

Interviewer: Say your name and where and when you were born.

CK: I'm Charlotte Baynard Kyle. I was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Moved to Greencastle in 1927. My grandmother had us come to Greencastle because during that time, you know, there was this depression. There were no jobs. So my family and I came to stay here.

Interviewer: Okay.

CK: We had no jobs. Stayed here.

Interviewer: Okay, where about did you live in Greencastle?

CK: On Apple Street.

Interviewer: On Apple Street. And what was, were there any surroundings? Like, what was around you at the time? Like, stores or schools?

CK: Well, now, they had what was called the South End. And in the South End, we had Monarch's Grocery Store. That's where we did most of our shopping. Because else we'd have to go further, you know, walk further.

CK: And of course, back in those times, people didn't have a lot of cars. So my father drove from Philadelphia to Greencastle in a car. But we took the train because he was scared it would break down, which it did.

Interviewer: Yeah.

CK: But we had just an old neighborhood store, Monarch's Grocery Store. And in the South End, there was the ice plant, bakery. And so, in fact, at one time, that was the heart of Greencastle. That's usually called that street down there, Broadway.

Interviewer: Broadway.

CK: Uh-huh, down there. I don't know too much about further history than that.

Interviewer: Yeah. That's fine. Did you like living in the neighborhood? How did you enjoy the area?

CK: Oh, yes, yes. But everyone was fine. We got along fine in the neighborhood. And not only that, I got along fine in the schools. I don't know why or what happened, but I always liked it. Teachers were always nice.

Interviewer: Yeah.

CK: I've been having a couple of good years doing that.

Interviewer: So did you experience segregation? What did you think of it in the neighborhoods or was there any in the schools?

CK: I didn't pay too much to segregation.

Interviewer: Yeah?

CK: Because I—well, the only thing that was really segregated in Greencastle, we couldn't go to the show.

Interviewer: The show?

CK: I mean, we could go to the show, but we had to sit upstairs in the balcony.

Interviewer: Okay. Where was the show?

CK: Bond Castle and the Granada were the name of the shows. And so outside of that, and then, too, I wanted to join the Girl Scouts when I was 12, and I couldn't. So, my mother took over as scout leader.

Interviewer: Right. Now you're looking at these pictures.

CK: So yeah, we did all right with that because we got to go wherever the other Girl Scouts went. But yet still, our troop was the colored troop. But we always got to do the camp and things like that. I didn't pay too much to—

Interviewer: So you got to do everything that they were able to do?

CK: Mhm. I guess other people might have noticed it more earlier, you know, they were older than me. But I didn't. I wish that would be back in the 40s.

Interviewer: Okay.

CK: The 40s.

Interviewer: And what schools did you go to?

CK: Like DeMarcus, Ridpath School, and Greencastle High School. I graduated from Greencastle High School.

Interviewer: And did you enjoy going there?

CK: Yes, I did.

Interviewer: Were you involved in the national league there?

CK: Yes. I still have my little book about—well, we used to call it the Minaret. But during that time, it was the War, so they only published just the Seniors. And I was on the girls' basketball team. It was a team, a volleyball team, not basketball. Too short for most of them. But I played and I got along with everybody. The girls would even help walk me home. We'd have practice at night, and they'd walk me halfway home. So, I didn't have any problems with segregation.

Interviewer: Okay. And then, did you ever cite an interest in DePauw Athletics or DePauw at the time? Was there any, I guess—

CK: Well, I think when we were in Scouts, we got to go to DePauw Swimming Pool. Okay. They had a few swimming pools around.

Interviewer: So, did you know very much about DePauw at the time, or just went to the pool and that's about it?

CK: Well, no, I didn't know that much about DePauw. I knew people who went to

DePauw. My mother even housed some of the students that went to DePauw. Yeah.

Interviewer: And how was that? Did you understand, like, was it just—so she would house students?

CK: Yeah, they couldn't join the fraternities.

Interviewer: Right, the dorms and other things.

CK: The dorms, yeah, the sororities. So she housed, I mean, from 19—I'd say 49 or 50 to up to 56.

Interviewer: Okay. And after school, about your employment options, what all did you involve yourself in or what, did you just, like, go home like that?

CK: After school, well, after school, the war was still going on for me in 1943, so when I graduated. And I went to work at a defense plant in the United States. But there wasn't much of any kind of employment. And when the boys came home in '45, there was hardly any employment. They had to go elsewhere to find jobs, especially a small town like that, you know, there was no industry. Right. They didn't have as many students, you know, as they did then.

Interviewer: What plant did you say you worked at?

CK: I worked at Mallory's in Indianapolis.

Interviewer: And what type of plant was that?

CK: It was—they made Rocky Pelties radio batteries and things like that for the troops.

Interviewer: And then, did you know much about IBM or anything to do with that?

