

Kaye Minehane (Farnsworth House)
Interviewed by Shaniqua Osgood (2001)

My name is Kaye Minehane. I was born on April 30 in 1911. I was born in the south of Ireland in County Cork. Ireland was beautiful, so green and full of trees. I remember so many stories about my family, I don't know which ones to tell! I was the oldest of seven children, and I went to school in a one room school house. Then I came here in 1929, and I became a nurse in 1941, right when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, so I was a nurse throughout the Second World War.

When I came to this country I had to take a ship. It took 8 days to cross the ocean, and we didn't see anything but water. Now I like to fly, but I don't like to sit for so long! I met my husband in this country. I have one daughter, Maureen, and she has a boy and a girl. My daughter lives in Ireland now, she's 47. My grandson works for Air Lingus, and my granddaughter's a teacher in Spain.

Many, many years ago when my sister and brother were 9 and 10 years old, we had a jennet (mule) on the farm in Ireland. One day we hooked him up to cart and took him up a road, but he went just so far, and then he wouldn't go any further. He backed up and backed up until he couldn't go back any further, then he fell into a great big ditch. The cart fell on top of him. Well, we had to go to tell my father, and I thought he was going to kill us! It took four or five men to release the animal from under the cart, and they were both lost, the cart and the animal.

When I was a kid, I used to pick up things around the house. One Sunday, when they were all at Mass, I stayed home, and I made two or three little fires in the yard. Then I sat down and watched them burn. I got in trouble a lot for things like that! I would do things for fun, but they would turn out not to be funny.

My father was an old fashioned, very strict man. We all had to kneel down and say the rosary together before we went to bed, but he couldn't chastise us during the rosary. So that's when we thought of MORE things to do to get in trouble! One night, I was kneeling down, and one of my brothers put a cat on my back, and the cat dug his claws into me, so someone had to get up and take the cat off my back! Another time, my father had a man working for him on the farm, and someone put knives and forks into his pockets, and when he would kneel down to say the rosary, the knives and forks would fall out!

I remember when I was 10 years old, we had hens and chickens. We had one hen and she had about ten little chickens. The hen was killed by the dog, so we took all the little chickens and put them in with another hen at night, and the next morning she thought she had ten little chickens of her own!

About kissing the Blarney Stone:

My three brothers dropped me down to kiss it. I looked at the stone, and it was full of

lipstick. So I just came back up without kissing it. I saw it, but I never kissed it.

I loved riding my bike. I rode and I rode, and I rode. One night I was riding my bike home, and some animal was laying in the middle of the road. I must've woke him up because he moved just in time, otherwise I would have flown over the hedge! Many of the roads over there are dirt, and some animals like to roll themselves on the road. There are no really wild animals in Ireland, but there are cats, dogs, foxes, rabbits.

I remember soup being served on the Boston Common during the Depression. Some of the men had signs that said "We work for food". Roosevelt was the greatest president we ever had. He started the WPA, Social Security, and everyone had a job. He was wonderful.

There were no funny stories during the Second World War. Everybody was working very hard. The war was very severe, and the English almost lost it. But Roosevelt sent troops over, and THAT was the beginning of the end of the war. Hitler had blockaded England with submarines, and the people were hungry. I went over after the war, and every other building was bombed out.

During the war, we were very short of people at the hospital because all the orderlies were drafted, so the nurses had to do everything . We nurses were suppose to be in by the 10 o'clock curfew or we needed a pass. We all lived in nurses quarters, and late one night, someone was knocking at the door to get in. You weren't suppose to let anyone in after curfew, but I let her in anyway. Then we were all questioned about who let someone in, and neither of us ever opened our mouths!

During the blizzard of 1978, I was working at the Robert Brigham Hospital up on Parker Hill. We couldn't go home for a week.. There were helicopters flying all around delivering medicine and food. We got double pay for staying on duty for the week. When I came out, people were all talking to each other out in the street. It was an amazing time.

One of the biggest surprises I've ever had in my life was all the cards I got for my 90th birthday! My daughter had a big party for me, and we saw all the relatives. My two sisters are both sick. They're in Ireland. One is 89 and the other is 84.