GUS KUHLMAN

An Interview Conducted by

Melissa Marks

April 8, 2003

For The

Department of Human Services
of the
Township of North Brunswick

North Brunswick, New Jersey

INTERVIEW: Gus Kuhlman

INTERVIEWED BY: Melissa Marks

PLACE:

DATE: April 8, 2003

MARKS: ....2003, and I will be interviewing Gus Kuhlman. What's your full name and why were you named that?

KUHLMAN: My birth name was Gustav, G-U-S-T-A-V, and I'm of German-American descent. We quickly shortened to Gus, and it's been that ever since. Middle name is Roger for one of my uncles. Kuhlman used to have to N's on it, and it has one now.

MARKS: Was there any reason for it?

KUHLMAN: Well, I think they changed it after World War I, for obvious reasons.

MARKS: Who was the oldest person in your family when you were a child?

KUHLMAN: The oldest? Well, my grandmother, both my grandmothers. I don't remember anyone older than they were.

MARKS: Was there anything specific that you remember about them?

KUHLMAN: Yes, my father was the firstborn in this country; they came over from Germany. And his mother spoke broken English, but

he spoke perfect English even though they used German at home. And that was on my father's side. She I saw only occasionally on visits. My mother's mother, she lived with us all my life. She was a very wonderful person and part of the family for sure. Just to tell you, I was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and lived there until 1939 when I graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. I came up here to work for Johnson & Johnson in August 1939.

MARKS: Where did your parents work?

KUHLMAN: My father was chief chemist for the Bureau of Food & Chemistry in Pennsylvania. He was head of the _____.

MARKS: In one of the articles it said you worked as a chemist?

KUHLMAN: Yes, I worked as a chemist. Yes, with Johnson & Johnson. When I went there, I was their aromatic chemist.

MARKS: Could you tell me pretty much just what life was like when you were growing up?

KUHLMAN: I had no brothers or sisters. I graduated in chemistry with a lot of minor subjects from the University of Pennsylvania. I was singing with a big band in Philadelphia in 1938 and 1939. And band lost out on a contract in Atlantic City in June of 1939

after graduation. So I decided I'd better look for a real job. At that time nobody was looking for anybody. The Depression was still on, and jobs were few and far between. I had 88 interviews from June 'til August, and I had three offers. One was _____ Refining in Philadelphia, the other one was H_____ here in Philadelphia, and the third one was Johnson & Johnson. The other two it was $25 a week they offered me, and J&J offered me 30. So I went with them for $5 a week.

MARKS: Do you remember what you wore _____?

KUHLMAN: Well, back then the dress was pretty conservative, and there wasn't anything special like fads really.

MARKS: What kind of sports did you participate in high school?

KUHLMAN: And also in college, yes. Sports, I was a member of the soccer team for four years. I played some _____ lightweight football, and I did some track down there. Plus the intramural sports in the fraternity: bowling, softball, basketball. And I was into photography, and I was on the photography board for the yearbook. I was president of the fraternity, incidentally, and _____.

MARKS: Was your school segregated?

KUHLMAN: Segregated? Not really. It probably was because even though nobody said anything, there were rumors that they allowed just about so many Jewish people in. That was the thing at that time. There was that feeling. And that was the only thing that I saw. No, the university was--it was an Ivy League school, and it was pretty diverse.

MARKS: Did you attend church when you were growing up?

KUHLMAN: Yes, Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania and joined the Presbyterian Church here on _____ Avenue in New Brunswick. And I was active there as a deacon and elder and then chaired the finance committee for 13, 14 years.

MARKS: How old were you when you started dating?

KUHLMAN: I was 14.

MARKS: Do you remember who your first date was with?

KUHLMAN: Sure, I do. Her name-- She had the first same name as Naomi here; her name was Naomi. Her last name was Swope. She lived across the street from us.

MARKS: What was a typical date like?

KUHLMAN: Well, then you went to the ice cream parlors, and we had the movies, and there were dances. _____.

MARKS: Have you ever been in love?

KUHLMAN: Twice. My wife died in 1999. We were married for 58 years. We met at early ages. And I ultimately joined a group around here called the Widows and Widowers. We would hold dances and help you over the bereavement and get you back in the real world again. And Naomi and I met, and I'm in love again.

