



Niagara Area Historical Society _____ Niagara, Wisconsin

The Kimberly-Clark Years... 1898 to 1972...

Whistle Down the Wind...



I Remember – Precious Memories

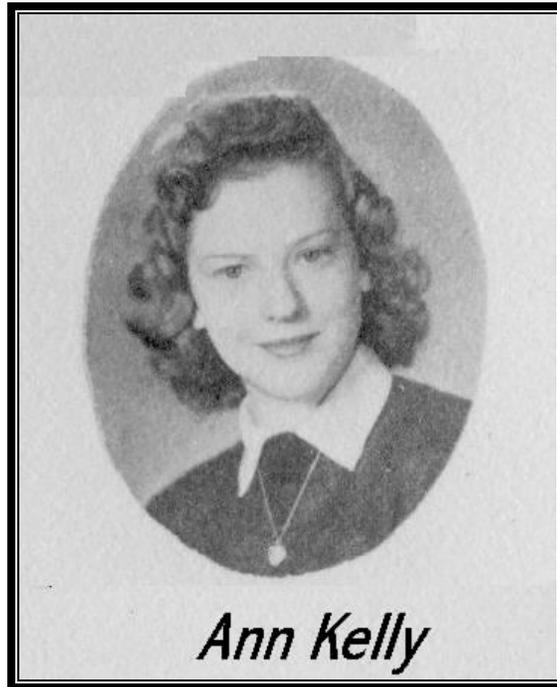
NHS Class of 1943

Ann (Kelly) Bartik...

I Remember – Precious Memories

Remembrances of Growing Up in Niagara, Wisconsin

By Ann (Kelly) Bartik



1943

Ann Bartik

NHS Class of 1943

Loganville, Georgia

May 3, 2003

Niagara High School



Niagara, Wisconsin

Ann (Kelly) Bartik

March 9, 2002 --- I Remember

On Saturday nights, Mr. Frank Leroy who had a horse driven cart with a lantern hanging from it would clean our out-houses. When I was 5 years old while straddling one of the holes my one foot slipped in. I can still see my shoe hanging on the clothesline. My mother had just given birth to Joan and grandma Stark was taking care of us so she is the one who cleaned me up.

My father making footprints in the snow beneath our bedroom window and telling us Santa was checking on us. Also remember my Dad leaving in the afternoon to get us a Christmas tree. He returned when it was dark with a terrible looking tree and my mother was furious. Seems Dad stopped at Thomson's Tavern and we never did find out where and how he got that tree but mother had him remove branches and insert them in his newly drilled holes. Christmases were always fun, lots of baking and cleaning and Dad threatening to let us open a gift early which never happened.

The family being quarantined with scarlet fever while my dad stayed at the hotel. The scarlet fever sign was removed from the outside door several days before Christmas. Mother did all her shopping from the catalog and managed to keep it hidden from us. The delivery man (Orville "Sonny" Phillips) would come every morning, stand on the back porch, take mother's order and delivery it in late afternoon. This was a routine service offered by Roy Berg's grocery store. Mr. and Mrs. (Constance) Berg extended credit to many people during the depression and I'm sure they didn't get it all back. They were thoughtful compassionate people and an asset to the community.

Mother sewed all our clothes. Our coats and snow suits were made from felt that had been on the paper machines. Mother would dye the felt; add contrasting material for collar and cuffs and we were dressed for winter. I cried several times about a boy in sixth grade who lacked warm clothing so mother made him a jacket and mittens. She gave the gift to my teacher who presented it to the boy so he would never know where it came from. I was so proud of mother.

How about the air raid and black out drills during World War II? The streetlights were turned off and all homes had to pull their window shades down so no light would shine through. If it did, the street captain or one of his monitors' visited you.

Saturday morning movies in the gym at the clubhouse. They had a projection room up stairs off the balcony so a large screen and chairs were added to the gym area and we had a theatre. Mostly cowboy and Indian films were shown with a few Shirley Temples thrown in for a change. Everyone loved the cartoons. The film always broke at least once and occasionally two or three times. During the "fixing" break everyone would stomp their feet and clap their hands to show their disappointment.

