

Interview with Toots Kenyon
Interviewed by Phyllis Messenger
Interviewed on May 20th, 1999

Toots Kenyon	TK
Phyllis Messenger	PM
Scott Keely	SK

PM: This is an interview with Toots Kenyon on May 20th, 1999 at the Deephaven City Hall. Thanks for coming, Toots.

TK: It's my pleasure.

PM: Toots, I wonder if you would begin by telling me where you live and how long you've been a resident of Deephaven.

TK: I live on Virginia Avenue in the cul-de-sac in a little white house on the hill, not far from the present mayor, Howie Bennis. We were in business in 1946, but we moved into Deephaven permanently in 1948, across from the elementary school on the John Wilson property. Kenny Sutherland had built the house and it wasn't finished. Then, they had another child and they needed more than two bedrooms, so we bought the two bedroom house. Every spring for three years, we plowed through the mud to get to our home.

PM: That was on the street?

TK: On Eastwood Road. There were Ellen Wilson and one other family living there when we moved in. Then, Kenny built right across the street.

PM: Before you came to Deephaven, where did you live?

TK: At 7310 Bryant Avenue in Richfield. My husband, Bert (Albert), was an aeronautical engineer with Honeywell and, when the war was over, he was going to be transferred to Michigan and my folks had just moved to Richfield from Ely and they were only seven blocks away and I just reneged. So, we found this little store.

PM: Tell me about that, how you got into the hardware business?

TK: Oh! Gosh. Bert went down to Lyndale Hardware, which was on 66th Street and Lyndale Avenue – I think it's still there – to get a piece of glass because the Ewald milkman had broken a pane of glass when he came in to deliver milk. Bert came back and he said, "Toots, I just talked to Mel Gibson – it wasn't Gibson. Harold and Mel were the two.

SK: Mel Jazz?

TK: Well! Mel Jazz was a customer of ours back then. Bert said, "Let's go out and look at that store. They want to sell it because they have a manager in there that wasn't working out." That was probably in October or November of 1945. So, we went out and looked at it. I didn't even know where Deephaven was. I was not a city girl. Deephaven was home to Bert because they spent their summers here. Ken

Allen's permanent home is now here there was a summer home that Bert and his family lived in. We debated for a few days. Honeywell came back and said, "Bert, you're scheduled to leave in December 1st for someplace in Michigan." I don't remember where it was. That prompted us to buy this little store that had an old wood stove in the window. The manager who was a World War II veteran and his wife were running it then.

PM: What was your first impression?

TK: Oh! Do I have to tell you this? Bert and I walked in as customers and this one-armed man was sitting on a nail keg. His wife was sitting on the counter. They didn't say, "Could I help you?" "Were you looking for something?" They were sitting there bickering, so we walked around. Because neither of us knew anything about hardware, I said to Bert, "What is there to buy here?" He said, "I don't know. Let's go back to talk to Dana." Dana was one of the owners at that time. Then Harold Gilbertson, who was the other owner, took us aside and said, "They just aren't working out. We opened this store in July and it's going downhill. We'll make you a real good deal." It turned out it wasn't a real good deal because we paid for what they call *blue sky* and instead of blue sky; there was nothing but negative reports. That was November 1945 and we were there till May 1982, by the time all our moves to the new building took place. So, it was a happy time.

PM: You felt desperate enough, not wanting to leave the area, that you went ahead and bought this store?

TK: Yes, I don't know what would have happened had Bert gone with Honeywell. My mom and dad had just moved down here solely because of me. I had left in 1942 and it was just more that mother and dad could handle with their baby being gone.

PM: You were an only child?

TK: No. I was the last of seven.

PM: What were you doing at the time?

TK: When I met Bert, I was working for American Hardware Mutual on 24th Street and Nicollet Avenue. I was a policy writer. When we bought the hardware- this is what is so strange – we joined the Retail Hardware Association and all of their insurance was with American Hardware Mutual. So, I felt like I was bringing business to my old employer.

PM: Tell me about the first days as owners of the hardware store. By the way, what was it called?

TK: It was called Deephaven Hardware and we kept the name all through that time. Shall I tell you about the very first day?

PM: Sure, that's a great story.

TK: There were people coming in and looking around and not buying anything and, then, this one man came in. He looked at Bert and said, "My god! Are you Bert Kenyon?" Bert said, "Yes, Hi, Mr. Jewett." It was Frank Jewett from up in Northome, who had lived, I think, on Fremont Avenue, in the Kenwood area where Bert and his family had lived. They visited and Mr. Jewett said, "Thank goodness, that crabby old

guy is gone from here.” Then, he really blew us out of the water. He said, “Bert, I need some pipe cut and Threaded” and he had all these measurements written. Bert said, “Yes, give me the stuff. I can have it for you in about an hour and a half.” Mr. Jewett said, “Oh, fine. Good luck, Bert! You’ll soon be seeing my son, Hank. He’s living down near us.” So I’m alone with Bert and one of the men from Lyndale Hardware that we hired to come in to help for month and Bert took off for Wayzata, went to Lee’s and Shaver Hardware and talked to Myron Shaver and told him what he needed. He came back with all the pipe cut and threaded with a price from him. Mr. Jewett came in and he said, “Oh, that’s great, Bert. Say! You might as well open an account for me as long as it’s you now.” We probably had thirty dollars in the cash register and we opened our first charge account. Oh! We had such delightful people, really and truly, Phyllis. I miss the people and Bert missed the people when we left, but the work was getting too much because Bert was beginning to lose weight and he just wasn’t that strong. Then, we wound up with Mr. Jewett Sr., Frank Jewett Jr., and Willis Jewett all as customers. Willis worked for us for a little bit in between things.