MARKS: On the sheet it says you have one son?

KUHLMAN: Yes.

MARKS: How did you find out you were going to be a parent?

KUHLMAN: How did I find out? I guess the usual way. Your wife says, "Oh, I'm not feeling too well this morning...." _____.

MARKS: When you were a child, was there any specific job that you wanted or career that you wanted?

KUHLMAN: Well, I guess I was aiming for the chemistry field because of my father's profession. So that's really what it was. But I was more gregarious, and I grew out of chemistry and got

into something where I had contact with more people. But that was my first thought.

MARKS: Were you ever in the military?

KUHLMAN: No, I wasn't, the reason being that-- Of course we moved here in 1941; we were married in 1941. Then of course in December of that year the bad news happened. At J&J they lost two or three of the chemists, male chemists, quickly to the draft. And I was ready for drafting. And they panicked, I guess, and they said, "Will you accept a deferment if we offer you one?" So my wife and I had quite a discussion on it, and we finally decided, well, somebody's going to have to stay and do the work. So I did. The reason I got it was they needed someone to find substitutes for a lot of the chemicals that they were using in their processing and in their products that had been cut off because of the war and they couldn't get it from the Far East, you know. So that was my job. That's where I earned my deferment, doing that. Because Johnson & Johnson was an essential war industry at the time, and they could do it. So I wound up there.

MARKS: Were there any major changes in technology over your lifetime?

KUHLMAN: Oh, my! Some century! I guess we saw it all. Too many _____. You look back, and you just realize it. I was born in

1917, and what happened through those years is just incredible.

MARKS: Has the role of men and women changed over the years, too?

KUHLMAN: Oh, yes, definitely. A woman's place was in the home then. In 1941 my wife was a nurse, so she had a profession and _____. But, yes, it has changed quite a bit.

MARKS: Can you describe what North Brunswick was like when you first moved here?

KUHLMAN: Yes, I can. I looked up some figures here. When we came, the census in 1940 was 4,562 persons in North Brunswick. It grew through the years. In 1950 it was 6,450. In 1960, 10,099. In 1970, 16,691. And it went up from there. It was a small town, and it was wide open, a lot of wide open spaces. When we moved in here, we had a house on Cleremont Avenue which we rented for six months. And then the *Home News*, this Colonial Gardens had the first homes that were built out here in 1926, and a few more came in the early thirties. And the *Home News* owned a lot of property here. So they built four homes to try to sell them. And it was a bad time, I guess, because they had a lot of trouble filling them. So this was built to sell for $15,000. And we ultimately bought it at 8600. So that was the story.

The home next door was here, and there was one across the

street. The home over here, this old farmhouse next to you, that must be close to 200 years old. That area was a farm, a dairy farm. It was owned by the Lindstroms of Milltown. He was the principal at New Brunswick High School for quite a while, Willard E. Lindstrom. I don't know how they were related, but a fellow by name of Klein ran it. Mr. Klein ran the farm and lived in that farmhouse. I have some pictures of them that will show you the area. That's Gus, Junior. This is 1946. And you can see the barns that were there, beyond you there. They were about across from where Franklin comes out. That was Mr. Klein. That's his wife and his daughter in the middle, Betty. She was married over there. And you'll be surprised to know that where your house was, there was a nice ice-skating pond in the winter.

MARKS: That's where my house was?

KUHLMAN: That's right. That's right off of Farrington, right where your house is in the middle of the field there, between the barn and the house. And every fall they would start to fill up from the springs. By the time the cold weather came, it froze over, and we had many wonderful days ice-skating there. The roads had a minimum blacktop, no curves or anything out here. Farrington was paved, if you will, just down to Franklin. Then when you started getting down the hill, there was no paving. It was just a dirt and cinder road.

So it wasn't until the early to mid-sixties that the

Lindstroms sold their farm and reclaimed about 30,000 square feet there where the farmhouse is. And so, I don't know, 112 or so houses went up, and it slowly developed. Then we got curbs, and then we got well-paved streets. The sewers-- There were septic tanks when we came in 1941, and sometime in the next five or six years they did put sewers out here. We were on the lucky side because we were high, and that side's low, the other side of the highway. So our sewers over here are way down, and that's good because the drainage is good. _____. So there was room for many houses.