Our Winter Carnival was an event that involved half the people in town. We had games, skating races, ice shows and snow sculptures. Uncle Sam and a replica of the protestant church were two of my favorite all time sculptures. Mary Jane Lyman fell twice during our skating race and still beat me. Well, someone had to be last! My sister Cleo came in first in her age group that year. (Gave my parents something to rejoice over).

Remember having to stop and start your car in the middle of a steep hill without sliding backwards before getting your driver's license?

Sundays were special, started with church in the morning dressed in our "Sunday go meeting clothes" which my mother insisted we wear all day and of course we weren't suppose to get dirty. Had a big noon day dinner (all home made, even hot rolls and the pies) read the funnies and then off to spend our five cents. The long walk to and from the club plus the time spent deciding whether we wanted a five cent ice cream cone or two for a penny pieces of candy took up a good part of the afternoon. When I was about 11 my dad would take me to the local baseball games and I found it more enjoyable than listening to the Chicago Cubs game on radio. Then too, dad always bought me a treat from the concession stand. Sunday was the Lord's day and we didn't do any scrubbing or deep cleaning which was fine with me.

I'm sure we all remember Walter Winchell, Gabriel Heater, Jack Armstrong, the Shadow and many more radio programs. We always had to be quiet when the news was on. How about Orson Well's scary program and I can't forget the boxing matches. Obviously Dad had control of that radio dial.

Wedding receptions at the Grange Hall--you could crash the party, nobody cared, and you could learn how to polka. Most of the time you didn't know the bride or groom.

Whistles were part of our lives especially those that originated in the mill. One whistle at noon, one at nine P.M. our curfew time, a long eerie whistle meant that someone was lost and volunteers were needed to join the

search. Volunteer firemen responded to a series of whistles that would indicate the location of a fire such as two long and three short. Amazingly it worked! Nothing high tech about our fire department. The Niagara library reminds me of the distinct smell of books, dead silence and Mrs. Marcelline LaPine's stern look. (that was the reason for the silence). She was really a nice lady.

The band concerts in the park provided by Jack Prentice and his orchestra. Same orchestra that we danced to at the KC Hall in Iron Mountain on Friday nights in 1941 and 1942. You went to Mike's root beer stand after the dance if you had time, as our parents were strict about our curfews.

The times mother took us up on the bluff to pick berries that she turned into jam and jellies. There were several trips during the berry season and the only thing I liked about the ordeal was the super picnic lunches we had.

From our back yard garden, Cleo and I got paid for picking potato bugs--ten bugs for a penny. Mother used to use the water from the washing machine to scrub the porches. We had clothes lines in the basement that were used during the cold winter months. We never owned a mop, floors were scrubbed on our hands and knees with a sturdy brush and the kitchen walls were washed about every three months. We girls were always cleaning the kitchen cabinets and drawers and I came to the conclusion years later this chore had to have been used as one of our punishments.

Fresh bakery delivered to your neighborhood three times a week. Oh those fresh potato donuts!!! Bakery goods were from a bakery in Norway, Michigan.

Fourth of July picnic at Lake Antoine with family and friends. Only time of year my parents bought a case of "pop". Our standard summer drink was cool aide.

Girl scout meetings and banquet, which meant a new dress, and the excitement of going to the new scout camp at Timm's Lake.

Mr. Eugene Comte, the tailor from Marinette who had a suit club. You would pay a couple dollars every week and when you had enough money in your account he would make you a suit. I remember his suits--they were so nice. When I was older I had him make me a suit, the best suit I ever owned. I remember him in a good looking tweed suit and he always wore a hat.

Big event--Governor Heil came to Niagara and gave an address from the steps of the Kimlark Inn and we got out of school so we could see and hear

him. Thinking back, he must have been trailing in the polls as important politicians didn't come to our little town.

Believe it or not, the hills behind the Shattuck schools were used for sledding during recess, I know as someone ran into me as I was climbing up the hill. The results a broken leg. Lila Dejmek pulled me home on my sled which I had taken against my parents orders so of course mother said God was punishing me.

Nuns coming to town for the summer and yes the catholic kids attended religious instructions every morning for six weeks. Must admit I found these classes more fun than attending Father Troy's (Trojanowski) weekly one hour sessions that were held in the school's auditorium. No conflict between Church and State---God was allowed in our schools and any other place he wanted to go. I enjoyed the nuns so much that for a short time (very short time) I thought I wanted to be one. You couldn't go to church and not see one of the McIntyre's. The boys were altar boys, their father an usher and mother played the organ and sang in the choir.