PM: Let’s locate your first store.

TK: At Chowen’s Corner and it was next to Herb Miller’s gas station. It has been a grocery store and Clarence Lehman fought him out because he didn’t want competition, which was fine. Our first year’s rent for that little store was \$75 month! It’s good thing it wasn’t any more. (Laughter)

PM: That building still there?

TK: It’s still there and there’s a dry cleaner establishment in one half and a paint show room now.

PM: It’s on Minnetonka Boulevard?

TK: Right at the stop sign, just one building from the corner, which was Herb Miller, which is now a vacant lot.

PM: Tell me about the rest of the corner there when you first came into the business.

TK: When we first came into the business, there was the Schroeder Dairy, which is now the streamlined and remodeled Streeter & Associates. Clarence Lehman had a two story grocery and behind Clarence Lehman’s Grocery there was a garage. I think it was Mason’s Garage. It was a brother to Ray Mason, whose son now has Mason Motors in Excelsior. Basically, that’s all there was and then, a year later, Harold and Louise Peterson brought that little building and made it into a shoe store.

PM: They moved the building there?

TK: I don’t know where it was. It was moved from someplace. It was just a little building.

PM: That’s the building that’s now the...

TK: It’s where the bird house stuff is, yes.

PM: Were there houses on that corner as well?

TK: The only house on the corner was Annie Chowen and she was a character. She was a little old lady that was sharper than anyone gave her credit for. She saw everything. She knew everything. She was eccentric, but she was sweet. She would sit on her front porch and watch things and, then, if something unusual happened, in the afternoon she'd come over and she'd say, "I saw all these people. Was somebody sick?" And usually, there was either a car accident or something. Her house, oh, talk about houses full of newspapers. Her house was full of newspapers. She was there for quite a while.

PM: Was this the original family home?

TK: Yes, I think this is where her father and mother were born. There was no electricity. There was no indoor plumbing in the house up until the time somebody torn it down. Way back, Sam Perkins, who was, I think, a railroad postal worker, was one of them who tore it down, her and a man by the name of Johnson, who lived on Highway 101. I think he was an attorney. They tore it down years and years ago.

PM: White you were still in business?

TK: Oh, yes. We might have been in the new store- we moved into that in 1967- but, it could have even been prior to that the house was torn down.

SK: There was no plumbing or electricity in the house up to 1960?

TK: No. When it was town down, it was still...She had a kerosene lamp and you know that little building that was separate from the house?
(Laughter)

PM: She was pretty elderly when you came out?

TK: She was old when we saw her in 1946 and she looked the same the last time we saw her, which was probably in the 1960's. She never seemed to change. She was old and she never got older. She was just plain old.

PM: Did she get around?

TK: Oh, yes. People would pick her up to go to church and to go to the doctor. She'd walk across the street to Clarence Lehman's. Ted and Vi Rapley bought the old Schroeder Dairy and move into that and Ted, by the way, was an excellent meat cutter. They had wonderful meat.

PM: He had Ted's Meats then?

TK: Ted's Meats. He and Vi ran that.

PM: Did he actually do the butchering there?

TK: Oh, yes, including deer. The men that went hunting brought their deer in to be dressed. That's what I couldn't handle. I came from northern Minnesota and a deer to me, was like a pet. They were so beautiful. When I'd see deer going past strapped to the top of the....How could anyone kill those beautiful creatures....

PM: Who were the customers of your store and the stores in the area? Were most people from the neighborhood?

TK: Oh, yes. It was probably five years before we began bring other people in. Frankly, when we started out, a lot of our good customers during the summer moved into town. There were the Bennetts, the Walkers, Mrs. Fletcher. All of these people had these beautiful summer homes up in Northome, but after, like, Thanksgiving, they moved in and didn't come back till Memorial Day. Those were the, you might say, money accounts that we had because they would buy their grass seed, their fertilizer, all of the things that really amounted to volume. Then, Tonka Woodcroft was built up and we got those costumers. Then, Heathcote was built up. These were all year round. I'm thinking it was probably around 1950, 1952 before people were there all year round.

PM: Was that the same for Deephaven Park?

TK: We had people year around from Deephaven Park. One close knit group that we got to know so well...that was the Deephaven Park people because they were here. They were like you and me; we didn't move to town. We stayed put.

PM: Tell me a little bit more about Annie Chowen.

