

The following transcript of
Thomas “Tom” Kiley’s interview

on

Memories and Music

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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THEME:

D.M. And it's time now for another chat with another guest on Memories and Music. And we have a gentleman who has seen some tragedy in life. He has seen war. He has come so with his head high. In fact, he's a fine story and a fine gentleman and I know that you're going to enjoy meeting him. His ~~am~~ name is Mr. Tom Killey. Mr. Killey retired in September 1973. How many years had you put in with the company when you retired Mr. Killey?

T.K. Thirty-four years and eleven months.

D.M. And what was your position when you retired Mr. Killey?

T.K. I was deputy chief of Copper Cliff Police Department when I retired.

D.M. Alright sir. Now let's start as we, you know, we like to do from the very beginning. Where are you from sir?

T.K. I was born in St. Catherine's, Quebec.

D.M. Now, I think most of us know something about St. Catherine's, Ontario. I don't know much about St. Catherine's, Quebec. Tell us something about that.

T.K. Well St. Catherine's, Quebec is about, roughly eighteen miles from Quebec City. It's a summer resort mainly and also some small farms.

D.M. Well now, it is now, or it was in your youth out there? Maybe it's been practically ~~been~~ swallowed up by now. Or do you know? Have you been back lately?

T.K. I have been back, and it has changed greatly. It's built up and it's mostly a summer resort.

D.M. Well now Mr. Killey, what did your father do there?

T.K. My father mostly landscaped ~~and~~ gardening.

- D.M. Oh that's interesting. Had he, he taken a course in landscape gardening, or how did he get into that kind of work?
- T.K. Well I don't believe he ever took a course in it. He was very good at it, and some of the farming people were after his services to look after their gardens and lawns, flowers, and so on.
- D.M. He was a ~~fellow~~ man with a green thumb in other words.
- T.K. He was, yes.
- D.M. Do you remember him as ~~that~~? Is ~~that~~ your memories of your father?
- T.K. Yes, that's as I remember.
- D.M. He, did you talk a good deal about growing things and so on?
- T.K. He never talked too much about it but he used to a lot of it....
- D.M. He went out and did it.
- T.K.he was very good at it.
- D.M. Very, very fine sir. Now, what about your ~~mother~~? Where did, where did she come in to the south ~~ridge~~? ~~Where~~ did she come from?
- T.K. My mother was born in St. Catherine's, Quebec.
- D.M. Oh. Well ~~that~~ that's keeping it all in the family. What about brothers and sisters?
- T.K. There were five boys and ~~two~~^{two} girls.
- D.M. Right. Well now you told me Mr. Killey as we were preparing for the broadcast that both your mother and your father died when you were fairly young. Now what was, what were those circumstances sir?
- T.K. My mother died when I was approximately twelve years of age, and my dad, I was fourteen years old I believe, when my dad past away.
- D.M. Well fourteen years of age, your father dead and your mother dead. Now what happened? How did you get along?
- T.K. Well I went to live with some people who were very good friends of my parents and I worked for them and also went to school with them.

D.M. ~~kn~~You know, you say to me that you went to work for some people who were very good friends of your parents. Now that's, those were gentler times were they not? Were they you know when people, friends meant a little bit more or something. You think?

T.K. Well these people were very wonderful people. They were very kind and considerate with me and, in fact, they couldn't do enough for me. They were really wonderful people.

D.M. What were their names?

T.K. The Hencheys.

D.M. Hencheys?

T.K. Yes.

D.M. Are there still any Hencheys in the St. Catherines area?

T.K. No, not anymore. They've all passed away.

D.M. I'll be darned eh? Just a little piece of history came....

T.K. Yes.

D.M.in there eh, and a wonderful family as you remember.

T.K. As I remember, they were just wonderful with me.

D.M. Well now, you went to school and public school in St. Catherine's.

T.K. Yes. I went to St. Catherine's Public School.

D.M. And about what year would you finish there sir? You started around about 1916 I guess.

T.K. Roughly 1916, but 1924, or '25 () finish.

D.M. So what happened when you finished school? there?

T.K. I continued to live with the Hencheys and I worked for them.

D.M. Well now these Hencheys, this wonderful family, they interest me. Now what, you worked for them, what sort of work did you do or what did they have or what?

