



# Orleans County Historical Association

TABLE OF CONTENTS - J. Kenneth Moriarty Interview

SUBJECTS

NAMES

- \* barber (56 years, plus)
  - changes
  - apprenticeship / training
  - shaves / hair cuts
  - Witch Hazel face steams
  - beards / long hair
  - women's "bobbed" hair
  - shaving mugs / brushes
  - spittoons
  - barber chairs
  - razors: straight & safety
  - cash register
  - hair for toupee
  - hair barbers / stylists
  - cost to customer / changes
- \* Medina Journal newspaper
  - office boy
  - salary / duties
- \* Bakery / Robertson & Johnson
  - duties / salary
- \* the Depression
  - Medina banks close
  - effect on business
- \* Prohibition
  - saloons / speak-easy
  - home brew / raids
- \* ethnic groups into Medina
  - Polish / Puerto Ricans
  - Italians / blacks
- \* World War II
  - Company F leaves Medina
  - Medina Fire Department
  - women get the vote
  - Harrisons, Lockport

Daniel Moriarty, father Catherine Peel, mother  Ethel Hudson, wife Patricia Moriarty, daughter Bradley Shelp Brad.Jr., David Joanne Moriarty, daughter Ralph Squire Jeffrey, Judith, Janet
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Harry Blount  
 John McClellan  
 Arnold Rayburn  
 Johnnie Oaks / Vincent Campana  
 John Waldner / Mr. Ferlazzo  
 Mr. Durnin / Johnnie Day  
 John Edward Furman / Otto Guli  
 Johnnie Wochna / Chester Broughton  
 Mrs. Litchfield / Father Hogan  
 Johnnie Butts / Charlie LeVan  
 Harry Messina / Joseph Sedwick  
 Ruth Raymondjack / Mrs. Sarchia  
 Cary Lattin /

Donald Fox  
 Cy Roberts  
 Bill Stear  
 Ken Moriarty

BARBERS

Sacred Heart Club  
 Knights of Columbus  
 Senior Citizens of Medina  
 Medina Historical Society  
 Shelridge Country Club - golf  
 Niagara-Orleans Country Club

trolley / first automobile

1908-1992



# Orleans County Historical Association

## INTERVIEW

J. Kenneth Moriarty  
500 Davis Avenue  
Medina, New York

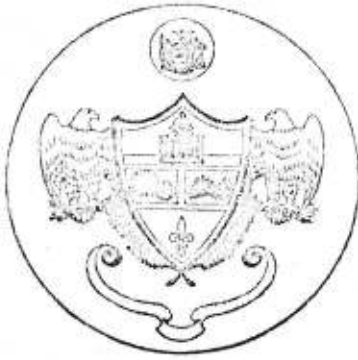
J. Kenneth Moriarty was born June 24, 1908.

Interviewed November 15, 1978 by Helen McAllister, Medina.

M Moriarty

Mc McAllister





# Orleans County Historical Association

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to collect information about the historical development of Orleans County by means of tape-recorded conversations with people whose experiences reflect the county's growth.

These tapes and transcriptions will be preserved as educational resources and possible publication (all or in part).

I hereby release this tape and transcription to the Orleans County Historical Association.

J. Kenneth Moriarty  
Signed

Nov 15 1970  
Date

Understood and agreed to:

[Signature]  
INTERVIEWER

Nov 15 1970  
Date

For the Orleans County Historical Association, the Oral History Project, Mr. J. Kenneth Moriarty , 500 Davis Avenue, Medina, New York is being interviewed by Helen McAllister of Medina.

Mr. Moriarty is a barber with more than 56 years experience.

M I was born in Medina, N.Y. June 24, 1908.

Mc Were you born at home?

M Yes and the doctor was Dr. Rogan. .... My father's name was Daniel Moriarty. My mother's maiden name was Catherine Peel.

Mc Do you have brothers and sisters?

M Well, it was a family where my Dad died when I was six months old. My Mother remarried and she married a man that had three children with his, my Mother had five children, and they had four children between them. So we had quite a family!

Mc Is Moriarty your own father's name?

M Yes. Mother married a man by the name of John McClellan.

Mc Did they continue to live in Medina?

M Yes.

Mc Where did you first go to school?

M Saint Mary's School in Medina, N.Y. and that was in 1915.

Mc How far did you go in school?

M Just through eighth grade, that's all.

Mc And there was a little graduation ceremony, probably?

M Yes, at our school. When I got out of school I was 15, but I started in the barber business when I was 14

I worked nights after school and on Saturdays while I was finishing 8th grade in school.

Mc Who did you work for?

M My uncle, Harry Blount. He asked me if I wanted to learn the barber business and I took him up on it. He took me in at the age of 14, to teach me the business. At that time you didn't have to have school education as far as the barber school education. You didn't have to have that. You could get your education in a barber shop, which made it very nice at that time! I wish they would do it today. They don't do it.

Mc Where was his shop located?

M At 113 East Center Street in Medina.

Mc Did he have other barbers working with him?

M Yes. At the time, he had a man by the name of Arnold Rayburn. He was formerly from Brockport, N.Y. A very nice little guy and one of the smallest men that I ever worked with. In fact his picture is right in that picture there. ... He was just exactly five foot tall. He had one of the smallest pair of hands I ever worked with. He wore a size four glove; so you can imagine what his hand was like!