MARKS: What made you stay in North Brunswick? What made you stay here?

KUHLMAN: I worked here. We worked in town, and we liked it, too, very much. A lot got done. There were a lot of things that we wanted to improve out here. When I say "we," I mean with the residents. One of them was mail. We wanted to get--we had to go down to the corner of what was Route 25 then. It was a state highway. It wasn't 130 until it became a federal highway. So the mailboxes were all lined up down there, and we all had to go down there to get our mail. So we had formed an organization called the Colonial Gardens Association, and started to go to work to get some things that we wanted changed. And we did.

We started with the mail delivery. I was president of the association. And that came through very nicely. Let's see what

year it was: 1949, 1950, I guess, yes, January 1950, that we got what they called _____ delivery, where we had mailboxes out at the street, and they would come by in a truck like they do today and put the mail there. That was a big step forward. And we got good numbering out here. And we finally looked at 25, and Route 25 became the highway. It was a two-lane road, and the deaths began to pile up on it. I remember a bad one, really bad head-on collision. And so we worked with the township, and the township worked with us, and we finally got the state to do something about it. They improved the highway, and the deaths stopped _____.

Fred Hermann, who was mayor at the time, he really worked hard with us and with the state and everything. He wrote and got petitions out. And the state finally came through and improved the highway to a point where it was much safer. Put signs up. It was about _____. Another thing was over where the building is that used to be Carter-Wallace's building, _____ circle now, right by the circle. Down in that hollow there, there was a fireworks company called On-Excel Fireworks or On-Excel Chemical Company. They finally had a couple of big explosions, and two of the buildings burned down. The older kids would go on over there and everything. So we worked and the township worked with us on that. And the association finally got them to tear down the buildings and _____. So it was things like that, these improvements that really, really forced them, the township. Fred Hermann and the council were just wonderful.

Then we suddenly got notice that Jersey Central Power & Light was going to put in a big new gas line, and it was going to go right down in _____, and it was going to swing up in my yard, and swing down Farrington and where you would be, and we battled that one. And the township _____ up with us, and they offered them two different trails that they could use on township property. And fortunately, with all the pressure that was put on them, they decided to change the route. And that's why it's down below at the end of Farrington now _____. They tried to put it right down the street here.

There were so many things that we were able to bring about and get it back into civilization. As far as the--that's the only thing I can think of around here for this local area anyway. We had bus service that came up from Hightstown into New Brunswick, four buses a day. _____ during the war period. That was essential. You almost had to use them because _____. That's an air-raid warden, civil defense. I was the assistant civil defense director for the town during the war. We had rationing, gasoline, meat, all kinds of stuff. They issued you so much, and you were allowed to get just so much _____. So this was essential to getting through the war. They did have rationing.

Then in 1957 I ran for Brunswick Committee, a three-man committee, and then it went to five. I ran on the Republican ticket, won the election, and spent two terms, six years, on the town committee. At that point my boss said, "Hey, you spend so much time off the job." He wouldn't let me run again, so I

didn't. But during that time I was the police commissioner.

The police department--it was an appointed police department, politically _____. It wasn't in good shape at all. The chief was Bill Hoffer[sp?], who was a heck of a nice guy, but he was older, and he wanted to retire. The town had no provisions for retirement at that time. So I really had to act as chief for the first couple of years and try to pull the department back in shape, which happened. I had a state trooper come in, and he did a lot of teaching, covering police work with them. Then I was able to get the council to agree to a retirement package for Bill Hoffer. Then I appointed the captain then as chief so I didn't have to devote as much time to it.

And we had a lot of things happen during that time. We had a minor-- Ryders Lane and Route 1, there was a traffic signal there, and it was murderous. And that was just one of the smaller accidents. And then finally a bus with college students in it was coming home from a trip at night, they were coming south, and a truck rammed them from the rear, and there were I don't know how many deaths, how many were killed. But it was a terrible accident. So we went to work, and we finally got them to take away the light and put in the overpass that you see there now.