T.K. They, well CNR agents, they looked after the CNR express freight and they also had a low(?) contract and ran a post office. I used to drive() and I drove taxi for them when I was old enough. Started about sixteen.

- D.M. How about that eh? This would be a car, a car you drover
- T.K. A car in the summer time and the horse and sleigh in the winter time.
- D.M. Is that right eh? What would the horse and sleigh be? Part of the entertainment of the area or something?
- T.K. Yes. They had a set of horses I'll call it, five or six horses which they used in the winter and also a () in the summer time. But I enjoyed it very much.
- D.M. Well now this fine family, these good people, they, did you not tell me, that they were sort of, there were sort of brothers and sisters but, and unmarried, but two of the men married later in life. Now what was that story there?
- T.K. They were, when I first went to live with them, there were old maids and bachelors but the, two of the men got married late in life, and also two of the girls.
- D.M. Oh. Well there, there maybe some ^{Henchy} relatives around somewhere eh? Not in St. Catherines, but somewhere.
- T.K. No there are Hencheys, the () people. I believe they live in Montreal now.
- D.M. Well now Tom, about your brothers and sisters. Now we've got you looked after by the Hencheys, what, how were they looked after?
- T.K. Well my two sisters, they went to live at relatives of ours who took good care of them and put them through school.
- D.M. Right.
- T.K. My two older brothers were on ~~there~~ their own, looking after themselves and working, and the ~~others-ones~~ younger ones lived with my uncle, and another with his....
- D.M. Oh, what were they reaching for now?
- T.K.with his godfather.
- D.M. Well now Tom, how long were ~~ea~~ you with this Henchey family?
- E.K. I ~~went~~, I believe it was about 1925, ^{when} ~~and~~ I went there, and I lived with them until 1937.

D.M. O.K., so what happened in 1937?

T.K. In 1937, I decided I could make a move, and I decided that Sudbury would probably be a good place to come to....

D.M. Right.

T.K.and that's what I did.

D.M. Well, that's fair enough, and how old would you be in 1937.? You would be, you were born, what, in 1909?

T.K. I was twenty-eight years old when I left St. Catharines

D.M. Alright sir. So, well now you had all of Canada to choose from, from St. John, Newfoundland. Why Sudbury?

T.K. Well I often read about Sudbury being famous for its nickel and I thought it would be one of the better places to go to.

D.M. Right. Well now, tell us then about your first day in Sudbury. You're Your arrival here, what did you do?

T.K. When I arrived in Sudbury things were rather dull. Neither Inco or Falconbridge were hiring. After about approximately one week, I got work with Sudbury Motors who (O) with Pontiac dealers here in Sudbury.

D.M. Oh well now that's, I suppose you'd worked a little bit with cars back with the Henchey. Does that give you some experience there.

T.K. I knew quite a bit about servicing cars, oil and grease and that sort of work. I liked that.

D.M. Right. Now it seems to me that you have some very kind memories of the service manager there.

T.K. Yes. The service manager, Johny Wexell, who is a very nice man, he was very strict about his work but he was very kind to me and in fact he wished me to stay on.

D.M. It would seemst seem then Tom, that you, you had some problems but you met some nice people during your life.

T.K. Yes, I've met a lot of very wonderful people. Very kind people.

D.M. You've been, you've been lucky. Well then, you, how long did you stay with the Sudbury Motors.?

T.K. I stayed with Sudbury Motors until August 1938.