Mc How did he reach the top of some of the customers heads?

M Well, by lowering the chair and if they were too high, he would ask them to squat down a little bit.

Mc There's a third man in the picture, or isn't this in your shop?

M That's the shop. The third man is me.

Mc When you started working at the age of 14, do you remember what your pay was?

M I had no pay. You worked a year until you got your apprenticeship in. You worked a year for nothing. You were learning the business. When I started to get paid, I got \$15.00 a week. ..

Mc Did you just give hair-cuts, or do more than that?

M Oh no. At that time, we did hair-cuts, shaves, shampoos, massages, face steams. We did everything. Today we don't do any of that, just the hair-cuts.

Mc Then from the age of 15 on, you were a full time barber?

M Right! At that time, we used to be open at 8 o'clock in the morning 'till 8 o'clock, five days a week. Then Saturday, we worked from 8 to 12 mid-night before we closed, and then we would finish up after that. Sometimes we would get out at two o'clock Sunday morning. Then we'd have to be back at nine o'clock on Sunday morning, and worked from 9 to 12.

Mc You were open on Sundays?!

M Just shaves, 9 to 12 Sunday mornings. I think that lasted about a year after I first started before they cut it out.

Mc Why would men come to a barber shop to get shaved?

M At that time, pretter-near 90% of your men went to the barber shop to get shaved. The thing that did away with the biggest share of the shaving, was at the time women started coming into the barber shops. Then men got so they wouldn't wait that length of time to get a shave and they went to safety razors.

Mc Why did women come into the barber shop?

M Well, back then, I won't try to give you the correct date, but it was back in the '20s when women started to come in the barber shops to get their hair "bobbed".

Mc Didn't they have beauty parlors?

M No, not at that time. All the women that wanted that kind of work went to barber shops to get it done.

Mc Did you ever cut women's hair?

M Oh a good many of them! Oh yes.

Mc Was there a special trick to cutting women's hair?

M Well, there was no two women who wanted their hair cut alike! (laughter) So that was one thing that you ran into. It was always different and of course, different ones would come in with a picture... they'd want their hair cut "this way" or they'd want it cut "that way". Some would come in and say, "I want my hair cut like Mrs. So and So", and maybe Mrs. So and So you could do it on, but this one you couldn't and then you had to try and explain that. And they couldn't figure out why. But some women's heads are not shaped like the others, you know.

Mc Did you ever, I think this was probably done in the early 1800's. but did you ever get very long women's hair and sell it? Or did anyone?

M Not in my time. Now they used to sell it. In fact they do some today.

Mc In America?

M Oh sure. They use certain kinds of hair for men's toupees, and like that, right now! (laughter)

Mc And now the men can go into women's beauty parlors and wait their turn, right along with the women. So it's reversed!

M Right! Right! Absolutely!

- Mc Let's go back to the early days. Would you describe, as much as you can, in detail, what a barber shop would look like? If a man came in would he have his own shaving mug, and that sort of thing?
- M We used to have a regular show-case where they would put their shaving cups. We would show them in there, with their name on them and when they came in to get a shave, we would get their cup out of the case and use that. And as soon as we would get through, rinse it and put it back in the show-case for them. We did that for, oh, quite a few years.
- Mc How often would a man come in for a shave?
- M The average man we would shave three times a week. And then we would have some that would get shaved every day. In fact Johnnie Oaks was one that got shaved every day, while he was Supervisor for the County here for a long while.... for the Town of Ridgeway.
- Mc What determined whether they were shaved every day; the fast growth of their beards?
- M Oh yes, sure. And what their job was. In other words, someone that was going to be before the public all the while wanted to keep clean shaved all the while. That was the reason. And of course, your old type shop had the spittoons and everything else, which you can see in that picture. They were in there at that time oo.
- Mc You said you had a case with the cups for each man. Cup and brush? How did you get the names on the cups? Did you do it; were they painted on?
- M No. Whoever bought theirs, if they wanted it, they got their own name put on it. It was painted on. ...
- Mc What was the brush made of?
- M The biggest share of them were made of camel hair.
- Mc Wasn't that expensive?
- M Yes, they were. Today that same brush, at that time we used to buy for 75¢, costs you \$7.50 or higher. There was always a brush that was what they called set in rubber. Not rubber-set, but set-in-rubber. They would guarantee that the bristles would not pull out
- Mc Where were they made?
- M The biggest share of them were made, at that time, I think,

I won't be positive of that, I think the biggest share of them were made in Germany

Mc How many customers would you have on an average day?

M The early days? Well, of course that's kind of hard for the simple reason that some men would come in and get a shave, some men would come in and get a hair-cut and a shave, some would come in and get a massage and the whole works. So it varied. If you did 20 men a day, you had a big day.

Mc How much would you charge for a shave for instance?

M When I first started in, it was 15¢. Hair cuts was 25¢, and shampoos were 35¢, massages were 35¢, Rub-a-Tonic was a dime.

Mc A rub-a-tonic ? What was that?

M A rub of tonic, hair tonic. If they wanted a head rub.

Mc What was a facial?

M A massage. We used to use the mud creams, or whichever cream they wanted. Just depends on what they wanted.