TK: She was very, very astute. Her mind was as clear as a thirty year old; but, I did make a mistake. One time she came over – we'd make phone calls for her; that's another thing, she didn't have a telephone either – she told us that she'd been so sick the night before and I said, "Annie, if you ever need help, will you put this card up?" I gave her a white piece of cardboard and said, "Put this up in the window that faces the store and I'll come over and see what you need." About three days later, this card went up and Bert saw it and said, "Toots, Annie's got that card up. You better go over. I wonder if she's fallen." She was fragile, I went over and she met me at the door and she said, "Would you go and get me some milk?" I said, "Sure." It was Clarence Lehman's still. I went over to Lehman's and Mable Lehman was there. First of all, I went back to the store and got some cash, and then, I went over and got this. I said to Mrs. Lehman, "This is for Annie. She isn't feeling good so I'm getting this for her." Then, a couple of days later, the card went up. She needed some bananas and needed some bread. I learned to put some money in my pocket, so I went over. This went on for probably three to four weeks. One day Mabel Lehman said to me, "Toots, you're new out here and Annie is going to use you as long as she can. That lady has lots of money." I said, "Oh, she doesn't have anything. She doesn't have electricity." She said, "She doesn't want it. She's afraid of light switches. She doesn't want any electricity. Stop using your money. The next time she asks you, tell her to give you the money." Of course, I wasn't that brave in those days – I'm brave now; I would have said it. I went over and she asked for something and I said, "Annie, I don't have enough money for all of this, but I'll get you one or two things." So, I did. Dear Mable Lehman walked over and she said, "I just have to make you stop this. Annie is not spending any of her money. When she comes over, she looks at things and says, 'Oh, I don't need it.' Then, you come in a couple hours later or the next day and you buy what Annie was looking at!" (Laughter) Burt said, "oh, my wife is such a push over for sob stories." I did stop. I did stop, Phyllis. She'd come over and we mad the phone calls for her and I took her to the doctor. The clinic was at 101. I think it might still a clinic up there behind Deephaven Drug. By that time, Oppen and Johnson was the name of the clinic. I'd take up there and I'd go and get her. Dear Annie, she was a sweet little old lady.

PM: Her father was?

TK: I think Joe Chowen. Her brother Mac Chowen lived next door. The house had been torn down. He lived with his step son, Don Richardson, and his wife. Don Richardson sold his house to the church and that became part of that parking lot in front of the church on Minnetonka Boulevard.

Those were fun days, but they were the lean years, too.

PM: Your business grew over the years?

TK: It grew slowly. We had buying the property next door to us from Jack Schaefer. We just knew if we were ever going to be able to make any money, we had to have more space. I think by that time there was a hardware at 7-Hi, the Coast to Coast. Then, we built the building that Wyman Nelson is in now for his office building. We had, like 6000 square feet compared to what we had and, then, our business did take off. That was in the fall of 1967 that that building went up. Then, in 1969, we built the apartment above because it was getting to the point where it was back and forth and seven o'clock at night. It was just too late. So we sold our home on Honeysuckle and built the apartment. That was a life saver.

PM: But it might have had some drawbacks?

TK: Oh, oh, oh, oh! We even laughed about it at that time. Bert was so good-natured. He never got angry when people would call at eight o'clock at night.

Can I tell you about a couple of funny incidents that weren't so funny?

PM: Sure.

TK: One evening, this man called and said, "Could you possibly get me another quart of paint because I'm right in the middle of it?" So, Burt said, "Sure." He ran down, met the man and got the quart of paint for him. Monday, the wife brings it back. "Oh, we didn't need it after all." (Laughter) Sundays, we'd get calls all the way from eight o'clock in the morning till five in the afternoon for one thing or another; but we were above the store and it didn't matter. If we were home, we went down and I do think people appreciated it.

Were you here in 1982? They had a retirement party in our parking lot for us. Jim Wyer and I think Jane Dayton Hall were the two of the instigators of it. I don't remember all of the others. They had a guest book. They had a program. It was just...oh! It was a tear jerker. We did get a lot of pictures. One of our customers did an audio tape, which I still have. Jim Wyer wrote a cute thing on this big board that he had where people could sign in at the guest book. He said, "Here's a chance to sign your name one more time without having to pay for what goes on the line on the bottom of a check," or something like that. I looked back at that book about a year ago and it was amazing to see how many people have died. I've outlived my doctors or they have all retired. I have to find forty-year old people to take care of me. (Laughter)

PM: Tell me about the pronunciation of the corner.

TK: Oh! Everyone calls it Chowen's Corner. When we came out, we called it Chowen's Corner. Again, back to little dear Annie. She would take such offense. People would come in and say they wanted directions and they'd say, "I was told to come to Chowen's Corner." If she was standing there, she would say, It's (pronounced Cowen, drop the H) Chowen! I'm a Chowen! It's named after my family." She would say to us, why don't you correct people?" I said, "Everybody calls it Chowen's Corner." It's

Chowen." And it is. But, Then, There's a Chowen Avenue in Minneapolis spelled the same way so how do you rationalize it?

PM: Most people who live here today do say Chowen. (Pronounced Cowen)

TK: Yes, I haven't heard anyone say Chowen's Corner, to tell the truth. I say Chowen's Corner (Cowen).

PM: Were most of the folks, when you did these special little favors for, your regular customers?