- D.M. And what happened then?
- T.K. I was hired by Inco to work at Creighton Mine.
- D.M. I see. Well now, now you were not a tough () farm. You hadn't worked on any farm work or anything so I guess you'd find that fairly tough going when you first started out there.
- T.K. Yes, the work was very hard. It was timbering and drilling. I found my muscles to be badly cramped up in the morning. I could scarcely get out of bed.
- D.M. I see.
- T.K. But I got accustomed to it and finally I got, I liked it ~~erily~~ fairly well.
- D.M. Well that's interesting Tom. Now how long did you, did you stay working underground?
- T.K. I worked underground until approximately one year. I think it was August 1939.
- D.M. Oh yes. And then, what happened in '39?
- T.K. I applied for employment with the Copper Cliff Police Department and a few days later I was accepted.
- D.M. Oh now who was the police chief at the time?
- T.K. James Ramesbottom. He was chief of police at that time.
- D.M. Right. Now, well now what would your duties be then in '39? The security around the ()?
- T.K. To start off, I was security at Creighton, at the smelter and refinery and also with the town of Copper Cliff.
- D.M. Now this would be mainly to keep the fellow out of the plant eh from, who had a few drinks or something. Is that right?
- T.K. Yes. Mostly keeping intoxicated people from entering the plant and being injured, and also to prevent too much material going out.
- D.M. This, I suppose this would take a certain amount of tact eh? I guess they'd thank you for it later eh? At least the ones you kept from being hurt.
- T.K. Yes they didn't, most of them didn't approve of being sent home, but () would be thankful. They were very nice people.

- D.M. ha ha, well, now we're up around '39 or so, then it seems to me that you made another change about around '40 or oh no, a little later than that, around '42. What happened in '42?
- T.K. Well I went ~~e~~, to, first I was transferred to Levack in 1939 in December and I worked in Levack until 1942.
- D.M. And in '42?
- T.K. In 1942, I joined the Canadian Army.
- D.M. Where did you enlist?
- T.K. I enlisted in Toronto.
- D.M. Alright tell us something about your early days in the army.
- T.K. Well it was the usual thing. We were sent to Simcoe Ontario for basic training. We lived in tents there at the race track and later I went to Camp Boarden for the () in '53.
- D.M. Well that's par for the course I guess and then you went overseas right?
- T.K. Yes. I was, before I ^{was}, went overseas, I was transferred to the Canadian Provocore and I went overseas with the Canadian Provocore.
- D.M. Oh and that was, you said was forty-three or so.
- T.K. Yes, about 1943.
- D.M. Where did you land in (England?)?
- T.K. We landed off Granick, Scotland actually and went by train to London, England.
- D.M. Right. What were your first impressions of England?
- T.K. Well the first thing that impressed me very much, was the number of Canadian troopsmen all over the world and the airforce in the place and the scarcity of food I found.
- D.M. Yeah that's very true, very true indeed. I also landed at Granick, and I saw the mountains, the hills in the background.
- T.K. Yes.
- D.M. I don't ~~reme~~ know whether you would remember seeing that or not.

- T.K. It reminded me somewhat of the country north of Levack.
- D.M. ha ha ha, maybe you're right. Now, now what, tell us something about the time you spent in England.
- T.K. Well it was only a very short time in England. I would think about, probably not any more than six weeks. The Canadian, Fifth Canadian Armoury Division was getting ready to go to Italy and I was sent to the number five () Police Company which was part of the first division and I went to work with them.
- D.M. Well now that would be quite an adventure. What boat did you sail on and what were your conditions?
- T.K. I can't recall the boat we sailed on ~~from~~ when we left England. We changed ships twice on the way, to Italy. Once in () which is on north African coast and....
- D.M. Well now, why was this, were you attacked on the roof? Was that ~~there~~ the problem or....
- T.K. No, we never knew what the reason was. We weren't attacked then.
- D.M. Yeah. It's a strange thing. You just got off one boat and on ~~another~~ another eh?
- T.K. That's right.
- D.M. One of those mysteries of war....
- T.K. Right.
- D.M.we haven't heard about eh?
- T.K. ~~It seems~~ We changed in Algeria, we changed ships there.
- D.M. Right.
- T.K. And just got ~~at~~ to another ship. We got onto a french boat from Algeria and it wasn't reported ().
- D.M. Well now what are your memories or what were your first impressions of Naples?
- T.K. Well of course it was a different country and we didn't see it under ideal conditions, but I enjoyed it at least.
- D.M. Where, where did the army, where did you set up headquarters? Outside Naples someplace?