Mc Would a man get shaved first, and then get a facial?

M Oh yes. You had to get shaved first.

Mc What was the advantage of a facial massage? ...

M Take off black-heads! Oh yes. Definitely! Sure! That was the biggest share of them wanted it for. And of course it would make them feel nice too. Of course if a guy came in and had been "out" the night before, you'd ask if he wanted a facial steam. Why, we used to do that sometimes if they came in with a "big head".

Mc What is the advantage of a facial steam? Does it clear your head?

M Right! We used to use what they called Witch Hazel steam

Mc How do you do that; take a towel?

M Get it real hot, put it on, and put Witch Hazel right on top of the towel.

Mc What would that do?

M Well, it just seemed to relax them. I have the Witch Hazel right in the case now. To this day.

Mc Do you ever get calls for that today?

M Not any more, no.

Mc Not a cure for a hangover then?



M That's right! (laughter)

Mc You have said that your barber shop was open on Saturday nights, real late. Life was different back then. Was Saturday night a big night?

M This was a Saturday town! In other words, that's when you had your big day! At that time, we used to be open 'till 8 o'clock every night, five nights a week, Monday through Friday. The reason for this was, all your factories here in town worked 'till six o'clock at night. So if you got any business from your factory trade, you had to either get it Saturday night, or you had to get it after they got out of work, which made it a long day.. But everybody worked a long day back in those days. It wasn't an eight hour day and then you were done.

Mc Did you get people from the canal?

M We used to get them if they docked here. If they wanted any work, we'd get them. Course we were right close to the canal at that time, right down on East Center Street where they docked. We were right close to it. Of course back in the days when the trolleys were running, we used to get the trolley men.

Mc You would get more than just your regular customers?

M Oh yeah! You would get some transit trade. Sure.

Mc Did the people have to make appointments to come in?

M No. No, it was "first come first served". That's the way it was and that's the way it is today in the barber business, the biggest share of it. Some work by appointments today, but not too many of them.

Mc What about the furniture and other equipment? You have two barber chairs. They look like old fashioned chairs. Are they?

M The one that you are looking at there right now is over 80 years old. This one here I bought second handed in 1944. ... I bought it from a fellow who used to be in business here in Medina. He moved to Lockport and his stuff was stored here and I bought his equipment.

Mc What was his name?

M His name was Vincent Campana. He lives here in Medina today.

Mc How would a modern barber chair differ from this chair?

M A lot more plush than they were back in those days. They have sunken ash-trays on the arms where we don't have ash-trays on these at all. ... This old one, you can see, you even had to put a standard underneath it to raise it up higher where I wanted it.

Mc How old would that chair be?

M Well, John Waldner owned that chair. He was the one that moved the barber shop over here. He used to be in the shop where the Viking Hotel is right now. He moved over here in 1927 and he brought that chair along with him. Of course he was in the barber business over there for a good many years before I went into it. So you can see how old this chair is. It's quite an antique. I've had chances to sell it, but I don't want to do it! (laughter).

Mc I don't blame you for not wanting to sell it!

You have an early cash register, is that right?

M There's an early one. (points to it)

Mc When you say "early", would that be before 1927?

M Before '27. That cash register came out in 1909. The National Cash Register. Each individual key registers itself, and you have to add up the keys afterwards. What you've taken in. It doesn't total it for you. You have to add them up afterwards.

Mc ... Does it still work? And do you still use it?

M Yes, it still works. I did use it up until the time that Mr. Ferlazzo died and I took over the shop.

Mc Was Mr. Ferlazzo a barber?

M Yeah. I came in here with him in 1974.

Mc Let's trace your barber shop days. You said that you were with your uncle on East Center Street. .... How long were you there?

M I was with him from 1922 to 1928. He sold out in 1928 to Mr. Durnin and Mr. Day. ... I worked with them up until 1934. Then I went to work at Harrisons (General Motors in Lockport) but barbered at the same time. I barbered nights.

Mc You did what they call "moon-lighted"?

- M Yeah, I had to because when they took Company F away from here, they took 65 customers away from me in one smash. So I had to do something else.
- Mc That was during World War II ?
- M Right. 1943. So I went to Harrisons and went to work.
- Mc How long were you there?
- M Two years and a half is all. "Till the war was over. Then I opened up my barber shop in my own home on West Avenue. Now the house is gone. It was right next to Saint Mary's church. In 1945 I opened up on Main Street, in the front of my brother's billard parlor.
- Mc Whereabouts is that?
- M Right down now next to what used to be Cardone's Liquor Store. The store is this side of it. Formerly it used to be Slack's Grocery Store, previous to that. I was there until 1957 and then I went down next to Johnnie Wochna's building, next to Ranallo's Bowling Alley.... They are both dead and gone now. I was there until 1974. Then I come over here on West Center Street.
- Mc Was this tile floor here then?
- M This tile floor has been here since 1927. This building used to be a hotel: the old Hart House. ... This is now the Newell Shirt Factory , owned now by Mr. Raymond.
- Mc You have moved around a lot. ... When did you come into owning the business and say, " I'm the Boss"?
- M Well, when I left Harrisons, then I was my own boss. From then on. Of course when I came in here with Mr. Ferlazzo in 1974, see, the building that I was in on North Main Street was sold and I had to move, and he being a very good friend of mine says, "Why don't you come on with me?" So I came and unfortunately he only lived five months after I came in with him. But it was a very nice set-up between us. I was working Monday and Tuesday, all day, and Saturday morning. Then he worked Thursday, Friday and Saturday morning. So we were able to keep the shop open five days a week. Where the way I work now, I can keep it open three mornings.
- Mc When did Saturday nights stop being the big day? ...