TK: Oh, yes. We did have a couple of people that we really didn't know. I still, to this day, don't know where they lived. I know they lived east of 101. We did have one family – we didn't know at the time – were abusing us. They said they were painting the interior and they'd buy like, a gallon off the white or a gallon of ivory. Then, they'd buy quarts and, then, they'd buy gallons. They'd come back and say, "We didn't need this gallon." We'd look to make sure there was no paint stain around and we'd put it back on the shelf. This one time, luckily, someone came that we know very well and they bought a gallon of whatever this was, off white. I sort of thought, gee, white paint should be heavy because there's so much pigment in white paint. But, I put it up and the next morning, he came back and he said, "This isn't Stewart paint." I said, "Oh, yes." He said, "Toots, open it." I opened it and instead of being white-white, it was sort of bluish white. So, I took another gallon off the shelf and just shook it up on the shaker and brought it out and I said, "Oh, Bert, is this that same gallon that was brought back the day before?" He said, Yes, I don't think I've sold any off white." Then we took it off and put it in the back room. I don't remember if Bert dumped it or threw it in the garbage. Then, about a week later, this same...but the wife came in that time and she wanted, I think it was a gallon and a quart of something. She came back two days later and said, "We didn't need these two quarts." I looked at her and I went and got a can opener and I opened it. One, you could tell it had been filled with water. I looked at her and I said, "You know, your husband brought back a gallon about a week ago that we went to sell to another person and there was at least three inches of water added to it. " She said, "Are you saying that we diluted the paint?" I said, "I don't know, but it was not the same consistency as the one we had sold him." We never saw the people again.

PM: They were not one of your regular customers?

TK: No, No. That was one of the only things I remember that was bad.

PM: You had some customer who would put in special orders for Christmas decorations.

TK: Oh! Is it all right if I mention the name?

PM: Sure.

TK: In Cottagewood, at the end of Grandview Point, we had a customer by the name of G. V. Thompson. He was with Cream O' Wheat. In fact, his daughter was married to Lloyd Workman...Betty Workman and she may still live in Cottagewood. Mrs. Thompson hanged the Christmas decorations and the décor every Christmas. This one year, George Jerabek, who was their caretaker or the head gardener or whatever, came in and he ordered forty eight lanterns. They were red with Christmas bulbs in them. We stocked, like, six. We called the wholesale house. They had, probably, twelve left in stock. We called Shaver. We called Link Aldritt at Aldritt's Hardware at the time and between Link Aldritt and Shaver Hardware and I think we went to Kokesh, we got the forty eight that we needed. In those days, Phyllis,

you just didn't stock that much of anything. Then, he'd probably come in and want, like, a case of strings of blue lights. Mr. Thompson was just a delightful man. They moved into town in the winter though, too. After Christmas, I think they moved in, but George was there all the time.

PM: Were those magnificent decorations facing toward the lake, then?

TK: I was never at the house. I don't know whether they were on their big porch, if they were in the living room or what. I would have been fun to have seen the house.

The only house I ever did see was Mrs. Bennett's. It's now Cedarhurst, but her home was Cedarhurst. The man (Horace?) who was her superintendent of the estate later worked for us after the house was sold. Oh, what beautiful decorations. They had a greenhouse so Horace grew all the Christmas plants. That home was just beautiful.

PM: Tell me a little bit more about the development of Chowen's Corners, as the years went on.

TK: After Annie's house was torn down, they put that building up across the street, but I don't remember. Was it Curt Ostrum that might have built that building? Who's in there now? I don't know. There's a beauty shop and some office space in there. Then, after the Bumper Chute, I don't remember whether Streeter went in right after that or not. It seems to me there was something else after that. Then, of course, Lehman's Grocery was torn down and they found old newspapers in the walls for insulation. Was it 1912 they told us? Then, of course, Clarence Dosch bought Mason's Garage behind the store. He sold that. Was it the city who bought that for the parking lot behind the present building? That I don't remember.

I remember when Cedarhurst was being developed. Bert Chapman was with David Seidel Investment. Now, maybe, there would be somebody else who would know more about that than I. I do know that Bert Chapman helped in the development of Cedarhurst and those homes were all so nice. Every one of the people became customers. We had such a good, good group of people.

PM: The development of community was a real boon to your business?

TK: Oh, yes, as the different groups went on.

PM: You've talked about some of the other hardware stores that developed over the years. How did that impact your business?

TK: It didn't. We worried. The first hardware store that was built within the proximity of us – it wasn't built as a hardware; it might have been a library – was the Bruce Hardware. People from Minneapolis came out and rented it. We waited for it to impact us, but it didn't. Then, Bruce Hardware closed and I don't remember what went in then. Maybe that's where Don Deakyne started his hardware store. Then, when Super Valu move off the corner and built the new building, I think that's when Deakyne moved up to the corner. That I'm not clear on, but Don Deakyne was a good competitor. We talked. We exchanged things. If we did have something, we could run down and Don would loan it to us until our order came in and the same, if he needed something, he'd call and as Bert if we had an item. He's still in business.

PM: You were less than a mile apart?

TK: Yes. I think our products were different. He was True Value and that was their line of paint and their line of tools, were we as independents could have True Temper. We could have any line we wanted because we had two or three wholesalers supplying us and I think that helped. Our paint line was different. Everything was different. We didn't handle the same brand of lawn fertilizer or mowers or anything.

PM: Did you have various people from the neighborhood work for you over the years?