Well, then the traffic accidents came up at Milltown Road because there was no overpass there, and we began to get accidents there of people running the red light on Route 1. And we went to work with the township and finally got the okay to put a bridge across there. It just shows all that you have to really

take some action and put pressure on these people to do things because they don't do it willingly.

During my time with that we had the notorious Clarke Murders down on Route 27. A Hungarian young man who had come over-- They were doing freedom fighting over there against Russia, and a lot of them came over here at the time because the New Brunswick area was heavy on Hungarians. A lot of them worked for J&J. And he took a taxicab out to the Clarke home on Route 27. He was a doctor, a very prominent doctor. He went in to rob the place, and he just put the taxi driver on a bed and shot him and killed him. He put Mrs. Clarke and the housekeeper and there was another lady, I'm not quite sure who it was, he put them on a bed and shot them all in the head, the three of them.

I was on the road from my job, and I was coming in. I had a radio in the car, a police radio. They were looking for him. They got me, and they said, "Come right out to that house." So I did. It was a terrible scene. Of course the prosecutor's office takes over all murders and things of that sort. So they took over the case. But the story is I had been telling my police officers they had a lot of bad habits. And I said, "You have to phone in. You have to radio into the base when you go out of the township for any reason. Or if you get out of your car to stop a car. Always keep the desk notified about where you are."

Well, this Hungarian fellow that shot them all after robbing the place, he drove the cab, and he got away. They were looking for him, and finally a day--I don't know whether it was the same

day or the next day--the Franklin Township police stopped this car on Route 27, and he didn't have a license or anything. So he told them, "I live in Highland Park, and my license is all there." So they said, "Okay." So they followed him over to Highland Park. Never checked out with the desk, their desk. He took them upstairs to his room where he lived and reached into a drawer. Instead of pulling out a license, he pulled out a gun, killed them both, and took off. The Franklin Police were hours trying to find out where their car was. Finally someone noticed it in Highland Park and called it in.

But he got away. And it was a couple of years later that some sheriff's men were coming back and forth from something on the parkway, and they somehow picked him up and chased him, his car. He got up in around Union, and he left the car, and he got behind a bank, and they got all the cops, and they were shooting back and forth, and they hit him. A bullet hit him on the head and went across the top of his skull. He never regained consciousness, and about six or eight months later he died. So it's a strange story, but that's what happened. It's interesting. It all started in North Brunswick.

I'm just trying to tell you some interesting things that happened. This was in 1947. One evening it was just getting dark, and we heard this plane circling and circling and flying around, low, low, low. I had my pilot's license for about five years. It ran out in '42, and I haven't flow since then. But I knew he was in trouble. And he was in trouble. All of a sudden there was a

tremendous flash of light over in that direction. He hit the power lines that go across the DKM[sp?] property now, you know--That is where the--that was owned by the Personal Products of J&J. On Route 1 there, the technical school.

WOMAN: Devry.

KUHLMAN: Yes, that's what happened to the plane. They were all killed. Oh, yes, North Brunswick had an airport for quite a while. Remember? Off Jersey Avenue there's a road called Airport Road. It's industrial, where the industries are. That was an airport. It ran from Jersey Avenue up to Route 27. That was their landing strip was there. That's the field. You can't tell too much. A friend of mine had an airplane there that we used to fly. That was an active private airport. One time when I was the police commissioner, we got a call about an airplane wreck in the woods south of that. We went down there, and it was the son of the fellow who owned the airport. He had gotten his solo license, and he was out practicing. I don't know now what happened really, whether the motor stalled or anything. But it went into the ground, and he was killed. But that was a very active airport at the time. What else can I tell you?

Oh, what helped us on the pipeline, too, was I had a lot of stories cut out of the paper where pipelines had exploded, one right over here in Franklin Township. Only a cow was killed, but the pictures and.... They say these are safe, but they do

explode. And when they go, they go. They've improved safety now a lot, I understand. One right over in Edison there, and that was a bad one. What else? _____.