CK: No.

Interviewer: You didn't know much about IBM?

CK: They didn't come on until after I moved, I moved away from Greencastle, that's all I know.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah. And then, so without all the jobs and stuff, how did your family cope with that? Was there much of a recognition of the differences in opportunities and things like that?

CK: Well, I don't know too much about—my mother was a cook at one of the—several sororities for 35 years. And my father worked at the post office from 1928 or 1929 until he retired in 1965. So, I mean, I don't really know about jobs and things like that. But they didn't have the experience of trying to find any.

Interviewer: And so, organizations, you know, you were involved with Girl Scouts and the Needleworkers Club.

CK: Needleworkers, yeah.

Interviewer: So, do you want to explain that to all the organizations and what you guys did?

CK: Well, in the Needleworkers Club, as you said, it's been going on since 1910. And my grandmother was in it, my mother, there was myself. I didn't have any daughters, so my daughter-in-law joined. So, it really made four generations. But it was more or less—it wasn't just a fun club, it was kind of a charitable club. They did things for

charity. In fact, I went through some of the record books I found from 1934 to 1988. And found out where they contributed to the Red Cross. And they signed the charter for the Color Girl Scouts. And they backed us. They bought us drugs. First-aid kits for the troops and did things for us, you know. And then I found, looking through some of the books, I found out where in 1937 there was a big flood in Kentucky, the Ohio River. And they transported a lot of people to Greencastle and housed them in the old frozen food locker, the armory, or something. It must be an armory or something. But we used to leave where they had those to drink. But it was empty. And they put cops and things up in there. Well, I found a receipt where they had collected— I think it says the colored clubs of Greencastle— collected \$38 for the flood victims. I thought that was kind of unique because to get a receipt for something like that, you know. But they gave it to the Red Cross. They collected the money and gave it to the Red Cross. And then during that time, the Needlework Club, they made bandages during the war for the Red Cross. And then they found out where they made pillow slips for the hospital. I don't know why they needed pillow slips, but they did.

CK: They bought tubing and made these white pillow slips for the hospital. I found the receipt in there where they thanked them for bringing— And instead of taking them and having somebody take the pillow slips, they hired a telegram boy to deliver them. And I thought that was kind of unique. But they did. And just different things. And, of course, they sponsored a girl. One of the club members had a daughter. Her name was Katie Norris. And I think she had bones sclerosis. And they sponsored her to go to a camp for the summer. And they did a lot of charity work. Dental health.

CK: And I guess you saw where they made the dental health doll. Yeah. Well, I found a slip. I'm the one that made it.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah?

CK: And I found a certificate from them that they sent me.

Interviewer: Aw.

CK: And we helped the Heart Fund. And there was a—I guess a school in Tupelo, Mississippi, that we used to help, send clothes and things that they would need in their homes or just anything that—it wasn't an orphan's home, but it was a Catholic home that took care of the children. And we helped them out several times.

Interviewer: And would they come to you and ask, or would you just take them out?

CK: It was advertised on the TV, so we found out about it.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay.

CK: And then they sent us material on the school.

Interviewer: Right. And is that generally how you guys looked out for organizations to help and things like that?

CK: Yes. Yeah, we like to, you know, be doing something for people. I mean, we always try to find out what could we do. Nursing homes, we made lap ropes and bibs for them to wear for the weekend and things like that.

Interviewer: And how often did you guys have your meetings?

CK: Well, now, during the time my mother and them were—they'd have it every two weeks. But, of course, during that time, they didn't have television, so it was just something for them to do. And then it cut down to once a month, which is bad, once a month. But we don't meet on January and February because those are the winter months, and getting to and from, you know, in cars.

Interviewer: And what would you guys do in your meetings typically?

CK: Well, we just—well, mainly we had a program. Everybody that entertained the—had the meeting at their house would have a program. And the program would consist of something maybe that was either current events or history or something that would be educational that we could all share.

Interviewer: Just discuss? And so, you guys went to help with that at different houses all the time?

CK: Different houses, and there's a program at every meeting.

Interviewer: Right. And I saw you guys—

CK: As far as the needlework went, that kind of shifted because after television came in, you know, you didn't do as much needlework. So, it shifted to crafts. And we still do needlework. We do knitting and crocheting and—what do you call that? Making rugs, latches, things like that. And if something different that somebody's learned how to do, they'll bring that to the club. Teach everybody. I taught everybody how to do some kind of stitch. Crochet stitch, not too long ago.

Interviewer: So were there presidents and things like that? Leadership?

CK: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: Were you involved in any leadership?

CK: Oh, I was president.

Interviewer: Were you? Okay.

CK: Well, it was supposed to be for two years. Yeah. But I found and looked at one of those books and it was actually four years. They just kept—I don't know where they said, well, we retain the same presidents or the same officers. They just elected me. But every time I turned around, I was president.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

CK: Either president or secretary or something.