TK: Yes, Edgar Dean...oh, that goes way back, now that you bring that up. Edgar Dean and his wife ran Clarence Lehman's Grocery after Clarence got out. Ed and a pilot friend of his bought it and ran it and, then, they sold to people by the name of, I think it was, Pitt, Ed came to work for us. He lived down in Deephaven. His house is still down there. I can't name the street other than Deephaven and a corner. He was with us until they move out to California to be with their daughter, Louise. Horace, who was superintendent of the Bennett estate, was sold until 1967 when he retired and married Alice Teska, who was a teacher at the Deephaven School. They moved to San Diego. Then, who did we have after that? Oh! John Husmann who came to us and he lived in Eden Prairie, a very, very devoted employee and a good man. He died following surgery for a non-malignant brain tumor. Then, we had four or five different ones. Arnold George, who was the postmaster in Wayzata, started working for us part-time. Then, he retired and came in full-time. My brother came to work for us during the summer months. Then, we had a retired assistant postmaster from Wayzata, Gil Hohenstein, who did the book work. After John died, we were only in business for about two more years and we sort of filled in with different people taking extra hours. We knew in 1981 that we were going to wind it up; but, we just didn't know when or how. Then, Wyman Nelson came in and looked at the building and said, "How much do you want for it?"

PM: The deciding factor for you was?

TK: I was more concerned about Bert because I saw him losing weight and I saw that it was harder for him to do the things that were just a breeze to him before. He seemed to be working harder to do the same work. He was going down to the store earlier in the morning, working later a tonight to get caught up repairing things for people. It just wasn't worth it. As I say, I still miss the people. There are still hugs and hugs when I see them in the stores.

PM: Now that you are in real estate, you probably still connect with a lot of people.

TK: It's so much fun, Phyllis. I've had people call and say, "Oh, gosh! I can remember when I bought such and such and such at the hardware store. I wonder if you want to come over and look at the house. I still have this. I still have that." I've drunk more coffee with former customers; but oh" it's so great.

(Toots relates a story which she asks to be "off the record".)

TK: You know what is wrong today – I see it; I see it everywhere... it's just the age we're in – if you go in, you can't ask how to do something. If you come in and say, "How would I put this together?" "The instructions are on the box." See. Bert would take something out of a box, assemble it, and hand it to them ready to use. I guess that's probably what endeared him to the people.

PM: But, he just kind of learned on the job everything he needed to learn?

TK: Yes, yes. He was mechanical. He could fix things. He learned to glaze windows and do screens. He did the neatest job of glazing; you'd swear he had learned from a professional. But, Bert was a perfectionist. Everything was just so. I miss him.

PM: After you retired, you built your house?

TK: We built the house on the old...it's called the Deephaven Farm. It had been the Thorpe farm prior to that. Then, Joe Boyer bought this property and he built our home and he built a spec home next door. We moved in in September 1983 and in October I went in for my realtor's license, simply because my brother was pushing me. He said, "You just can't stay idle. You've got to do something." It's been a fun time for me. I haven't worked real hard. I haven't made enough money to support myself in a year, probably; but, it's been fun.

PM: You work mainly in this local area?

TK: Last week, I sold a home in Plymouth. I'm going to be listing a home in Minnetonka next week with Art. I do work with Art Johnson, my boss, because I'm too old to risk knowing everything. There's just too much to know in real estate now. Art is, without a doubt, the neatest, most honest person you could ever encounter. No, I've sold in Bloomington. I sold in Richfield, in Golden Valley last fall. It's just wherever. Like in Golden Valley, they were people that I knew way back. I sold them the house five years ago. There was a split-up. She went home to Mama and he stayed in the house until it was sold. Then, they reconciled. Now, they've bought another home together. Lot of fun, lots of fun.

PM: Some houses are in Deephaven that you sell?

TK: Yes, there's one down on Shaver's Lane. There was one down on Rutledge (Road). Right on Virginia... in fact, he was the county assessor, Don Monk. I just sold their house about two years ago when he retired. They went up north. There were others. There was one down on Minnetonka Boulevard, but out of Deephaven. Right now, we're talking to a couple of people who are thinking of retirement, both of them in Deephaven.

PM: So, they would move away?

TK: One of them is talking about moving into some sort of... I wasn't quite sure what he was talking about the other day when we went down to visit him. He said, "Retirement place." She said, "No, no, not a retirement," so maybe a senior citizen thing.

PM: Do you see any particular trends in the housing market, in Deephaven in particular?

TK: It's scary, Phyllis. If you don't want to sell your home, don't even think about putting it on the market.

PM: Why is that?

TK: Because every house up to at least \$200,000 anywhere is grabbed up with three or four offers. Those over \$200,000 up to \$300,000 are selling within a week. Art listed a house a week ago last Friday for \$383,000 in Plymouth. He had two offers last Saturday, one full price and one under.

PM: There's a lot of movement?

TK: It's a lot of movement and it's really scary. Everyone keeps saying, "Oh! Toots, why don't you sell your home?" Where would I go? Kelly has to have a place to live as long as he lives.

PM: Kelly is your dog?

TK: He's fifteen years old. He's totally deaf. He has no peripheral vision. All he is, is a bundle of love. Oh! He's my whole life, so, I'll stay put as long as I have him. Who knows, as long as I have my mental and physical capabilities, I'd like to stay where I am.

PM: The office that you work out of is located where?

