

While the town government is five people, each with one vote, and a few employees, we have at town hall only five full time employees in town hall, five. We do all that we do with five full time employees, and half time or part time employees, other than the highway people, who are full time. There are eight full time highwaymen, and the superintendent.

That's a very small group of people to keep things moving, and the way we do the work we do is through committee and through each of the five members of the town board and the superintendent of highways, involving people who are willing to give a few hours, and they do that in myriad ways.

We have a rec park that is the envy of the county, because we have a retired teacher who runs the programs, and is attractive to all the volunteers who are interested in sports, and he has this cadre of people who are willing to help him. With a small budget actually for all that gets done, he's an amazing director of recreation, John Kuhn.

The tree committee is a good example. Another retired teacher, who saw the importance of ... We have aging trees and we have some change in the overall appearance of the town, and there is a national effort to realize how important trees are. This woman responded to that when she retired. Formed her tree committee. We've been Tree Committee USA for, I don't know, ten years or more. She has a small group of people, but they are a hardy group, and they have figured out how every spring, get out there and refurbish the town and village. There's a village tree committee as well, with these gorgeous, beautiful trees that someone else is going to sit under the shade one day. It's a wonderful thing. Without the community loving the community, that wouldn't happen.

There are a lot of organizations here that are small, but important. They have a small group of core volunteers who give and give and give. Fire company being an example.

Chris Klose: What you're talking about is passion?

Sue Crane: Yeah. It's finding a way to ... What makes people be volunteers is the question, because every organization, and I know it depends on them, and usually it's a matter of passion on the part of the leadership for either a project or a vision, or an activity. It can come down to something as simple as here is something we have to do. We have three months to do it. Can we get this done?

I'll give an example of one of the best I think volunteer committees we had that made a huge change in Red Hook. When I first sat on the town board we recognized a need for senior affordable housing in Red Hook. We received a letter, Jack Gilfeather was the supervisor at the time, and a group of people, who were probably sixty or more, sent this letter. I think there were seventy some signatures on the letter, saying, "Listen, towns in surrounding communities have affordable senior housing. What are you going to do about it," basically. We're aging out of the big homes we have. We need a more practical place to live.

Because I was on the hospital board, and because I was familiar with Wells Manor, which is just a housing developing in Rhinebeck, I thought this will be my project. This is something I can take on. To make a long story short, we identified seven or eight people from across the spectrum of talent in Red Hook. An attorney, an insurance broker, a woman who had been involved in senior housing, a woman who was a social worker. Anyway, I recruited this group of people to come together and they developed a passion. That's what the answer was.

They developed a passion, and they were discouraged. They started over. They appealed to the state. We had people from the state come here. Look at properties around, and so on. We earmarked the old pie factory location. It was rundown, disabled and off the tax rolls, because the county had seized it for lack of taxes. We worked with the state, the county and this small committee of people to draw attention to this is the place. People can walk to services. People can be comfortable. We can raise the money.

It took six years to develop a plan and get something going, but now there are a total of ninety-six units with maybe a hundred and fifty families or more affected, who are local people, whose family members live there, have moved there to be near them, or not, have just moved there from this central village of Red Hook to there, because it makes sense for them.

I had no idea that was going to take so long. We were raring to go for a while, and then you can't ... If you see something that's important, you need more than one person to do it, because you will get discouraged and you need someone who won't, and so it takes a group of people to pick up the pace when those of it who got started, they say, "Gee, I don't know if this is going to work," and here at the Elmendorph, you have done it. I mean certainly it's been an evolution.

I worked in the Grand Union when I was a kid in high school. At age fifteen, as soon as I could get my working papers, I became a check out cashier. I remember when this little Elmendorph was threatened to be torn down by the Union Grand to make a parking lot, and it was just a few people who decided, "No, no, no. This is a historic building. This place has importance, and we can teach. We can connect that past with our kids in the future, and let them know that things change, but there's certain aspects about a community that deserve to be revered, and this is one."

Chris Klose: Interesting. [Inaudible 00:45:53]. You're sitting probably in the spot where the first supervisor of Red Hook [inaudible 00:45:57] the first town meeting in 1813.

Sue Crane: That's wonderful. Just to take you, 1813 to 1940s, this building was ... I remember that door being the place where we pulled in after church to get what was called a 49er, which was a block of ice cream that was equal to a quart. It was just big enough to fit in the refrigerator freezer of the old freezers, you know.

Chris Klose: Yes, I do.

Sue Crane: It was Sunday after ... On a good day, it was Sunday afternoon dessert. Can we go to Mr. Pulver's to buy a 49er was the question on the way home from church, and it was dispensed right out of that door. There was some sort of retail thing going on here. Honestly, I don't remember enough about it to remember anything other than the 49er, and I remember that.

Chris Klose: Well, I think the [inaudible 00:47:07] would be your take on the need to recall our history, to preserve what we have, because what goes around comes around. It may be different, unfortunately.

Sue Crane: Yeah. The question is how to retain some of our history, so that people will remember?

Chris Klose: [Inaudible 00:47:40] and I know you [inaudible 00:47:47]. Here we sit in this restored eighteenth century inn.