When I left the Township Committee, they asked me to come on the Planning Board in 1964, which I did. And I was 35 years on the Planning Board. I was chairman, I was vice chairman. And the first plans for the circle were made in 1963-1964. The cost of then would have been eight million. Now I think it's 84 million or something like that. But I always say I'm so glad they didn't build it then because it never would have sufficed for the traffic now. But that's how long we've been trying to get a circle there--I mean an overpass--to eliminate the circle. What else?

MARKS: Do you think the township is better now or was it better when you first moved here?

KUHLMAN: That's a broad question. I think it's better probably in services and all. But it's not better in the number of people. There are just too many people and too much traffic. That's the biggest problem in North Brunswick now. And I saw it happen and, unfortunately, had to be a party to a lot of it because-- We had nice zoning here. We had two-acre, we had three acres here in town. All of a sudden the state came in in the early seventies because the developers had been lobbying the legislature down there to change this in the county. So the state changed all the

zoning situations, and they named us as a urban-suburban something they called it. And as such, they limited what we could zone. They said you can't have zoning higher than 30,000 square feet, which is less than an acre.

So they made us change our guidelines. And that just flooded the gates with developers. The first one to come in was Hidden Lake, and we held them up for years because it was like barracks, their first plan that came in. And we finally forced them to-- coerced them into doing something different: reducing the number of homes, making them more attractive, which they finally did. He hired an architect from Florida, down south somewhere. And Hidden Lake today is a nice community, a nice-looking community. But that was the first of them.

Renaissance down here along 130, when they first came in, it was the same way. They had houses lined up in lines on streets, small houses, close together. It was terrible. So we finally got that down to a point where it was better. But we still wouldn't grant him what he wanted. So he and R_____ of Governor's Point and somebody else, there were three of them, sued the township under the Mount Laurel Law, and they won. So the judge said, "Here's what you have to let them have." So the judges set how many houses could be put in there, and it would have allowed just under 3,000 units. Fortunately, the Wetlands Law came in before they could really get going, and they lost a thousand units to wetlands that they couldn't build on. But that's the bad part that happened: The state got involved and just took our nice

little township and loaded it up. Otherwise, _____.

MARKS: Is there anything you would change about North Brunswick now?

KUHLMAN: Just the traffic situation really. That's all. I fought and fought against them--they wanted to make this DKM property commercial, and I battled that even on and off the township planning board, and we finally won. Thank goodness, because I could only see Route 1 in North Brunswick becoming another Route 18 like they have in East Brunswick. And we did all we could to prevent it. The first shopping center was Brunswick Center down here. That was a big vacant property then. So that's the worst thing about North Brunswick, too many houses. _____. And the traffic.

MARKS: I should switch sides of the tape.

KUHLMAN: Are you watching this?

MARKS: Yes. [Change to Side B of Tape]

KUHLMAN: I put him in touch with Eddie Condon in New York, and then he began to bring in jazz stars, music stars, to play with his band there. Lee Wiley came down. I met her, and we became friends. And I always made-- There was a lot of interest in-- I

wrote a small book about it. One time I got a call from a producer in Japan who said that they wanted to do a documentary on Lee Wiley. I'll try to shorten the story. Her picture up there. That's the Japanese actress who was an award-winning actress in Japan, who was going to be the main one who was acting in this.

What happened was her husband was a director. One day he threw himself out of a six-story window, out of his office, and killed himself. And she went into a terrible state, and she wasn't doing any movies or doing anything. And she heard Lee Wiley's song--she was singing, I can't remember this....

WOMAN: "As Time Goes By"?

KUHLMAN: "As Time Goes By." And she just fell in love with this, and she liked that, and she heard more of her. She tried to learn more about Lee Wiley, and she couldn't learn anything. So they went on the Internet and asked for anyone who could give her help on Lee Wiley. And they got no answer. They were just to withdraw and give up the idea when they got an e-mail from Barbara Lee. She's a singer here who is currently singing in New York City and is another good friend of mine. And she said, "Get a hold of Gus Kuhlman if you want to know more about Lee Wiley." So they did. They contacted me, and that did it. From that point on they were able to make the movie.