TK: Right at Chowen's Corner. It's in the two story gray building. It's Art Johnson, Johnson-Bormes. However, Dick Bormes, hasn't been there for years. I've moved from M.B. Hagen in 1991 to join Art and Dick was gone then. He became a priest don in, was it?? Moscow (Mills), Missouri...an Episcopal priest. Art has kept the name. Art's been the mainstay.

PM: Your commute has never been very long, has it? (laughter)

TK: Oh! I'm ashamed when I go in for oil changes and when I come in to buy a car. I have a friend who waits for my car. Bert use to trade every two years. Well, now, that's it's just me, I'm trading every three years. I'll be buying a year 2000; it well be out in September according to the sales manager. I will probably have 12,000 (miles) on my three year old car. (laughter)

TK: Isn't this terrible? I go seven blocks to work. Then, when Art and I are going on a tour to look at these homes, he drive because he has his phone and I think, very honestly, he's more comfortable driving his own car. And if I can ride in a Mercedes, I'm not going to complain (laughter) Church is six blocks. The grocery store is a mile.

PM: Which church do you attend?

TK: Church of St. Therese.

PM: Tell me a little bit about that. Have you been involved at St. Therese for a long time?

TK: I have been a member since 1946. I'm active. I'm dues paying.....but I'm not involved in any of the social things. I never wanted to get involved when we were in the store because I felt it was better to keep that separate from the business. I adore our present priest, who is leaving after twelve years. I have good thoughts, good feelings about the church, but it's another part of my life.

PM: Thinking about the development of the church in the community... You've been involved since 1946.

TK: It was a basement. You know where the nuns live now, the convent on Minnetonka Boulevard before you get to Chowen's Corner? There was a basement next to that house – it was just a basement – and that's where we went to church. Then, when the school was built, we went to church in the basement of the church school. In fact, that church hasn't been there that long. Mom died in 1967 and

about a year or two later, they started talking about the new church and it had to be maybe 1971 before that church was built. I remember going over and painting some of the speakers with oak stain. I did help that way.

PM: When you were in the hardware business, what was your role? A little of everything?

TK: Yes, I mixed paint. I balanced the books at night. I didn't do any of the actual bookkeeping. The Retail Hardware Association had an accounting department, so we'd send everything in every month or else the accountant would come out and pick up the stuff. I sent out the statements. In the last few years, even that was done by the association because things become computerized.

We had such an argument with the association because they automatically put this interest on after sixty days. I tried to get them to take it off. We would not charge interest. Our customers, if they had a problem, we knew it. They'd probably come in and say, "My husband's been laid off. Is okay if I don't pay till September?" I'd just mark the account, "Don't send bill. Don't send bill " It was kicking out....I was constantly pulling these things out, calling the association and saying, "Don't put interest on." It's the computer and we can't pull it out." So, here I am, inking all this stuff out at the bottom of the bill.

PM: Even in the early 1980's or late 1970's, was that happening?

TK: This was in the 1970's. It had to be maybe 1976, something like that, that we started doing this.

PM: You really took care of your customers, Toots.

TK: Oh, but they were so loyal. Oh, Phyllis, they were so loyal to us. They could have gone to 7-HI. They could have gone to Deakyne. They could have gone to Excelsior. They didn't. Most of our customers were charge customers – and of course, we let the dogs into the store too. (laughter)

TK: Oh! I hope that if the Deephaven police hears this, they aren't going to come after me now.

PM: I don't think so.

TK: This was probably in the late 1960's or up to maybe in the late 1970's, they had different people but they had this one woman. What was she called? In plain English she was the dog catcher. I think she called herself a public safety officer. She had a station wagon and she had a thing about picking up dogs! (laughter)

PM: She have a quota?

TK: So many of our customers would bicycle up to the store. Some would walk up. Louise Patridge had this sweet basset hound. She could just sort of (unclear). Sam Patridge would bicycle up. I can't remember the dog's name... if it was Sadie or what. She'd come up she'd lay out in the sun. Sam would leave and Sadie probably didn't feel like going then so she's sit there. Well, one day, we saw this woman police officer com and she pulled up into the parking lot and she sitting there looking at the dog. I said, "Bert, did Sam Patridge leave?" He said, "Yes, he was on his bike." She sat there and sat there; so Bert - went out and call the dog in and, of course, she gets up- floppy ears- and she comes in. Pretty soon she pulls up and she said, "Is there a dog in there?" I said, "Yes, it's my sister's dog is here. Why?" "Oh, okay.

Oh! It's a relative's?" I said "Yes." So she left. Bert said, "You stared at her and barefaced lied to her?" I said, "She was going to take the dog." He said, "Probably."

Then, during the summer, a collie from back on Shaver's Lake Road, a beautiful collie, would come up, sometimes, with one of the customers. I don't know who it was. She, again, would sit there. Then, this officer one time saw here. I saw her come up and look at the tag and she was pulling her away. Bert went out and said, "What are you doing?" She said, "This dog is a stray." He said, "No, the customer is in the back room getting some paint," which she was. It was not a lie. Then, she laid for that dog. We told whoever the woman was, "The dog catcher was going to take your dog." Then, another time, this same collie was out in front and we brought her in and, evidently, the cop had gone past, seen her, came in and said, "Where's the dog that was outside?" In the meantime, I had run downstairs with the dog and was holding her and petting her. I heard the officer say, "Tell your wife that she is going to be arrested if she continues to hide that dog from me." (laughter)

TK: I went out of the basement back door with the dog and I go through the woods and half way through the woods, the police car is going down Shaver's Lake. I turned around with the dog, and of course, she saw me and we had words. She said she was going to have me arrested because I was obstruction justice, that the dog was a stray. Well, I won. I won. That was the end of the dog catcher with me. That's the only time I ever had words with a public officer.