Sue Crane: I think the importance of getting to know people in a very one on one measured way is to uncover those interests, like gardening, like restoring furniture, like painting or discovering what colors were appropriate for a particular building that you're trying to draw attention to. You can't know what people know until you spend a little time, and they don't even know that what they know is important to you. It's all a matter of investing the time, and, unfortunately, a lot of us aren't willing to do that.

I have a lot of thinking time, because the kids have grown, and Bill and I are rattling around by ourselves. I still like to cook. I still like to bake, and I'm still in the same house, which can enable me to put some perspectives on the person I am now and the little girl who came running across the yard to my grandmother's kitchen, where I now cook.

In thinking about that, I think we all should know that we're all the same. There is no difference among us. We all have a past. We all pain. We all disappointments and losses, and we all have joys and successes. The person you see on the street is the same. It's uncovering what's important to them, and the most seductive thing you can ask of a person or say to a person is, "I need your help." Right? Once someone says to you, "I need your help," it's very hard to turn and ignore that. You might not be able to, but you will ask the question, "How can I help? What is it you need? If I can't do it, I might know someone who can."

That can happen in a small town. I don't know. I've only lived in two cities in my life. One, Albany, New York, and one, Philadelphia. I don't remember in either place, maybe because I was there only a short time, an academic year in both cases. I don't remember having the opportunity to develop that kind of conversation.

Chris Klose: Thank you.

Sue Crane: You're welcome.

Speaker 3: I have to ask a question. Is that all right?

Chris Klose: Yeah.

Speaker 3: [Inaudible 00:51:28] Chris mentioned that your family's been here for a long time. Can you just describe that? You have a connection to the chocolate factory?

Sue Crane: Yes.

Speaker 3: Yeah. [Inaudible 00:51:39] connection to the chocolate factory.

Sue Crane: Okay. Yeah. The question of my family living in this community is a good one, because my great-grandfather, my mother's grandfather, was one of the entrepreneurs back in the day that ... Nothing was too much trouble. Nothing was too scary. He really was a guy who would take on almost anything, and moved his family here from Brooklyn. Had three wives. My grandfather was the firstborn I believe of three children by the first wife.

Chris Klose: This is Joseph Griffing.

Sue Crane: Joseph Griffing was his name, and when she died, he married again. He was the founder of the chocolate factories. He and a partner, and I don't know this story as well as many of you do, but what I know about him is through the eyes of my mother. She was scared to death of him. She said, "Ah, if we went to see grandpa, I was just trembling." He was just a dynamo. He was just a very ... He was busy all the time, and abrupt apparently with children. It may have been an age where children should be seen and not heard, too. That's possible.

Her father, his first son, went to Bard College when it was St. Stephens, and a preparatory institution to prepare young men to the Episcopal priesthood. He fell in love with my grandmother, who was a telephone operator, the only one, back in the day, and he and she raised two

daughters here in Red Hook. Great-grandfather Griffing founded the Red Hook Fire Company band.

His son, my grandfather, was a musician, an accomplished pianist and clarinetist. He could play almost anything I think. In the day when entertainment was usually around a family piano, it was important kids knew how to play an instrument, and most of them did. I, to this day, have his original upright piano, and I can remember him playing for me when I was a little kid. It's still in the house where he did that for me.

He never reached his potential as a bright young man, but he loved music, and what he did for the village of Red Hook was play the piano at the Lyceum Theater for Silent Movies. That was big time entertainment in the day. In the '30s, I'm presuming, my mother would have been … The twenties and thirties. My mother and her sister and their friends went to the silent movies on a Saturday night where her father played the piano, and one of the best stories is when they were sitting watching this silent movie, their dog walked across the stage in front of the film. I always had an image ... Every time I went in that movie theater when I was a kid, I always remembered thinking, "Now that's where he sat in what they called the orchestra pit, and played his piano." Yeah, that's a great building. I have a lot of memories of that building.

Chris Klose: He played there, and as I recall, Joseph Griffing built the Lyceum.

Sue Crane: He did. He founded a number of businesses, and ...

Speaker 3: [Inaudible 00:56:10]

Sue Crane: My great-grandfather, Joseph Griffing, founded not only the chocolate businesses, the chocolate factory on [inaudible 00:56:21] Street and there was a chocolate factory in Annandale on the Sock Hill, which, unfortunately, burned a number of years ago, but nevertheless he employed through those businesses a lot of people, and he kept going. He founded the Lyceum and I believe a paint store, and he was instrumental in a number of storefronts that he owned.

He was part of the founding group of people who founded the Red Hook Fire Company when the buildings caught on fire in the village of Red Hook, and there was no formal fire company, and they lost a lot of buildings in Red Hook with just people passing buckets of water, and it just wouldn't do, so a group of young businessman, great-grandfather among them, founded the Red Hook Fire Company as an obvious need.

It doesn't seem possible, does it, that I could tell you about that in a very personal way. It seems so long ago.

Chris Klose: Good. [Inaudible 00:57:43].

Sue Crane: You must be almost done, right?

Chris Klose: Yeah.