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- T.K. The first headquarters was in a place called Kasoria. It's a short distance outside of Naples, and we were regrouping there. Picking up vehicles and from there we went to the Artona front.
- D.M. Right. Well now, being a promo or a military policeman with a bunch of fifth ~~div~~ ~~soldiers~~ soldiers, this would require a good deal of tact and getting along. Would you agree with that Tom?
- T.K. Well the fifth division and we had not much problem with them because we were with them in action and out of action so they had a lot of respect for us the same as we had for them and, in fact, we could depend on them for backing ().
- D.M. ha ha ha ha ha. Oh Tom it's good you know to talk to an MP but I can understand it. Now, it seems to me then, that you went ~~with~~ the fifth div. Of course there was quite an army pushing off Italy eh? The British, Americans, Canadians.
- T.K. Yes. We were part of the British eighth army and
- D.M. Right.
- T.K.and the American fifth army was on our left flank.
- D.M. Now, as I recall it, the big, the decisive battle there was casino. Is that right?
- T.K. I would say so. That was, held us up longer than any other part of Italy.
- D.M. What are your memories of Casino?
- T.K. What I can remember about it is having about two days of ~~about~~ fifteen hundred guns pounding. It was, I never heard anything like it in my life because it was the heaviest artillery branch I ever was close to....
- D.M. Yeah.
- T.K.and the American planes in daylight were bombing Casino. It was a good....
- D.M. Heard the guns night and day I suppose.
- T.K. Night and day steady, yeah.
- D.M. Well now Casino wasn't just a village. There was a monastery there as I recall.
- T.K. There was a monastery right on the peak of the hill which the Germans had ~~gone~~ cemented into and they were ~~gone~~ and

using that place to shell all the roads leading into Casino.

D.M. But when the troops finally went up the hill, the Germans had retreated from that point.

T.K. Yeah, the main German army had retreated. They only left a few behind to keep shelling, ~~off~~ to hold off the enemy, hold out () as long as they could.

D.M. Well you know Tom, those are incredible memories to have to be present at things like that. Now I haven't asked you, are there any fellows around Sudbury here or Copper Cliff here or Levack, men that you met in England or in Italy or any of those places?

T.K. Well I met Norm Crofferd. I met him in Italy. He was from here, he's in Toronto now, and one member of the Copper Cliff police department, Norm Harper. I think I just missed him over there. In fact, I believe we met on the same road but didn't recognize him.

D.M. Well then, things got quieted down after Casino did they?

T.K. Yes a bit. After Casino, we moved up about three hundred miles north of Rome to a place called Lavena and we were there for about a month or more and the whole fifth division regrouped, came back to Leghorne and sailed from there into the south of France into Marsake.

D.M. Right, and from there?

T.K. And from Marsake we went up to the Boogian boarder to a place called () which was famous in the first world war.

D.M. Famous in the first world war, right.

T.K. And we regrouped there ~~and moved~~ and got new vehicles and from there went on up to Niagan.

D.M. And where were you when the world ended?

T.K. I was in Niagan when the world ended. They had them ~~on~~ up on the German boarder, and I can't recall the name of the place, we had just returned to Niagan then.

D.M. Alright. Give us a little background about the organization of a pogo core and military place, Tom. I mean there were hours when you would work and just how you ~~you~~ coped. How was it done?

- T.K. It could be two or three days at a time without a break and our duties were to make sure that the proper supplies got to the proper place. In other words, with the artillery moving up, that they got to ~~over~~ the artillery and the infantry supplies getting to the infantry. We were also responsible for handling the prisoners and moving them back into the bare areas.
- D.M. Oh yeah. Well now, would, how would you handle this? Would five men march a hundred prisoners back, or how was that handled?
- T.K. Well at first, we couldn't, in fact, we didn't take too many prisoners. They didn't give in too easily. We'd only get a few at a time. (), we didn't have time to dissolve them. They were coming so fast, because () keep on going.
- D.M. Is that right.
- T.K. They didn't even dissolve them because we didn't have the time because they were surrendering by the hundreds and....
- D.M. At this point, I guess they figured the war was over and they were preferred to surrender to the Canadians and ~~Ruse~~ British, to the Russians rather.
- T.K. They didn't () Russians I don't think.
- D.M. Well that's true Tom. I'd heard that before. Now, did you return back to Canada from Niagan?
- T.K. Yes, well I went to Amsterdam. We were seven months with the () of Amsterdam. All the Canadian troops were mostly in that area, in a area of probably fifty miles in Amsterdam.
- D.M. Now, tell us something about Amsterdam. What's it like?
- T.K. Well it's a very lovely city. Although again, we didn't see it under the best conditions. Food was rather scarce, rationed, but there were very nice people. I met some very ~~wonderful~~ people in Amsterdam, very nice people.
- D.M. Did many of them speak English?
- T.K. Ah, most of them could speak....
- D.M.some English.
- T.K.not too much as I was understood.