Miss Malina Beauchamp, our 3rd grade teacher wore bright colored clothes and lots of jewelry that was associated with Mexico where she spent her summers. I remember the Spanish song she taught us but I can't spell the lyrics.

Our beloved Miss Daisy Milks---Always thought she should have been named teacher of the century. Wish my sons could have experienced a Miss Milks.

The town swimming pool and the nice man Mr. Folke Johansson who was in charge. All you had to do was swim the length of the pool and back to receive a pin that gave you the freedom to go beyond the three foot line and play in deep water.

Oh! the Gypsies who camped in the vacant field at the north entrance of town caused some rumors and a change in our living style. Parents locked their doors (many people left their doors unlocked at that time) and kept their children close by as rumor had it the gypsies would steal your children and anything else they could get their hands on. Well, they don't steal children but my experience years later at St. Joseph's Hospital in Atlanta will confirm the rumor they will steal anything not nailed down. This same field was also used for several "old time" tent revivals.

Must mention the "Sweet Shop" a place in 1941-43 where high school students could hang out, get a candy bar or soft drink and dance to juke box music. It was run by a retired couple, George and Mabel Bougniet. The Sweet Shop was in the brick building on main street across from where

(Oscar and Ruth) Durand's lived. Dr. Mac (McCormack) once had his office upstairs in this building. When he vacated it, George made an apartment up there and moved in. They didn't have any children and Mrs. Bougniet dressed real nice and her hair was always perfect.

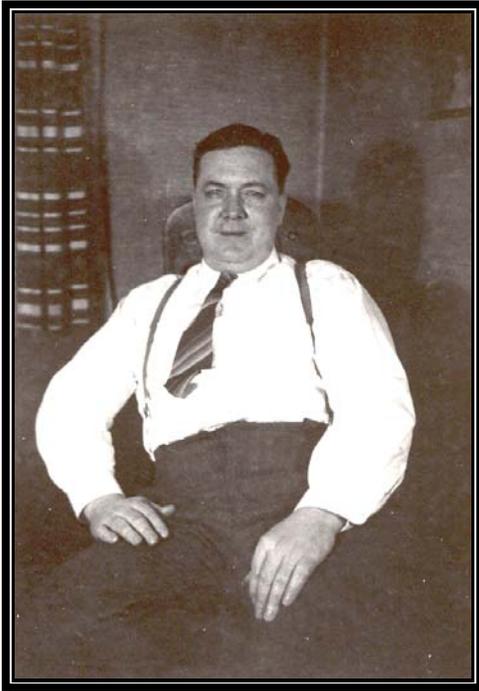
The house next to Floyd Kelly's belonged to Fred Dejmek. There was a large nice sand pile next to Dejmek's where we spent many hours playing until the Clifford Towns family moved a house on that lot. There weren't any homes beyond Town's until years later. We moved when I was almost 13 and that's when Ray Saler bought the house. I think!

Leland Riley and his wife Irene owned the building across from Angus McIntyre's. His father-in-law, Mr. Ernest McAllister owned the place until he died. Johnny Kososki first had his tavern in that building and then there was the Marcouiller's grocery store.

At one time, Dad was the town's pinochle champ so it's easy to understand why we girls all learned the game. (I now play internet pinochle.) As a family, we spent a lot of time playing various card games.

Signed: Ann (Kelly) Bartik

-- Family Profile --



Floyd



Julia

Floyd Kelly was born in 1905 in Mankato, Minnesota.
Floyd died in February of 1975 and is buried in Niagara Cemetery.

Julia Elizabeth (Newcomb) Kelly was born in 1903 in Appleton, Wisconsin. Julia died in July of 1985 in Downers Grove, Illinois where she had been living with daughter Joan and is buried in Niagara Cemetery.

Children:

James Daniel was born in 1924 and died at three years of age.
Ann was born in 1925 and finished Niagara High School in 1943.
Cleo was born in 1927 and finished Niagara High School in 1945.
Joan was born in 1930 and finished Niagara High School in 1948.
Sue was born in 1936 and finished Niagara High School in 1954.

Niagara Area Historical Society



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Donald C. Raboin

NHS Class of 1955

Novato, California

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