

## JACK KRATOVILLE ARCHIVAL DOCUMENT

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### ABSTRACT

#### *Biography*

Jack Kratoville was eight years old when Pearl Harbor was attacked in 1941. He was a member of a well-known Riverhead family, with his father serving as town clerk since 1933. The Kratovilles owned property just outside of downtown Riverhead, land that was at times used as a golf course, airplane spotting tower, and scrap yard. Jack attended school throughout World War II and observed the soldiers that were moved through Riverhead. In addition to attending school, he also found work on a local farm. Jack went on to serve in the Korean War and later ran the family's luncheonette in Riverhead for many years.

#### *Summary*

In this interview, Jack describes his life in Riverhead and the position of his family in town. He recounts the official activities his father performed during the war, from confirming birth certificates to administering marriage licenses. Jack also shares his memories of studying airplane silhouettes, listening to radio programs, and participating in local scrap drives.

#### *Keywords*

*child, Riverhead, Long Island, New York, marriage licenses, birth certificates, air raids, plane spotting, scrap drives, radio*

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## **STORY TRANSCRIPTS**

### **Story 1: Proving Birthdays [5:44 – 6:40]**

As I said, men had to go in and enlist in the draft [during World War II], and they had to show when they were born. Well, people my father's age or older: most of them had been born at home. And especially, the Polish immigrants that were fairly new to [the U.S.], you know, they didn't even have a doctor or what have you.

So, in order to prove their age, they had to find people that remembered them at a certain age and document it. But my father, being the recorder of those birth certificates and marriage licenses and what have you, why, he'd get a lot of calls.

### **Story 2: Making Marriage Licenses [15:30 – 16:28]**

And then, [for] marriage licenses, they waived the waiting period [during the war]. There used to be a waiting period, as [there] is today, I believe. But they waived that for servicemen, so they could get married, you know, the same day that they made out the licenses. So, my father would used to be making them out in this house.

And people came from all over. When servicemen were stationed here, we had quite a contingent of Army people in—up where the high school is now, where they keep their buses; they were stationed up there. And I believe most of them went overseas just before D-Day.

**Story 3: Spotting Planes**  
**[18:50 – 19:31]**

Spotter station, why, everybody went there. They had classes and you'd get a pack of cards with silhouettes of planes, so you could spot a plane by its silhouette.

And although we were too young to serve, boy, my cousin and I got very interested in it. They'd give tests, and both he and I would ace it because we were so interested. And the older people probably didn't look at all. *[laughs]*.

CK: *These were enemy planes silhouettes?*

Well, both. Because if you spotted a plane, why, you had to know if it was friend or foe.

**Story 4: Using Scrap Paper to Its Fullest**  
**[25:38 – 26:33]**

I recall in fifth grade, why, Mrs. Wright was our teacher at the time. And [she] would pass out one piece of clean paper for a test, usually at the end of the week. And then, you would save that piece of paper and use it for scrap paper on any type of figuring that you did.

And before she'd like you throw it away, why, you had to come up and present it to her. And she would look at it *all* over. And if she would find one little spot, she would send you back with it and tell you, "Well, you can use that the next time." So, I have always used paper to its fullest extent, although I'm getting a little better.

**Story 5: Listening to the Radio**  
**[28:51 – 29:35]**

CK: *Well, do you remember: what [radio] series were you listening to?*

Oh, there was *Captain Midnight*, was one. He had a decoder ring you could send for, I think, with a couple of box tops from cereal. And you'd get home and he would always have a secret message, you know, it would be "B-3, D-4." And then, it might be some simple [message like], "Be good to your mother," or something.

And *Uncle Don* was another one; he always gave out birthdays. And I recall him—we listened specially one time because he announced my grandfather's birthday; my grandfather turned eighty or something.

## **PHOTO CAPTIONS**

### **Current 1**

Jack Kratoville being interviewed in his home in Riverhead, New York (Photo Credit: Chris Kretz)

### **Current 2**

Narrator Jack Kratoville with interviewer Chris Kretz (Photo Credit: Louise Kratoville)

### **Artifact 1**

World War II era pencil from the Harvard Shoe Store in Riverhead, New York (Photo Credit: Chris Kretz)