PM: You must have had lots of business interaction with the city hall and the police and so forth?

TK: Lots of times. Way back, Ray Sullivan used to stop and use the phone and even Bob Steele. Didn't they have radios in the police cars back then? But, they would come in and use the phone. Ray Sullivan was a sweetheart. Was he really our first police chief? He was a gentle soul. He was short and sort of roly-poly and loved to pretend that he was tough, but he wasn't. He was a softy. If you treated him decently, he would bend over backwards. Some of these kids, even then, were smarties. He let they know that he did have badge.

SK: How about "Two Guns"?

TK: I never saw "Two Gun Itzen". But, when we moved out there, there was no police department, but there was a constable. Edgar Dean, who worked for us, was also a constable. He said he could do everything except marry people. (laughter) Joe Itzen lived down around the lake somewhere in Deephaven Park and I remember hearing about him. I don't think I ever saw him, but they called him "Two Gun Itzen" because he carried two pistols.

His daughter had a streetcar at Chowen's Corner that she had a pottery business in. I saw a picture the other day, in the book, of the old streetcar. They called it a café, so maybe it was a café before we came out here. It's possible, but when we were here, Elizabeth Itzen had that. Then, that burned and I don't think anything was ever built on it after that until...Who would be there now? That's where Edina Realty's building is, I think. Yes, that would be just about in that spot.

PM: Her pottery was a showroom?

TK: I don't know what she did. She might have shipped it out. I'd go in there a few times and there were things on display, like, vases and bowls. But, I don't know if she sold it to some wholesaler or what. I don't even know what the name of it was... Deephaven Pottery or what. She moved to Florida. Maybe "Two Gun" did too, I don't know. (laughter)

PM: I'd want to go back and ask a couple of things. You were familiar with Petersons and the beginning of the shoe store?

TK: Yes, They were great, great people. Harold did everything. He repaired shoes. He dyed shoes. He put soles on and cleats on heels for people. What did he say one day? "I'm not a people person. Let Louise handle the..." Louise and he worked it alone for a long time and, then, her sister came in to help her and, then, Tish Gould came in in the later years. In fact, I never went to another shoe store after they opened. It was rough when they sold; I had to go find another shoe store. I bought my nylons there. It was just a family store. You could go in there and if someone was in the hospital, they'd tell you that so and so was sick; so, then you mentally thought, you don't bill them this month. I was such a close knit community. You just knew that if there was a problem, they were going to catch up.

Did you know that when we sent our last billing on in April, or May 1982, we only had one customer that still owed us money and by September of that year, he had paid it. In monthly payments, he had paid up the balance. Can you believe, after all those years, not to lose one dime when you sell out your business? People could have just not paid and what were we going to do? We wouldn't have gone after them.

PM: That's pretty amazing.

TK: It was. That's Deephaven. This is why I don't ever want to leave Deephaven until I have to. There's still the local grocery. I go into the post office, that little Deephaven branch up by the coffee place, and it's my neighbor two houses down working there. It's still a small community.

PM: Where was the post office when you had the store?

TK: In our store.

PM: Tell me a little bit about that part of the business.

TK: We got it by accident and you might say, "under duress". Arnold George, the postmaster walked in one day and he was closing up the post office. That was the Red & White Grocery, I think, that was up there just beyond...I'm trying to think what building. That could have been the forerunner of the Edina Realty. He had all these boxes in the back of his car. He said, "I had to pull it." There was a financial situation, an extreme shortage that couldn't be accounted for. I said, "I don't want this. We haven't got enough room." We were in that little building. He said, "Oh, it's not going to take up much room. Here's this cash register and here's this box." Dumb... He said, "What are people going to do that have been using it for the last year?" So, we took it. When we left in 1982, we were getting \$300 a month to run it and I think the volume in that post office was over \$100,000 in stamps sales and packages and money orders and that type of thing. Then, they had to let a contract out and that went for, like, \$800 a month. I understand now that it's up in the low thousands.

PM: Was that volume per month?

TK: A year. It was over \$100,000 a year. We were doing, like, \$10,000 to \$12,000 a month.

PM: Bert would do it reluctantly. He didn't like the post office and I don't blame hi. It was a nuisance because you had to account for absolutely everything. They came in, without letting you know, to audit

and if you weren't on the penny, they stood there until you wrote a check or gave them cash for the difference. When you didn't have a cash register...we had a drawer. When they're making change, honest employees are going to make a mistake and I might have done it. We were sometimes short \$20, sometimes \$50. We were never over. We did have a customer way back that walked past the open drawer one day and John Husmann saw him take some money out of the drawer. We were careless; the drawer was left open. I had wondered about him once before. He was standing back there talking and he sort of pushed the drawer but he didn't really push it but...his hand. We had no way of knowing. Be, we did watch him after that. That was the only thing that was negative.