- D.M. Now what about, you'd see the windmills and the canals...
- T.K. Oh the canals....
- DM.and all those things that it's suppose to be eh?
- T.K. Yeah, it's a very nice city, it's very beautiful.
- D.M. Well, that's fine and I'm glad to hear that. Well then, however you after, after your period in Amsterdam you returned back to Canada and back to....
- T.K. ~~Quebe~~ Back to Canada and Copper Cliff and went out to Levack.
- D.M. Well now, had things changed very much in the meantime?
- T.K. Really there wasn't much change. Practically the same.
- D.M. And you were at Levack for, until when?
- T.K. I was in Levack until May of 1953.
- D.M. And then what happened?
- T.K. I was transferred to Creighton.
- D.M. mmhh, and, but you didn't stay indefinitely in Creighton.
- T.K. No. I met a sergeant at Creighton and in 19, I think it was 1956, I was transferred to ~~Lieve~~ Lively.....
- D.M. Well.
- T.K.and promoted to staff sergeant.
- D.M. Very fine, and then another move up, some years later.
- T.K. I believe it was 1962, I was transferred to headquarters in Copper Cliff as an inspector.
- D.M. Well, and did you then finish your career at Copper Cliff then as an inspector.
- T.K. I finished my career in Copper Cliff. At a, I think it was 1969, I was promoted to Deputy ~~of~~ Chief of Police, which I held until I ~~reitre~~ retired.
- D.M. Until you retired eh?
- T.K. Yeah.
- D.M. Now one thing we have not talkied about Tom, we've talked about St. Catherine's, Quebec, and Italy, and Casino, and everything else, but we have not talked about

Mrs. Killey or your family. Now listen, we've got to pick them up somewhere along the line here. When were you married and to whom sir?

T.K. I married Jean Rockheart. She was a Levack girl. Married in 1953.

D.M. Right, and do you have any family?

T.K. Yes. We have eight in the family.

D.M. Well now that's fine. What are their names? Where are they, and what are they doing now?

T.K. Five girls and three boys.

D.M. Right. Are they in this area?

T.K. One, my oldest daughter is married. She lives in Toronto. I've got two daughters married. One lives here in Sudbury and one in Lively.

D.M. Right. And what about the boys?

T.K. The boys are still going to school.

D.M. Oh yes, yes. Well now Tom, life has not been easy at all times for you, however, it worked out pretty well. Would it be fair to say that, or would you say, that Sudbury has been good to you?

T.K. Oh I'd say yes. Sudbury was very good to me.

D.M. Well....

T.K. After all, I didn't have to stay here if I could have bettered myself, I could have moved elsewhere.

D.M. Right.

T.K. And I like the people of Sudbury. My I've always enjoyed Sudbury. In fact, I'd miss it if I wasn't living here.

D.M. Fair enough. That's ~~the~~ nice~~st~~ tribute I've heard on the show Tom. Now, one final thought now, you know sometimes people think they have a tuff or whatever, have you, you, developed a philosophy of life of any kind Tom. Any advice you'd give to a young fellow? Or maybe not, I don't know.

T.K. It's pretty hard, a person of my age, to advice anybody who's, would be youngster, ()/

- D.M. I think you're right eh? It's, they claim the old guys, you don't change, but sometimes one wenders eh?
- T.K. But I think life is pretty well what ;you make it, and it's got, it's good and bad, but generally speaking, I enjoy life very much.
- D.M. Very fine. Friends and neighbours, our guest today is Tom Killey who retired in September, 1973, after thirty-four years ~~in-t-~~ and eleven months with International Nickel. He worked underground for a time. He was in the army in the () core, returned here, and retired with the rank of deputy chief. Mr. Killey, thank you very much for being our guest on Memories and Music.
- TK. Thank you sir very much.