- M As far as I was concerned, after my two daughters got through college, that was when I started to cut my Saturday nights down. In fact while they were in college I worked six days a week from 8 o'clock in the morning 'till 10 o'clock at night. I made up my mind I was going to put them through school. I never had the opportunity, so I wanted to make sure that they did. Then after they got through school, then I started to cut the hours down and eventually I got the barbers to where we all got down to at least 6 o'clock at night on Saturday night. Now there's only one barber here that works 'till 6 o'clock Saturday night. That's Don Fox. I think he's the only one.
- Mc Is there a Barber's Union of any kind, or just an agreement?
- M No, there isn't (a union) here. There is in the cities, but not here.... Today every man runs his own shop. We have one man now that works Monday through Friday and closes Saturday. And there's another man that just works Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. I work Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings. Don Fox is the only one that's open all the five days.
- Mc How much do you charge for a hair cut today?
- M I'm only charging \$2.25 'cause I'm on Social Security and can only earn so much money anyway. Rather than say to the customers, "Well look, I can't take anymore", I'd rather take a few more customers because they're old friends of mine. I've got an older trade. Ninety percent of my trade is over 60 years of age. So, I'd rather work in a few more customers. So I don't bother raising the price.
- Mc You enjoy people?
- M Oh very well! I have a customer that is still with me. He was my first customer when I started in business 56 years ago and he's still a customer of mine! Been with me 56 years.
- Mc You mean that he's still got hair?! (laughter)
- M Yes, he's still got hair. Unfortunately the last few times, I've had to go up and cut his hair at the house.
- Mc What is his name?
- M His name was John Edward Furman.

Mc You have said that you also go out and cut Chester Broughton's hair?

M Yes. And I have an appointment this morning at 10:30 at the hospital to cut a head of hair.

Mc How many home visits do you make regularly? Quite a few?

M Right now I have, let's see, I have five homes that I have to go to cut older men's hair. Unfortunately, I lost a very good friend of mine just a couple of weeks ago. A very good friend of mine, an older gentleman. Well, as I say, I always feel as though they've been friends of mine and I've got to take care of them.

Mc I wonder if we could go back a little. You said that you were through school at the 8th grade and that you started working right away. Would you tell us how and where you met the woman who eventually became your wife?

M She took her sister's place in a store right across the street from the barber shop that I worked at. Her name was Ethel Hudson. The fellow that I worked with, by the name of Johnnie Day, he said, "Well, I thought Mrs. Litchfield has gone to England". And I says, "That's not Mrs. Litchfield." And he says, "Yes it is!" And I says, "No it isn't!" So we made a little bet and I went over, and I says, just to see who it was. I found out I'd never met the girl and she was Mrs. Litchfield's sister, Ethel Hudson.

Mc And that's how you met the woman who became your wife?

M Right! And we've been happily married 48 years. (See last page).

Mc Where were you married?

M Married at Saint Mary's Church in 1930.

Mc Was it what we would call a big church wedding?

M No. We were married right in the rectory. Father Hogan married us. A very lovely man.

Mc From that marriage you have how many children?

M Two lovely daughters: Patricia and Joanne.

Mc You mentioned that during WW II, Company F left Medina. Can you tell us what you remember about that particular period in the history of Medina. What was war-time like?

- M Very sad, as far as I was concerned. Very sad to see the boys leave. They left here in 1940, I think, when they left here to go to Fort McClellan. At that time, of course, we didn't realize we was going to be in a war. So when they came home on furloughs after the war was declared, some of them came home before they went away and any of them that got any work done (such as a hair cut), I never charged them. In fact a picture was in the paper just the other day of young Johnnie Butts. He was a customer of mine. (J. Butts was killed in war).
- Mc Yes, we owe a great deal to them.
- M Yes, I should say we do.
- Mc Was the Armory closed at that time?
- M No, they had a standing National Guard here all during the war.
- Mc ... Would you tell us about your interests in any fraternal organizations in town?
- M I belong to the Sacred Heart Club now. I used to belong to the Moose Club at one time. I did belong to the Knights of Columbus at one time. As I said, I'm an Associate Member of the Sacred Heart Club. I enjoy their club very much. And today I belong to the Senior Citizens Association of Medina.
- Mc You are rather important there. Aren't you the President?
- M I'm the President of the Station Masters of Senior Citizens.
- Mc Which, I believe, involves the men ?
- M Yes. Your husband was there yesterday. Then I belong to the Medina Historical Society. ... And I love to play golf. It's one of my favorite sports.
- Mc Where do you play?
- M Mostly at Niagara-Orleans Country Club.
- Mc Is that a private club?
- M Semi-private. They have a membership, but people from the public can play. Anybody can come in and play the course. They do have a membership though. It's what they call semi-private. Now, Shelridge Country Club up here is strictly private. That's the difference.
- Mc You don't belong to that?
- M No. I did one year. I didn't enjoy the course as much as I

would an 18 hole course. It's only a nine hole course, and I enjoy an 18 hole course.