PM: Did you ever have any burglaries or vandalism?

TK: No. No. We had an employee, way back, who we helped buy a car; we loaned him \$600 to buy a car. If Bert hadn't been sick with the flu, he never would have been caught.
(Toots, asks that the rest of the story be off the record)

PM: Here's a question back to the good old days. When you were looking at some of the photos the other day, you spotted the picture of Jean Penney. You said you sponsored her...

TK: Jean Penney, yes, Don and Ruth Penney's daughter. What were those days called? Deephaven Derby Days. We sponsored Jean Penney. One year, we sponsored Ann Mason. She's now married to Dave Shaughnessy. They live on Therese Street. Both were darling girls.

PM: that was for some queen contest?

TK: Yes, whatever the Derby Days. They rode around in somebody's open car with Ray Sullivan at the head with the whistle going.

PM: Did you go to Derby Days?

TK: No, because it was always on a Saturday and that was our busy day. I don't know whatever happened to the Penneys. They were here about the time of Edgar Dean working for us because they were good friends.

PM: Toots, these have been great memories. Scott may have some questions for you as follow-ups?

SK: We're have four people now and you've all covered interesting areas that sometimes touched the other areas. It's filling out a large picture of Deephaven. What I wanted to ask you what you liked about Deephaven, but you said that....

TK: It's home. It's a very close knit community.

SK: You've been here for...

TK: Since 1946

SK: 53 years

Annie Chowen...

TK: Everybody called her Annie.

SK: Everybody called it Chowen's Corner. Howard (Bennis) called it Chowen.

TK: We all called it Chowen; but, in deference to Annie, when she'd come in, if I introduced her, it was Annie Chowen and we called her Annie Chowen. (pronounced Cowen)

SK: She should know.

TK: And it was Chowen's Corner. She was correct; but, I suppose because of the CH and with Chowen Avenue in Minneapolis, they just adopted the same pronunciation of it.

Did John Burton talk about the development of Chimo? How his dad had died earlier and, then, his mother ... how they sold it to...?

PM: Why don't you tell us from your perspective about that?

TK: I don't know that much; I just know that all of a sudden the Burton property was being sold and was going to be called Chimo because of the house the Burtons kept there.

SK: Do you mean that it wasn't called Chimo prior....

TK: The house was Chimo and, then, there was Glooskap, the other house that Peter Boyer remodeled and now, it's been remodeled again.

Did John tell you that his dad never drove a car?

PM: He didn't mention that, no.

TK: Dear Ward. He would walk from his house, by the bridge, to Chowen's Corner and back. He walked back and forth. I'm not sure, but at one time, I think he bicycled, too. Mrs. Burton, his wife, drove. If they drove down, she'd drive and wait for him in the car and sometimes come in. There was another sweet lady. She was a sweet little old-fashioned type lady. She always wore a hat, very much of that era. Bert's mother always wore a hat.

SK: What is the story on Walden? When Walden was made Walden and what is Walden? Is it just an estate?

TK: Walden was a home. Mr. Walter Douglas built this home for his wife. I think, as the story goes. Then, they were on the Titanic. She lived; he drowned. I'm not sure if it wasn't their wedding trip.

PM: It was a trip to Europe of several months.

SK: What were their names?

TK: Was it Walter Douglas?

SK: And his wife, what was her name?

TK: I don't know; it began with an M, I think.

SK: They called it....

TK: They called it Walden.

SK: They hadn't lived there very long before they went on the Titanic?

TK: No, because he had just built it, hadn't he?

PM: I heard that they hadn't even lived in it.

TK: She did.

PM: Later?

TK: That's very possible. I know they had just built it when they went on this trip and whether he had built it for her as a wedding present, I don't know. That was there long before we came in.

SK: Is it the same house?

TK: Yes, the house is the same. Who bought it? It has been sold three or four times. In fact, the old carriage house has now been sold for, like \$900,000. That's now a home. B.C. Gamble lived in the Douglas estate at one time. Then, he sold and moved up to Cedarhurst. They both died while they were in Cedarhurst, I think. Mr. Gamble is in the mausoleum. Bert's her and the B.C. Gambles are right across – but they have a little private area.

PM: Which mausoleum is this?

TK: Lakewood (in Minneapolis)

PM: Bert had grown up in the Kenwood area?

TK: Right, 2121 Blaisdell. He was in school. This was one of the fun things about being in hardware: people that Bert had been in school was come in that were now living in the area. Don Dayton came in one day and said, "Oh, my god, Bert! Is this where you wound up?" John Snyder came in. There were several. Then, of course, Dr. Reiser moved out, but he was about 3 years older. And John Savage was at Blake ahead of Bert.

SK: is this the Savage from the Savage family that...?

TK: Wasn't it the grandfather that had Dan Patch?

PM: Yes,

TK: Earl Savage and John Savage were brothers and lived right across the street from each other as you go up into Northome now. I don't know who lives in Deedee (Mrs. John) Savage old house. Is it Gracie Lindley's son? It could be. The man who lives in Earl Savage's house, Jim, is one of the heads of Toro. They were customers too. It was so much fun.

(Toots speaks off the record about Bert, John Snyder, and Don Dayton's relationship in school.)

PM: Wonderful stories, wonderful memories. Thank you very much, Toots.