So she didn't impersonate Lee Wiley. It was called *My Lee*

Wiley, and she just wanted to learn more about her singing and everything. So part of it was filmed here right in this room and outside. They did a heck of a job. It was named Documentary of the Year in Japan in 2002. So it was a lot of fun to do. No script or anything. It was just off-the-cuff stuff. It was very nice. I have some pictures upstairs of that, too, when they were filming here. And they had sent us some VCR's of her earlier films that she had done before this. So we got to know who she was, too. We still correspond. She sent me that picture of Lee Wiley everyone has seen there.

And through all of this, one of Lee Wiley's very good friends when she was singing in a supper club in New York City in the early thirties was Dolores Reed who ultimately became Dolores Hope; Bob Hope married her, and they were always very good friends. So when the book came out, she wrote me a nice letter there _____. She sent me a picture of her. That's her in 1933. In the center that's Bob Hope's wife. So that was a nice thing to know. She's 90 or 91 now. Bob Hope's either a hundred or just getting to be a hundred. So music has done a lot for me in my life. _____. In 1999 I got the Heritage Award _____ in the township. So I've seen North Brunswick grow up and been a part of it.

MARKS: Just, I guess, to backtrack. During World War II, do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

KUHLMAN: I got up on a Sunday morning and somebody was visiting. I think my folks were visiting us. And they said, "Get down here! Get down here!" And I sat on the stairs, upstairs there, and at the bottom of the stairs they had the radio. And we heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7th.

MARKS: _____?

KUHLMAN: It sure was. Everybody was shocked. Some experience! Lived through it and hoped it would end, and it ultimately did. I was very fortunate. I tried to join the Civil Air Patrol. I made application, and they called into the draft board. They shoved at me and said, "This your application?" I said, "Yes, it is." They said, "Well, you have a choice. If you sign onto that and go with it, then we'll have to take away your deferment at Johnson & Johnson, and they don't want us to do that." So I couldn't even do that.

MARKS: Was there a major effect on the community?

KUHLMAN: Oh, my, yes. Not a community, the whole country. As I say, everything you can think of was rationed. Gasoline was very tight. There was no recreational driving to speak of. Meats, butter, and most other stuff was. You had to turn in the tickets to get it when you bought it. It was a big change.

MARKS: You said that you heard it on the radio?

KUHLMAN: Mmmm hmmm.

MARKS: When did you get a TV?

KUHLMAN: I'm trying to think of what would be the right year, but a neighbor over on Franklin owned a radio store, and they got some TV's in in the forties. I'm not quite sure what year. I don't know if it was '42 or after that. We used to go over there to see it. The picture would be on a mirror which would flip up, and then the picture would shine onto that mirror, and then you looked at the mirror _____ side, you know. That was the first TV I ever saw. Then later on we got one and got a bigger one. I forget the year, but it was in the forties sometime, late forties.

MARKS: Do you remember when you got a color television?

KUHLMAN: Well, not exactly. I really can't pinpoint it. But we got one as soon as they became affordable. To show you how countrified it was out here, one of the things that would happen is the fence would break over in your area where the cows were. All of a sudden you'd wake up in the morning or something, and here these cows were racing around the house, just racing around the house. And Pop Klein trying to get them back with his dog,

get them back into the field there. That happened at least twice. You can imagine, yes. But it was country.

MARKS: Do you remember where you were when you heard about President Kennedy being shot?

KUHLMAN: Yes, I was riding on the-- I left J&J in 1957. I came to their Personal Products Division in 1944 out here in North Brunswick to do a similar thing for them, to help them refine their processes. It would have been terrible if they couldn't get something to replace them, and I was doing research for them. Then they started a paper mill. They had a big paper mill over here in North Brunswick with two high-speed machines that made tissue paper for Johnson & Johnson for their products. And there was a mill down in New Brunswick, a small mill they had. Then we built up another one out in Illinois, Wilmington, Illinois, near Chicago.

I transferred over to that division in 1948 and started up through the line there. And became chief chemist and all that. Finally was the technical director for the whole Paper Division, all three plants, and then production manager finally. And that was a bad move because I got caught in between the union people, and I was on the wrong side. So I was out of there after a very successful career, I thought, in 1957. And I went on the road. I went into technical sales with a chemical company in Philadelphia and worked out of my home.

