

**DuPue & the Kruger family**  
*an Oral History*

William Kruger, Interviewee  
Of DePue, Illinois

Interview Date: April 20, 1976

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NARRATOR: William Kruger  
TAPE NUMBER: 1  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: April 20, 1976  
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: DePue, Illinois  
INTERVIEWER'S NAME: Louise Hedges  
FOR: Starved Rock Library System

I: This is Tuesday afternoon, April 20, 1976, and we're at the home of William Kruger, Sr. at DePue, Ill. This is Louise Hedges talking. What can you remember about way back when, Uncle Bill? For instance what can you tell me about the building that was torn down that used to be Ada's Tap? And then at one time it was.....

N: Well Mrs. Halewood, Mrs. Bob Halewood, then after she left, she ran a restaurant--

I. O.K. All right, go ahead, it's on.

N: He sold what they used to call \_\_\_\_\_ moonshine from under the counter. Then when Jack left there, Charlie Morris ran a restaurant and a tavern for sometime and then as I recall Ed Rowe and Ada run a tavern there and later Ada and John Lindquist ran a tavern in there. Then after they went out the building stood empty for quite a stretch and then Joe Croisant roomed in there and this was where Joe Croisant passed away.

I: Oh, yes, that's right, they found him upstairs, didn't they?

N: Found him dead. Well, I was the one that-----

I: Oh, yes, that's right.

N: He was huddled over a kerosene stove. It was very cold and he had blankets over his head and fumes from the stove suffocated him.

I: We just got done talking about the building that was on the corner of 4th and Pleasant Street that was--the last we knew of, it was Ada's Tap. Now next is a small shop that we remember recently as the Fonderolli shoe repair shop. Can you tell me more about that building?

N: Yes. There again Jack Pullan started out with his Blind Pig or tavern

N: if that's what you want to call it and then originally it was a butcher shop built by Jacob Goering and when ~~Jacob~~ Goering left ~~or~~ quit the butcher shop, Sam Williamson took over. Then when Sam Williamson left, Jake Grahams son George and brother Johnny ran a butcher shop.

I: You mean Goering, J. Goering, you said Graham.

N: Did I say Graham?

I: Yes, J.A. Goering.

N: Jake, Johnny and George Goering ran a butcher shop and then it stood empty for awhile and then Fonderolli ran a shoe makers shop there. Then there was a small building that was used for a barber shop. As I remember it, a man by the name of Curry ran it and when Mr. Curry left, the Floyd Bros. were in there for quite awhile. A man from Spring Valley, Henry Casey working for the Floyds. Then west of the barber shop was a tavern owned by Jacob Goering and later the building was moved to the alley and an addition put on the back end.

I: And today that building is the place where the reupholstery shop is.

Going back to this tavern thing, why did they call "The Blind Pig"?

N: Well, this was a expression they used because they were not allowed to sell liquor and this was moonshine made by different people that wanted to take a chance of getting caught and this is the only reason I can see that they called it "Blind Pig".

I: And then it had to be sold under the counter.

N: They had to sell it to individuals that they knew wouldn't-----

I: Yes, wouldn't squeal on them.

N: wouldn't report them.

U: I'd like to know something about what we used to call the Fur Farm.

Where was it and approximately when did it start if you remember and who was in it. I think Mr. Fowler was one man.

N: Fowler, a fellow by the name of Meyer, and Belnap. Meyer and Belnap were from Princeton and the pond is still there. Mrs. Sabattini owns the place. Right west of the city buildings. It never matured, never amounted to anything. A lot of people lost money, lost their shares that they bought. They were supposed buy three rats for a dollar, but they never even got their original three rats.

I: It was like muskrats, wasn't it?

N: Muskrats, yes. And then they had six or eight rabbit hutches. They started to raise rabbits but they finally got tired of feeding the rabbits and they turned them all loose.

I: I see. Do you remember where the men were from that tried to start it? That came in and got these people interested?

N: Belnap and Meyer from Princeton.

I: Oh, they were from Princeton.

N: They were the two I know--there could of been others but those are the two I know that.....

I: Well, then the way I understand it they just made off with the money and the people who invested were out.

N: They were out.

I: Yes. This farm was to raise the muskrats and sell to the fur-to furriers. The pelts to the furriers.

N: Wolves down there and different things. It never matured.

I: I was talking to Oralda Ristau the other day about it and see what she remembered and she said that just that it didn't last very long and everybody lost their money that was in it.

N: Well, see I lived (coughs) That was where we started to farm, you know. So that was a pretty big place at that time. It was from ours West to Ristaus on both sides of the track.

I: How much more land down around this fur farm is tillable land or was it when you lived down there?

N: Well, it was about 7---right close to-----

(tape shuts off)

I: About 200 acres, you say. Total land. O.K. now, we want to ask you about where you're living now. This was the original Kruger farm, wasn't it?

N: That's right.

I: Grandma and Grandpa came here to live and then.....

N: They bought it from Anto Herzog.

I: Oh, I didn't know that. O.k. then were all the kids born here? Uncle Henry and everybody?