Mc You must have been active all your life to be able to play that many holes of golf, and work too.

M Right. I have been.

I started in work when I was about eight years old in the Medina Journal office. I was an office boy . Then I went from there over to a bakery. Worked in a bakery ; used to be where Lindsay and Gregory is right now.

Mc What did you do at the bakery?

M Well the first thing, we had to get up coal from the cellar to run their furnaces for their ovens for the day. Then I'd have to wait until the bread came out of the ovens and then I'd help shake the loaves out of the tins. Then I'd have to stay and wrap all the bread after it cooled. They used to run it through a single wrapper. Just a loaf at a time. You'd have to push it through a sealer. Oh yeah, I've done everything!

(end of side I of taped interview)

Mc You said that you worked at the Medina Journal newspaper?

M I worked with the Medina Journal office when they were on East Center Street and I was with them when they moved up to their present location.

Mc What did you do? You said you were an office boy.

M Well, you did a little bit of everything. What I mean -- you couldn't do anything as far as the printing is concerned, but then when they got through, at that time they had no folder so we used to stay and fold all the papers by hand. And we used to get out about 8 o'clock at night.

Mc Did you get paid by the hour?

M I got 75¢ a week!! (laughter)

Mc How long did you work there?

M I worked there for two years, then I went to work in the bakery.

Mc Was Mr. Waters the head of the newspaper?

M Mr. Hinchey was the head of it at that time.

Mc And then you worked at the bakery.

M Robertson and Johnson ran the bakery. When they gave me my first week's wages, I thought I was a millionaire!! They gave me \$7.50, so that was ten times what I was getting at the newspaper.

Mc You were carrying coal, and wrapping bread?

M Yeah. I used to have to carry coal up from the cellar. That was the first job I had at night. I used to have to fill the coal box so they would have enough to run ovens the next day.

Mc You did all this while still going to school?

M Oh yes. We had to! As I say, there was a big family of us. We had to make every nickel we could.

Mc What kind of work did your father do?

M My step-father was an upholsterer, furniture upholsterer. Very good one too! He worked for the Empire Couch Company in Medina, which at that time was on Orient Street across from, well, at that time, W.J.Gallagher's Livery Barn, which is now Cook Wholesale. Been a lot of changes in this town since I was on the main drag. A lot of them!!

In fact right now I'm the oldest merchant, or the oldest businessman on the street, as far as the years of service.

Mc 56 years? But you are only 70 !

M Yes.

Mc How old was Harry Messina when he retired from Jay's Drug Store?

M I think Harry was just 70, but see, he'd only been here a short while. I can remember when Harry came here.

Mc When the customers came into your barber shop to get shaved regularly, did you have many businessmen that came in?

M Oh yes! Sure! Yeah, there was one man that used to get shaved three times a week. He was a businessman here for a good many years. His name was Charlie LeVan. He got shaved three days a week. No barber in town liked to shave him 'cause his whiskers were so tough!. But he always came to our shop the biggest share of the time. We always shaved him. We didn't care.

Mc Do men ever get shaved in the barber shop today?



- M Very few. You might run into one in the city once in awhile, but very few do any shaving today. Because for the simple reason they don't want to pay the price. It take you just as much time today to shave a man as it does to cut his hair. And if I tell a man he's going to pay \$2.00 for a shave, he thinks it's terrible! But it takes just as much time.
- Mc Did you used to shave the men with a straight razor? (Yes). Was this before the safety razor was invented?
- M Oh yeah. Of course when we shave anybody today, if I go to the hospital, I still use a straight razor. (shows the straight razor) The new type of razor they came out with, we don't have to bother doing any honing anymore. It's a straight edge but with just a little safety razor blade in it. So we don't have to do any honing anymore. Just take a package of blades with us to the hospital and if it gets dull, just put in another one.
- Mc Do you still have razor straps?
- M Oh sure. I even strap these newer blades.
- Mc Is that so you can get more shaves out of each blade? (Yes). When you shave at home, do you use a straight razor?
- M I use electric razor today. It's so much quicker and a lot handier too.
- Mc About a year ago you made a trip to California and your name got into the newspaper about something you hadn't planned at all. Tell us about that, will you?
- M Well, in fact the gentleman who went with me was Joseph Sedwick. He wanted his wife to go to Florida and she wouldn't go to Florida. I asked my wife to go to California and she wouldn't go to California. So him and I made up a deal that we'd go to California together. We went out to see a friend of mine, Otto Guli. He had married a girl from Medina. Her name was Ruth Raymondjack. I got acquainted with about 25 years ago, and he kept after me to come out, so we finally went out. And we had the misfortune to get in a hotel out there that sprung a leak!
- Mc Now what do you mean?! (laughter)
- M This hotel was only four years old. It was in the city of Mission Viejo, California. They had their hot water boiler on

the roof and it sprung a leak! Luckily, we were on the third floor and it didn't get in our room. I got up to take a shower that morning and, of course, being an early riser, I was in the shower about 5:15 a.m. and I turned on the water and no hot water. Then, all of a sudden the lights go out! So then I come out of the room and I heard the motors running. I opened up the window and looked down and saw two fire trucks. Well now I'm going to start looking. I wanted to find out what was wrong. I went down to the desk and they told me that we had to evacuate the hotel! Through this good friend of mine that lived in California, he had let us have a car to use for the week while we were out there, so I had the car right at the hotel. So, within an hour we were registered in another hotel. We were very fortunate in that way. He was just a grand host, as far as we were concerned.