Interviewer: Yeah.

CK: But I didn't get into it until 1980.

Interviewer: Okay. And what—all was incorporated with being president of the organization. What were you guys responsible for? How was it different from being a member?

CK: Well, they just had to take on more responsibility, the presidency and make sure that we'd have our programs lined out for the year and things to do for the next meeting and things like that.

Interviewer: Right. And would you say this organization has really impacted your life? I mean, was it a huge part of your life or was it just something on the side?

CK: Well, it was just something with—just a fellowship.

Interviewer: Yeah.

CK: Yeah.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. And then do you have any favorite stories about the organization or anything at all personal?

CK: Well, I mean, one thing I used to like about it, in the summertime we'd have breakfast at the park. And we'd take—somebody would take the little camping stove or something like that. Because over at the Robe Ann Park, I think they had those little fireplaces where you could eat and stuff.

CK: We'd take bacon and eggs and fried potatoes and sweet rolls and have a good time with breakfast at the park. And then every July we'd have picnic.

Interviewer: Right.

CK: I like that.

Interviewer: Yeah. And now why was the American Beauty Rose your symbol? What did that originate from?

CK: I really couldn't tell you that one. Back to...

Interviewer: Okay.

CK: But that is—that our colors are red and white. I know a different one. One member died. And we all went to services and we wore white blouses, red skirts. Anybody, you had to be red for the church.

Interviewer: Okay, so every time someone—you guys would all go. And who was left, you said? Of your generation?

CK: Of my generation. Now, there's really Bernice she's been in it for years. And the rest of them are all new members. They've been in it, I'd say, within the last 15 years.

Interviewer: And so do you still go to all the meetings?

CK: Oh, yes. In fact, I just got out of the presidency.

Interviewer: Okay.

CK: Next year I'm going, but I have to be president. I told them, driving up and down the road, you know, I'm just going to have to do that. The president's supposed to be there, you know. So I work here. I'm running every month, especially that day.

Interviewer: And then other than the difference between your work and crafts, did you see any transitional work going on in between your time and then now? You've been in organizations for all your years. Is there anything different?

CK: It's about the same.

Interviewer: What would you say your organization is—if you could summarize your organization, what would you—how would you explain it?

CK: How would I explain it? The Needlework Club? Well, I don't know. I've just continued to be in it because it's so old. In fact, at one point we were the oldest Needlework Club this side of Wabash River, because we have continued since 1910. It's never been broken up. Now, there have been other clubs, but they have never lasted as long as this people have lasted. And if you look, we are a registered in the Greencastle Library.

CK: Every so often, they call to ask—and every time they call, I'm the president—if we're still functional. And I said, yes, we're still working. And I was looking through one of the books the other day. We donated a book to the Greencastle Library, a book of poems by James Weldon Johnson. And we donated it to the library in the name of one of our former leaders. So, I thought that was interesting.

Interviewer: And that's at the Greencastle Library?

CK: Greencastle Library.

Interviewer: Okay. And I was looking in your scrapbook, and you had a pamphlet for every year. Now, what is that?

CK: That was our program. I mean, that would have—it has our club... and also the program, and who has the meeting, and who has the program. I don't know where—I think we changed it to everybody that has a meeting would be responsible for the program now. But it used to be a different person would be responsible. It didn't have to be the hostess. But I think now, I think we've said the hostess would be responsible for the program. I don't remember what we did back then.

Interviewer: Did the Needleworks Club ever encounter any difficulties or challenges? Or did you have a call?

CK: No, not that I can recall. I remember my mother talking about the husbands didn't like it. They didn't like it, the Needleworks Club, because of the women. They said they didn't do nothing but get together and gossip. But then every so often they'd have to have something where they invite the husbands.

Interviewer: Yeah.

CK: So outside of it, I don't know. It's just a nice to have an organization that you can say is doing so many good.

Interviewer: And how many members are there now?

CK: We've got 12. I think it's 12. And there has been as many as 25.

Interviewer: So do you have to live in Greencastle to be part of that?

CK: Evidently not.

Interviewer: Right.

CK: Because I've been living here for over 50 years.

Interviewer: Right. So, it's just called Greencastle Needleworks Club?

CK: Greencastle.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you want to say about the organizational club that we haven't heard on?

CK: I can't really think of anything.

Interviewer: Did you have any involvement with NAACP or know much about that with people in Greencastle?

CK: No.

Interviewer: No. Okay. And then were there any differences living in Brazil than Greencastle?

CK: Oh yes. Big difference between Greencastle and Brazil. There's always been a little rivalry between Greencastle and Brazil in everything. Basketball games and everything else. Yeah. But by Greencastle being a college town, people were living a lot better.

Interviewer: How are they different?