N: Fritz, Allen, Frank, and myself were born here.

I: Yes.

N: And Henry was born just West of here. There was a house..

I: Oh, yes.

N: Along the crick back there.

I: Yes, kind of back on the hill. I seem to remember Grandma telling that.

About how old was Frank when he died? He was just little, wasn't he?

(tape shuts off)

So then the little boy named Frank was about two years old when he passed away.

N: That's right.

I: And of those living are you, here in DePue and Mrs. Emma \_\_\_\_\_ who's living in Prarieview Nursing home in Princeton, then Uncle Hank, who's the oldest, died in 1959-----

N: At the age of 76.

I: He was 76 and then--

N: My brother Fred passed away-----

I: In 1973. In July and he would have been 84 years old.

N: Right.

I: Can you tell us now about when you were a kid. You went to school in DePue. You lived here on the farm and there couldn't have been too many houses built so how did you get there?

N: Well, to begin with, we used to go down through the field, the farmground, down to the railroad track and then up the railroad track to what we called the West crossing and from there took the sidewalk to the school and a lot of the sidewalk was still the old wooden sidewalk but at the age of six I didn't want to leave my mother and go to school so my mother would take me as far as the West crossing and turn me over to my sister then by the time my mother got home, I was sitting on the front porch crying and she would be coming home crying because I wouldn't go to school and I cried because I didn't want to go to school. (laughter) My sister cried because she couldn't do anything with me so they finally gave up and I was 7 years old before I started to school.

I: O.K.

N: After school-through school I worked in the clothing store for two years.

I: Whose clothing store?

N: N:L: \_\_\_\_\_ and then from there I went to the zinc works. I worked in the \_\_\_\_\_ laboratory and on the high line. The high line was used to run a small train on and charge the \_\_\_\_\_ and pull the \_\_\_\_\_. The pay wasn't so good but the working conditions weren't too bad. You had so much to do and when you were done nobody cared what happened but you didn't get the wages they get today. Working conditions at that time wasn't considered too bad, compared to the surrounding work.

I: You worked for the law enforcement.

N: I left the zinc works in 1926 and went farming and I farmed till '47.

I sold out in '47 and went to work at Sears store at Princeton. I wasn't there

N: very long until they came and asked me to come and work in the Sherrif's office. I put in four years in the Sherrif's office.

I: As a deputy?

N: As a deputy. And the politics changed so that the Republicans were out and the Democrats were in. From there I went to the Farm Bureau and managed the feed warehouse for 7 years and I left the feed warehouse and went to the \_\_\_\_\_ county livestock Association and I was there two years. Then from there I worked for the Ladd Fertilizer Supply and then back into the Sherrif's office for another four years and after those four years were up I worked for the city of DEPue as policeman and when I left DePue I worked at Burear for a short time and had an accident and had to quit work.

I: I've hear that sometime in the early '29's there was a strike at the plant. Do you know anything about that?

N: Yes. It was more or less a general strike because the--they wanted 8 hour shifts instead of 12 hours shifts. Up until then the plant as a whole worked 12 hour shifts but after the strike, they did get their 8 hour shifts.

I: In other works, they, at first they only had two shifts.

N: Two shifts.

I: Of 12 hours each.

N: Yes.

I: And then it came to three shifts.

N: Right.

I: I can remember when I was a kid you and Uncle Hank had a car called the Stevens. Can you tell me where you bought that?

N: We bought it off of G.M. Bryant. He ran the elevator and he owned the hardware store. Walt was more or less the salesman who sold it.

I: And then what other cars were sold in DePue? Can you tell me that?

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N: A ~~man~~ by the name of Meyers sold the Ford and then Frank Fowler sold the Herfbrooks.

I: Can you spell that? I don't even remember that car.

N: Near as I recall--H-e-r-f-b-r-couple-o-k-s - Herfbrooks. Just as it's pronounced.

I: Tell me anymore about it?

N: Well, it didn't--it was fairly big car but for some reason or another it didn't last long. They quit making them. I don't know who made the car but the Stevens car, the motor was made at the John Deere Plow works at Moline and the body was assembled at Freeport.

I: And then you mentioned something about a raffle.

N: During the boat club races on Labor Day, we used to raffle off an automobile and they raffled off a Herfbrooks that was won by a Mrs. Anderson from Malden, Ill.

I: Do you remember about how much these cars cost?

N: I don't recall what the Herfbrooks sold for but it was up, I would say, around 15-1800 dollars but the Stevens sold for 1835.

I: Do you remember what year that was?

N: 1918.

I: 1918.

N: Cause we put a --my oldest brother and I owned it together and then when we went to service, we put it on blocks.

I: Then was it still in pretty good running condition when you came back?

N: Oh, definitely. Just like.....

I: Didn't hurt it to stand like that?

N: It was covered with cloth cover. They had regular cloth covers for their cars and took the weight off the tires. Put wooden blocks under it. We could have--while we were in service, Bryant wrote and we could have had \$2300 for it,



N: but we figured why should we sell it for 23 and then we come back here and pay 25. They went up to 25, why should we pay 25 for another one because this one didn't have any miles on it to speak of at all.