Mc Did that leaking water destroy the hotel; did anybody get hurt, or anything like that?

M It cost the hotel over \$100,000.00 in damages just to the hotel. Nobody got hurt because there was no fire. Just the water. But it cost the hotel a lot of money, not only in the viewpoint of lost business but in just the damage it did. They had just redecorated the hotel, put all new carpeting in, everything. It was quite a misfortune for them.

Mc And an unexpected surprise for you!

M Right! But, as I say, nobody got hurt.

Mc Have you taken trips and vacations? Do you go hunting?

M I have never hunted in my life but Mrs. Moriarty and I have taken two trips with the Senior Citizens. We took one trip to Bermuda, and we took another trip to the Hawaiian Islands. So we've had a couple of nice trips with the Senior Citizens and it's been very nice. Bermuda is one of the nicest islands I think I was ever on. The morning glory's bloom the year around. It's just gorgeous, just gorgeous! And they are all over down there. I loved it down there!

Mc (The mailman comes in with "junk" mail). Do you get more "junk mail" than you ever used to?

M Oh yes, every day.

Mc It's a good way to advertise, I guess.

M I don't know whether it is or not because 90% of the people throw it away before they look at it. As far as I'm concerned it is a waste of money, as far as the taxpayers are concerned.

Mc Isn't it paid for by the company that sends it out?

M Yeah, bulk rate. It cost the Post Office more to deliver that ("junk mail") than they get out of it.

Mc ... Do you remember any fires, or how fire-fighting has changed?

M Yes, I can remember when they used to draw the equipment here with horses. Today, naturally, it's a lot more efficient. One of the biggest fires I can remember here in Medina happened while I was still in Saint Mary's School. That was the old White's Hotel. That's down right now where Medina Parts Association is. That used to be the White's Hotel. That burned in the winter time. ...

Mc Was it all volunteer, the fire department, at that time?

M There always was a paid fire department here in Medina, ever since I can remember.

Mc How many horses would they have drawing the wagon?

M Two.

Mc Would they have just one fire truck? What if a fire broke out here and one in another part of town?

M That was it. They had just one at the time.

Mc And you had to wait your turn?

M That's right.

Mc Did the fire wagon carry water with it, or did they have fire hydrants around, or what?

M Gosh, I can't really recall where they had fire hydrants. I know they wouldn't have them all over town because I can remember when they put the water system down through my street, years ago.

Mc Do you remember when they widened the canal?

M Just faintly. I can remember that they used to have what they called a "Swinging Bridge" that we used to have to walk across, back and forth across the canal at that time, which was right below Garrick's Insurance Office. Right between

that and the bridge was where they had the old "Swinging Bridge".

Mc Didn't Ceil White have a picture of that in one of her newspapers articles?

M Yes, that's it. We used to have to walk across that to get back and forth to school. Either that or go around by the lift bridge.

Mc It probably would be more fun to go on the swinging bridge?

M Oh sure! We didn't care. (laughter) Some men would go across; we'd get on it. Of course, we shouldn't have done it I know, but we used to get on it and get swinging, and some of the men would get a little scared!

Mc Do you remember your first automobile? What kind was it?

M It was a 1928 Ford.

Mc Who did you buy it from?

M Eugene Anderson, Senior. Right here in Medina. I bought that in 1932. That was after the trolley lines quit here. If the trolley lines had been running, I don't think I'd had ever bought an automobile; if they'd have kept running. Very cheap transportation at that time.

Mc The trolley line. I've heard a lot about it. Did it just cover the Medina area, or did it go farther than that?

M Oh it went from Rochester to Lockport! Oh yeah. And of course, then you changed at Lockport to go to Buffalo. It went right straight through. ... Once in awhile they'd run a double.

Mc What do you mean: run a double?

M Two together. Usually they ran single only. They always ran a double at night.... I mean just one trolley. Back in the days when they ran the doubles was when a lot of people came from Albion to work here in Medina at S. A. Cooks, or Mahar Manufacturing furniture. They used to run a double up 7 o'clock in the morning, and then a double back at 6 o'clock at night. They always did that.

Mc Why do you think the trolleys went out of business?

M ... Because of a lack of business. ...

Mc Who owned the trolley line?

M That I can't tell you. ...