CK: Well, they dress different. They talk different. And they were more concentrated. They were educated. And they are here. Because right now, in Greencastle you'd have people come around to your house and come visit you. I have been here for 50 years. Over 50 years. I don't have a friend that will come to my house. Only unless they're coming for something. You know. It's not like that. They're just not friendly.

Interviewer: Okay.

CK: Sorry.

Interviewer: It's good.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, you found Greencastle more warm and people have just to do it for college? Or they're close to buying land?

CK: Well, they're just people. The way they were brought up. You know, if you don't bring your children up in the right way, the way they grow up there, they're still not, what do you call it, respectful. They're not... I don't know how to call it. I've got some neighbors right now. I have to close my ears sometimes because of their language.

Interviewer: Did you, oh um, go on.

CK: I did want to show you my Girl Scout dress of over 65 years.

Interviewer: Oh, wow. That's a long time.

CK: I've loaned it out here in Brazil to the Scouts. And I've loaned it out in Kentucky. And it came home the last time. Somebody had tried to unzip it. And you know, a 65-year-old dress. They tried to unzip it. But the decorative hides it.

CK: It's not quite so bad. But I still have my dress. And I can still get in it.

Interviewer: Yeah, wow. Amazing. Congratulations on that.

Interviewer: And so, you were very involved with the Girl Scouts for how long?

CK: Well, I was the patrol leader there at the end. I would say up to 46, 47.

Interviewer: And so you just kept that dress all these years?

CK: It's been handed around from one person to the other. I'm showing it. I've even got a picture where they took a picture of it here in Brazil.

Interviewer: And are there any numbers still for that Girl Scout dress?

CK: There's still some up there in Greencastle. In fact, we've got pictures in there of the Girl Scouts.

Interviewer: So you get to associate with them still a little bit?

CK: Oh, yes. There's a plaque there of my club members.

Interviewer: Oh, good. So that was kind of...

CK: Mm-hmm. Okay, good.

Interviewer: So, did you um... Going to Greencastle, since you said you lived here but you went back to Greencastle a lot, did you notice any difference over the years?

CK: I mean, usually when I went back, I just went back to different functions. But the difference, I just like to go back to Greencastle. I just like the friends there and the people there. It's kind of like the people here a little bit like church vendors.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah.

CK: It's not as many here.

Interviewer: Okay.

CK: There's all of the colored people now have moved out of the small towns because there's no work. Most of them have moved around to bigger cities.

Interviewer: And what opportunities were there. So, there were no opportunities for a family?

CK: Oh, yeah. Now, do you have anything on the gardening chapter?

Interviewer: Um, is there someone interviewing there?

CK: Mhmm. She was the first black teacher in there in Greencastle.

Interviewer: Okay.

CK: You didn't know that?

Interviewer: No, I think we were all responsible for different people.

CK: Oh, different things.

Interviewer: Yeah, so we all have our own different things. But I think, I'm sure our professor would've assigned somebody to her.

CK: And then there was Reverend Buckman, who was the blind man that worked around at the sororities and fraternities.

Interviewer: Yeah.

CK: You got anything on him?

Interviewer: I'm pretty sure we have pretty significant... yeah, she researched all of the significant um...

CK: And he's also a poet and he's had poetry published. He's got a book of poetry published.

Interviewer: Oh, neat. These are all from Greencastle. So, is there anything else you'd like to share with your experience in Greencastle or the organizations you're involved in?

CK: No.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you want to look through your book at all?

CK: What's this? Oh, that's our future. You guys were talking just about everything. I saw, I did see the little book. Yeah. It's a program book that we have. Yeah.

Interviewer: Thank you. Just to go back to the dress we were talking about. Can you elaborate on that? You said you made a medical dress or what was that?

CK: I think she did.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

CK: She did both dresses. Wow, that's great. And we have the thing for the new nurseries.

Interviewer: Oh.

CK: My mother made that. Yeah. And they had the, now you can buy it. You ever look for that? And she wasn't a seamstress either.

CK: And this is one of those, how do you zip up the hood?

Interviewer: Uh oh.

CK: And close it right here.

Interviewer: Yeah.

CK: Many, many years ago.

Interviewer: Yeah.

CK: See, when I was what, 12, 13 years old? No, I said it until I was patrol leader. So I was 16 I guess when I last met...

Interviewer: Yeah.

CK: 16. Or 17.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, it was mainly Girl Scouts and Needleworks, that's what we were talking.

CK: Definitely.

Interviewer: Did you know anything about the Sunshine Club or the Masons or NAACP? Do you know much about these organizations in Greencastle?

Interviewer: No? Other people are hitting on that.

CK: Yeah, that was a little later on.

Interviewer: Yeah.

CK: After I moved away, I guess.

Interviewer: That's a lot. That's great. Good information.