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1-6-17
Woodbridge Essay
Grade 7

Growing up on 86 Green Street; A Wonderful Memory

My name is May Kelly, daughter of Hugh Williamson Kelly a journalist from the Woodbridge Publishing Center and owner of the United Railway Symbol Company. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to grow up sometime during the 20th century? I actually lived during that time. I grew up on Green Street and moved there in 1922. I usually attended carnivals, news events, parades, and parties.

I lived in 86 Green Street, Woodbridge, New Jersey. It was extravagant! My house may have been built by Charles A. Campbell in the late 1860's. My family bought it from the Valentines in 1922. My father is... or was very well known in town. He died in 1942. When he was living, he was a publisher for the *Woodbridge Publishing Company* and he owned the *United Railroad Symbol Company* (URSC) plant. We had fun going out and enjoying all the events that took place on and around Green Street! My dad always got to go to interesting and fun news scenes, too!

A memory I still have from when I was young was when I watched a parade for "Woodbridge Day" with my friends. The Celebration and Anniversary Committee had been planning it for months. An article was already in the *Woodbridge Independent*, on April 11th, 1924. The parade was held on June 4th, 1924, and it was still in the paper. It

took place on a free block in front of the Memorial Building on Main Street. There were prizes, games, dancing, members of the Local Women's Club, firefighters, ex-servicemen, fireworks, and more events. It was better, and much more, than a regular parade. This event was exciting because it was an opportunity for my fellow citizens, my friends, and I to celebrate our wonderful township.

Another event that stuck in my head from my childhood was when a carnival! On August 4th, 5th, and 6th, of 1927, there was a carnival at St. James Church. The company where my father worked printed a story about it in the Woodbridge Leader on August 5th, 1927. At the carnival, there were several hundred people. We all danced, won prizes, ate food, played games at novelty booths, and a lot more. This carnival was very popular, as you could tell by the enormous amount of people who attended! I went here to hang out and have fun with my friends. I also got to do my 3 favorite things; eat, win things, and dance! It was full of amusement and filled me with a great deal of happiness! I hope that everyone else that attended felt this way, too!

As a kid, I enjoyed helping EVERYONE in my community! This is why I loved going to the Lion's Club Christmas Party for Kids! This is one of my best memories because I remember that it felt so nice helping out the needy kids. There were toys, ice cream, and candy that was handed out by Santa Claus! This happened at The Lion's Club Christmas Party on December 21, 1939! I still have the news article from the Fords Beacon where an article was published about it in the issue that was given out on

December 21, 1939. It was held in the auditorium of school #14 which was Fords Ave. It was a party to give to children who were needy. I really enjoyed this event because I loved giving to the needy children who did not have the same privileges I did. I also really liked the feeling that I got knowing that I did something that helped these children have a good holiday.

One last thing that I vividly remember from when I was little was a terrible tragedy. It was when my father's URSC plant blew up! When the plant blew up on November 13th, 1940, everyone was taken off guard... and the news traveled very fast. The *Independent Leader* wrote about it November 15th, 1940... only 2 days later. The explosion killed 8 people and injured 25. People believed it was sabotage by an outside source. Thank goodness, though, that my father was not one of the people that was killed or injured in this tragic event. This affected me because it was, indeed, a tragic event and especially because it was my father's plant. He owned it and it was extremely important to our family. It hurt and killed many people, too. My heart aches thinking of how devastated those families to those 8 people were.

Growing up on Green Street was the best experience of my life. I will never forget it. Because my father worked at the publishing company and owned the United Railroad Symbol Company plant, we had intel on all the activities early, because you need to know them at the press, and he was very well known and respected in town. I loved all the carnivals, fairs, parades, parties, and even news events that I got to visit with my

dad. As I aged, or grew up, I felt the town aging and growing with me. As I grew older, I learned more and more about this wonderful town. These experiences helped me form an opinion on Green Street, and all of Woodbridge. It was, and probably still is, an outstanding place to grow up. It is important to me that future generations feel the same about this town and that it stays greatly appreciated. After my father passed away in 1942 at the age of 64, my mother, Nellie Kelly, sold the house. Green Street was a great place to live and will be always in my heart.