- Mc How did the Depression affect you or the people around Medina?
- M Well, when the banks failed here in Medina, now they didn't fail here until '31, when they closed here. At that time I was working on a salary and a commission and I was getting \$25.00 a week, and half of what I took in over '32. And when the banks went broke, my wages dropped from where I was earning \$35.00 to \$36.00 a week, my wages went down to anywheres from \$12.00 to \$14.00 - \$15.00 a week. So you ask how the Depression hit!! I had two girls at that time, and it was a little bit rough.
- Mc Did you have some money in the bank so that the bank's closing hurt that much more?
- M No, I didn't. I didn't have any in there so that didn't bother me any. But what I mean, as far as there were so many people that came in who were in just as bad a shape as we were, and didn't have any money -- they were customers of ours. What are you going to do?! You couldn't turn them down, so you cut their hair for nothing. It was just one of those things. You weren't doing anything anyway, so you just might as well go ahead and cut their hair.
- Mc What was the spirit of the community at that time? Was there bitterness or anger?
- M I think there was bitterness on the part that neither one of these banks should have been closed. When you take a bank that will pay off, I think it was 72% that the Union Bank paid off, and the Central Bank paid 68% under the hammer.
- Mc "Under the hammer" ??
- M Now what I mean; when they are selling people out -- you know what I mean, so much on the dollar. And when they paid off that kind of money, there was no way that either bank should have closed!
- Mc Why were they closed?
- M Well, they were, at that time, sure, short of money but it was on loans; that if they could have had more time, then people would have paid them off. But the State Banking Commission come in and closed the banks. And then of course, people started a "run" on the banks. There were banks closed different places. The people started a run on them and it just hurt them. That was all.

Mc Have you been active in politics?

M No! No! No way!! (laughter)

Mc Does that mean still, even now?

M No, what I mean; I vote and all that. But no way am I connected with politics at all!...

Mc Is this because you think it is bad for business?

M I hurt nobody that way. In other words, I don't say, "Well now you can and you can't". (talking of political parties displaying posters in his shop, etc.) I just don't let anybody and that's it!

Mc Then you seek out the information you want, and vote as you like.

M Right. Right.

Mc How do you feel about women getting the vote, way back when?

M I thought it was very nice. Thought it was very nice. Why not!? They are citizens. I don't know why they shouldn't be able to vote.

Mc Have you any feelings about this last election that we had in the country? They said that only one third of all the people voted!

M I think that's terrible!

Mc I do too, but what can we do about it?

M That I wouldn't have an answer for. I think when people have that opportunity, they should vote.

Mc It worries me because I am afraid that we will lose our democracy.

M Well, that's right. I say when you've got that right and it's a free right, that you should exercise it!! That's the way I feel about it.

Mc That's what our country is all about.

M Right! And that's the way I feel about it. I'll give you this: in just our last election here in Orleans County for the Sheriff, now it goes to show you if they've got something that they want to vote for, they'll get out (and vote). Now we've only got 16,000 registered voters in Orleans County and over 12,000 of them voted!! That's pretty good. Well, you can see that they will get out if they got something that they want to get out for.

- Mc The attendance at the churches has been dropping and dropping and many people have said "If we would nail the door shut so the people could not get in, maybe then they would want to go!"
- M That's right. And listen, we are having it in my religion, the Catholic religion, same way, which at one time was very strong. Today it's not as strong as it was.
- Mc You have been around Medina all of your life?
- M Right! So far. (Much laughter)
- Mc ... You have seen many ethnic groups come into the area?
- M Very much so.
- Mc To work on the crops and around. Were the Polish people here in Medina when it first got started?
- M Well of course the Polish people were here when I was born so, as far as I was concerned... But I think the greatest influx in my time, that came to Medina, were the Italians.
- Mc They came to work on the canal?
- M Right! The biggest share of them. In fact there's this widow who lives down on Glenwood Avenue right now; she is the first Italian that moved in on our street down there.
- Mc What is her name?
- M Mrs. Sarchia, and she still lives there.
- Mc How old a person would she be?
- M I would say in the neighborhood of 88.
- Mc She's still living in her own homw?
- M Yes she is.... Her son is a customer of mine, right now, yes.
- Mc We've had other groups come in too. A lot of Puerto Ricans.
- M Well, they came in in the '50s; around here.
- Mc They came to work on the farms?
- M They came to work, the biggest share of them when they first started coming in up here, come in to the canning factories.
- Mc Was that because there weren't enough people in this area who could do the work or what?
- M There was a lot of people in this area that didn't want to do farming work. Let's put it that way. What I mean, your factories started to pay such enormous wages that the farmers

couldn't afford to pay that kind of money, so they got this other cheaper help to come in.

Mc So they came to work on the farms as well as in the factories?

M Oh yes, sure. A lot of them, sure.

Mc Were the black people brought up here for the same reasons?

M They were brought up here in the 1940s to pick tomatoes. That was back when the Green Market (Green tomato market) came into effect around here; that was when they came.

Mc Gary Lattin was telling me how he used to grow tomatoes. He said that Polish women from Albion were good workers. But eventually that business all closed up.

With Orleans County being a farming area, the changes that have come about probably has made a difference with your customers too, hasn't it?

M Well, of course there's several things that have made a difference in our business. The biggest thing that made it different for our business has been long hair.

Mc Long hair and beards?

M Oh sure! That's the biggest influence. ... At one time we used to have 16 barbers here in Medina. Today we've got four. So you can figure what I mean by that. Now I'm talking about barbers. I'm not talking about hair stylists. I'm just talking about the old-fashioned barber. We've just got four left in business. There's Donald Fox, Bill Stear, Cy Roberts, and myself. That's all.

Mc What do you think about the long hair? ...