I: We have been told that Joe Rhyme and Kelly Richardson had a garage here. Can you tell me about that?

N: That is right. They sold the Studebaker automobile and I knew Joe very well because Jow and I hunted rabbits and ducks for several years up in fact I was Pallbearer for Joe's funeral.

I: Now they had their garage down in the building where Mohn Thoms lives?

N: That's right. John Thomas lives in the old garage now. It has been worked over into a store or a house.

I: Yes. Well, that's where Thelma's store was. Thelma's Variety Store. Do you remember when they ran this garage?

N: Jow was in there in 1919 and I can verify that because that was the year I hung myself. I got married.

(laughter)

N: He serviced my car a couple of days before we got married.

I: O.k. can you think of any other garages or anything else that-----

N: Well, Bryant's ran a garage. Pete Peters was the machanic, which the building is still there. It's behind the Steel and Bryant Hardware Store.

I: Can you tell me what was it like to a boy in DePue when you were growing up. What did you do for amusement and such things?

N: Well, amusement you had to make your own. Either good or bad. But we had long winters. We did a lot of skateing, we had a lot of snow. We done lot of sleigh riding but as far as activity was concerned, the only recreation you had was what you made yourself.

I: Did you ever do much trapping or hunting?

N: Not much trapping. Just a little. I did a lot of rabbit hunting, a lot of

duck hunting. In my day of hunting there, was no limit on rabbits or ducks. The later years, the duck limit was 15. The rabbits never did have a limit. You could shoot as many you wanted to in one days hunting. There were plenty. We used to go down to Sheffield. We'd come with the back end in the Stevens and that Studebaker, we'd take turns driving down, we'd come back with the back end level full of rabbits-----

I: This was you and Joe Rhyme?

N: Yes. Well, Stormy Burnett, it was his.....

I: Can you tell me anything about the paper that used to be printed in DePue call the DePue Leader.

N: Yes. it was in a building back of what is now \_\_\_\_\_ Confectionery Store. A man by the name of Randolph Hunt was the manager, the editor of the paper.

I: Do you remember who worked with him? Was that when Ione Graham worked with him?

N: I don't know who had worked with him but when the DePue Leader went out, Charlie Issaccson stated a Ice cream, Pool Hall, Bowling alley in the same building.

I: Well, then the DwPue Leader, the printing actually moved to Spring Valley form here, didn't it?

N: They, as I recall, they formed a partnership with the Spring Valley Gazette.

I: And then there was a Mahoney.

N: He was with the Spring Valley Gazette.

I: With the Gazette. O.k. now can you give your name?

N: William C. Kruger, born in May, the 10th, 1898, DePue Ill. Shelby town-ship. And lived in the same home that I was born in.

I hereby release all right, title, or interest in and to all or any part of my tape-recorded memoirs to \_\_\_\_\_, subject to the following stipulations:

PLACE Wm. C. Krueger  
home

DATE Tues. Apr. 20, 1976

Wm. C. Krueger  
(INTERVIEWEE)

(for \_\_\_\_\_)

INTERVIEW DATA SHEET

This section is to be completed by the Interviewer.

NARRATOR William Krueger ADDRESS DePue, Ill. PHONE 447-2383

BIRTHDATE May 10, 1898 BIRTHPLACE DePue, Ill. INTERVIEWER Louise Hedger PHONE 447-2553

DATE(S) and PLACE OF INTERVIEW(S) His home. DePue, Ill.

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This section is for office use. Write the date in the larger columns and check the smaller ones to record each process.

TAPES	Received & Labeled	Collaterals Filed	No. of Pages	Total Time	Catalogued	Audited	Editing	Review	Final Typing	Index, Table of Contents	Proofread	Corrected	Duplicating		Distribution	Dissemination		
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M. L. Bremer  
Charles E. ...  
Fowler  
B. ...  
M. ...

INTERVIEWER'S NOTES AND WORD LIST

Instructions to the Interviewer:

To assist the transcriptionist, please identify:

1. Passages which may be difficult to understand because of outside noise, other people in the room, problems with the tape recorder, etc.
2. Passages which are confidential and therefore should not be typed.
3. Passages which need to be treated in a special way.

Please list words or phrases which might be difficult to understand, all proper names, and unfamiliar terms. If there is more than one tape, note where the second and succeeding ones begin.

TAPE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Correction

Mrs. Bob Halewood instead of Haywood.

This Building, <sup>was</sup> called Ada's Tap on the corner of Fourth and Pleasant Streets instead of Liberty St. Charlie Pearce also ran a restaurant in this building.

Names - Jack Pullan. George Goering.

Jacob and Johnny Goering. Sam Williamson.

Curry - a barber. Charlie Morris.

John Lindquist and Ada Lindquist

Joe Croisant.

Fonderelli Shoe Repair

Floyd Bros.

Oralda Ristau

Anton Herzog

Stevens Automobile

Joe Rhyne and Kelly Richardson. garage in

Pete Peters

(Continue on Reverse)

the John Thomas building.