So I was on the road, coming down Route 1, when I stopped to make a phone call. And I couldn't get a line. It was a phone booth, and I couldn't--no lines. I thought, what's going on? So I went back to the car, and I turned on the radio, and there I heard it on the news that that's what it was. And all the lines--you couldn't get a long-distance phone line. You couldn't get much of anything unless you were dialing directly yourself. I don't know why they did it, but that's the way it was. They did it for a while.

MARKS: Do you remember the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.?

KUHLMAN: I remember it, yes. It didn't create the effect that the Kennedy one did. And then Robert Kennedy was shot. Boy, that was _____ that. I remember when the Zeppelin caught fire at Lakehurst down here, the _____ Zeppelin. The big explosion. It burned up, and a lot of people were killed. I was in school at the time, but that airship would fly over Philadelphia. And a lot of times when there was bad weather over Lakehurst-- They would come from Germany and England, you know, there'd be flights across the Atlantic. And they would often fly over Philadelphia, and we'd see them close in, low, low, very low. And when that happened, I wasn't there. But we certainly heard about it quickly on the radio and all. Saw pictures of it.

I remember Orson Welles when he put on his radio show that

had everybody going crazy about the Martians landing at this little town in New Jersey. You didn't hear about that, huh? Everyone went nuts. He named the town. It was a little one down in South Jersey.

MARKS: Everybody believed it?

KUHLMAN: Yes. Oh, sure. He didn't offer any explanation for it. He just put it on on his show like it was a news report. He sure knocked everybody out on that one. _____.

MARKS: Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

KUHLMAN: There isn't anything that I can think of that might be of interest. We've gotten away from the township a little bit onto other things, but that's the way it was. Things just developed, things modernized. Everything got better on the highways and the bridges _____. Now the traffic exceeds the roadways.

MARKS: _____?

KUHLMAN: Yes, we were shocked when Fashion Plaza came in. That was an enclosed mall initially. We were really, really thrilled with that, and it was nice. But they just didn't have the right mix of stores in there, and people stopped coming _____. It just

went off, tapered off, to nothing. They didn't have any real anchor stores, and they didn't have any stores that would drag people in like a drugstore or something like that to pull people in and get the traffic. So they just never got the traffic through there. So that sat vacant for a while. And then finally-- One thing we were open for on the Planning Board was that someone would maybe come and change it from a mall to a shopping center, which finally happened. An insurance company bought them out, opened it up so the entrances to the stores were on the outside. So we _____ final tax purposes.

We built our own water filtration plant. We used to get water from New Brunswick back then. But we finally built it over in Franklin Township along the canal. Got a permit to pump ten million gallons a day, and we built our own filtration plant. That was all done--that was started while I was on the Town Committee, Town Council. So when we had our own--

Oh, the Franklin Dam down here. Yes. That's one of New Jersey's better secrets. It's a beautiful dam, a beautiful lake. That is so nice. Now they have a gate on it. You can't even get out on the dam anymore. My son fished down there all the time, and there was a fellow who-- See, New Brunswick owns that; it's part of their water system. Franklin Lake is a reserve water supply for New Brunswick. So they had control of the dam. And they had a fellow who came out there every day. There was a house down there. There used to be a snuff mill down there at the end of Farrington.

The remains of it were gone when we moved here in '41. But there's still a house there that the people who owned it lived in, a big house. And a fellow by the name of Scratia[sp?]--that was his last name--used to monitor that dam. He would always take the readings and _____ needed to be. He stayed there in that house. He'd come down, and he was good friends with the Kleins, and we met them out here a lot, too. But that was something that's finally _____. They stopped that, and the house was torn down, I guess, when the gas line went through, it was _____. And now with terrorism, they have the fences up, and you can't get out on the dam anymore to see the beauty of the place.

When I was the police commissioner, we used to pull cars out of there regularly, stolen cars. They'd run them into the lake right behind the dam. I remember any number of times we'd get the divers would go in and fasten up the hook on the load, and they'd pull a car out of the drink. I guess that's enough. I can't think of anything more. But I had a good inside view of lots that was going on because I stayed close to things, and I was part of the government for such a long time.

[End of Interview]