M Of course I don't mind the full-look, but I don't like the long hair. When I'm talking about the long hair, I mean shoulder length. Now you take, if they have it styled, take care of it, keep it clean, very nice. I have nothing against it what-so-ever. I have three grandsons that have long hair, and as far as I'm concerned they lood good in it. But they take care of it. They don't let it go. In fact, I can show you a picture of one of my grandsons and I'll show you that he takes care of it too!

Mc Does he go to a barber, or to a stylist?

M No, he goes to a stylist. In fact, he wanted to know if I



- would cut it and I said, "No, I'm not going to try! So there."
- Mc Have you any idea how much he would pay a hair stylist for a hair-do?
- M Yes. He pays \$9.00 for his.
- Mc Let's talk about your daughters and their families. Who did Pat marry?
- M Pat married Bradley Shelp, from Albion. They have two sons: Bradley Junior and David.
- Mc And Joanne married.. ?
- M Joanne married Ralph Squire, formerly from Ashwood. Their children are Jeffrey, Judith and Janet. Joanne lives in North Chili and Pat still lives in Albion.
- Mc Do you get to see them quite often?
- M They're both teachers today. Both working. Joanne is a librarian, and Pat teaches third grade in Albion.
- Mc You and your wife live on Davis Avenue. Have you always lived at that address?
- M No, we moved there in 1958 when we bought our home. Previous to that, we lived on South Academt Street.
- Mc Going back a bit, do you have any memories concerning the period of Prohibition?
- M Prohibition came in when I was very young; 1918 I think, when it came in. Before Prohibition came in, we had 23 public saloons on the main thoroughfare, and I can remember them! A lot of them!! I can't call them all by name now, but I could name a few. But I don't know if Prohibition did the country any good because there were so many speak-easies" that opened up, and evrything else after that. I think that was the era of your, well, so-called "gangsters" as far as I'm concerned.
- Mc And that was brought about because of Prohibition?
- M Oh sure!
- Mc Another person that has been interviewed told about the speak-easy, and about home-brew, and that sort of thing. What was a speak-easy?
- M Well, it's a place where you duck in and duck out without

trying to be seen, that's all. They didn't want to be seen going in and out if they could help it. The biggest share of the speak-easies were patronized at night.

Mc Did mostly men go in, or would women go in too?

M Both, both! Just depends on how much you wanted to drink. Not being a drinker myself, I never bothered with it.

Mc Would they serve hard liquor, beer, or what?

M Mostly, what they called home-brew, which was a beer. Some of them did make what they called White Lightning. That's an alcoholic drink. That's what they used to call it "White Lightning" !! (laughter)

Mc Were the police aware of all this?

M Oh yes. Every once in awhile, they would pull a raid on a place. Oh yeah. And there was quite a few of them here in Medina. Oh yes.

Mc Were the people caught? Were they punished or sentenced?

M Just a fine, that's all. A couple of days they'd be back, open again. It didn't bother them too much.

Mc So when the 18th amendment was repealed, then what?

M It made it very nice as far as I'm concerned. It done away with all that.

Mc It seems like Medina has quite a few bars, up and down the streets.

M Well, I don't know. You might have 1-2-3 on Main Street right now, and the Maui Inn, that's four. But then, your Clubs all have bars today, outside of the Masons and the Odd Fellows Lodge. They don't have bars.

Mc We also have the liquor stores now.

M Yes, there are three.

Mc Do you think that drinking is or is not the problem that it used to be?

M Well, it's like anything else. If you tell anybody that they can't have it, they are going to get it. I think there were more people drinking during Prohibition than there are today, as far as I'm concerned. A lot of people quit drinking when you could get it without having to do it on the sly. (laughter)

Mc Thank you very much for this interview Mr. Moriarty.

M You're entirely welcome, I'm sure.

Mr. Moriarty was interviewed in his barber shop, West Center Street, Medina on November 15, 1978.

The interview was conducted by Helen McAllister, Medina.

The taped interview was transcribed by Lysbeth Hoffman of Waterport, N.Y.

The transcription was examined by Mr. Moriarty and several additions and deletions were made.

Final editing and typing was done by Helen McAllister.



Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Moriarty

## Moriartys Celebrate

50 Years 1980

In honor of their 50th wedding anniversary Mr. and Mrs. J. Kenneth Moriarty were feted at a lawn party at their Davis Avenue home on June 24. Mr. Moriarty and the former Ethel Beatrice Hudson were married in Medina on this date in 1930.

Mr. Moriarty, a native of Medina and son of the late Mr.

and Mrs. Daniel Moriarty, is in his 58th year as a barber in Medina. He has been an avid bowler and golfer during his active life and continues to pursue these sports. He and his wife are actively involved in affairs of the Senior Citizens of Western Orleans. She was born at Ostrander's Corners, north

of Knowlesville, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Hudson. She is a past president of the Medina Garden Club.

The party was hosted by their daughters and families, Mr. and Mrs. Bradley Shelp, sons James and David of Albion, and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Squire, daughters, Judith and Janet and son, Jeffrey of Milwaukee, Wisc.

Following the buffet, the couple cut a three-tiered anniversary cake. The gold-gilted candles decorating the table for the occasion were the tapers used in Mrs. Moriarty's parents' 50th wedding anniversary celebration 30 years ago. A crewel anniversary sampler was presented to the couple by their granddaughter, Judith.

Guests for the evening included family, neighbors and friends of the honored couple.

7-9-1980

J-R