

# Note from Wilber (Bill) William Kruse

Note from Wilbur (Bill) Kruse about his growing up.

Bill Kruse Grandfather – William Kruse and Grandmother Soidia Seegars Kruse  
Bill Kruse Father - Rudolf Kruse and Mother Octilla Rateike

Grandfather William Kruse was born in Elk Grove Township northwest of now Busse Road and Higgins. He married a Seegars's girl and they had 9 children. From what I recall as a wedding gift, they were given property at River Road and Rand Road with property facing rand road east. At the corner he operated a tavern called Monkeys Run. They served snacks (ham and cheese, sausage, fries)

His mother lived in a little house east of his house. His house It had 4 or 5 bedrooms with a barn for 4 horses and a hay loft above in the barn. They had a big garden in the rear of the house.

He and his wife had 9 children. Rudolph (your grandfather – Pops), Sophia, William Jr., Lidia, Alma, Agnus, Henry, Easter, Conrad, Sophia

As I remember the kitchen was very large. The house had a Englisch basement with a stove. The dinning table was always set up. In front of the basement kitchen was a store room where the vegetables from the garden were stored. Potatoes, carrots and many other items.  
At the rear of the barn there were many fruit bushes of blackberry, red berries, currents, gooseberry and many other kinds.

I remember a time that Grandfather came in to the house he had an armful of wood for the stove. The kitchen did have a hand pump for water. They also had two outhouses. All across the front of the house was a white picket fence that I use to on the top rail.

I remember on two separate occasions wedding for Henery and For Conard. The hay loft was cleaned out for dancing, food and drink. They also had a band. No smoking was allowed in the barn or in the house.

He was appointed Road Commissioner for Main Township. He later built another house east of the fruit trees around 1927 to 1928. This house was made of brick with inside plumbing.

I remember when his mother died. There was a big party in the new house. I still remember the amount of food on the tables. What always interested me was his work shop at the rear of the new house. He had all kinds of tools and paint.

He had at one time a touring Overland with side curtains. After that car he had a Dodge car tilled he moved to Mount Prospect. After prohibition he owned a Chevy.

Once prohibition was over and you could buy beer, he brought Bherns Tavern in Mount Prospect Illinois. When we moved into the building and open up a store for grocery and later a restaurant. We sold liquor and beer under wraps. I remember going to the drug store for a pint of whiskey. You had to have a prescription for each bottle. I also purchased near beer (nonalcoholic)

In the basement was a 12 foot by 12-foot cement cooler where beer barrels were kept for draft bee etc. I would help my dad pour off 2 ounces of beer and place it into an open bottle and recap,

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shake and store it up side down. To cool and sell the beer we had a dumb waiter between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, that was really neat. My family (Rudolph) lived above the restaurant at that time.

We had a black cook and her name was Miss Monroe and she had her own room upstairs.

The restaurant was open for meals seven days a week. 6 am till 9 pm. I remember we sold tickets for a given amount. One would buy a ticket and as they eat the amount would be punched out.

I also remember being the cashier. Below in the cash drawer was a large case that held cigars, cigarettes, gum, candy, snuff and the like. After each meal was served, I washed the dishes by hand, many, many times. It was also my job to keep the ice box filled. It was a large box that held many blocks of ice. Playtime was in a empty lot ½ blocks from home or at night we played on the street.

I recall my dad (Rudolph) buying a new Essey two door medium grey. Prior to that we had a Ford Model T. In cold weather you had to jack the right rear wheel as you cranked the engine. You held the choke to start every time. If it didn't start, we poured hot water on the carburetor, sometimes it took an hour or wait till noon when the sun was up.

I remember coming home from running my rural grocery route driving my Ford model T, I came around a corner and struck a parked car parked without lights. I hit his left rear of the car. I broke the glass lens in the fender. It was a small dent in the model T. My dad made me go and tell the person who owned the car what happen and that I would pay for the damages. I was 16 years old.

When I was about 9 o 10 years old I remembering visiting my cousin Lenard Retike in Frog Town standing on the corner waiting for a car to go by we were on our way for an ice cream cone. A rock flew up and struck me in y right eye. I remember turning around and then things went black. I woke up in St Anns Hospital. I wore a patch on my eye for 2 months.

In Mount Prospect the city was paving all the streets. I would watch trucks pick up sand in one hopper and stone in the other and the small trucks would pull under and receive about five yards of sand. Once the gravel and sand were mixed, they would pour the cement mix into a large mixer machine. Once mixed, they would pour the mixture into the street. Men would then level off the pour. The men them place a large cloth over the pour so concrete would not dry to fast.

My mother's parents had a farm on the south east corner of Palatine and Wolf Road which is now part of the Pal Waukee Air Port. My mother was one of the 16 children in her family. The church that they attended was on Milwaukee Avenue about ½ mile south of the Des Plaines River. The school was also there.

I remember there was an old farm house in North Elmhurst Avenue in Prospect Heights. This is where the men who worked for the Milburn Paving Company. No electricity. They used candles and kerosene lamps. I would sell the daily newspapers every day.

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I remember during prohibition my dad would get a call saying the Fed's were on their way to conduct a raid in Mount Prospect. I would help pour all the whisky into pots and pans ready to dump down the toilet on the second floor of the restaurant.

I remember when my dad added on to the back of the house with large bedrooms upstairs and a living room downstairs. Heater with a stove, how cool.

I remember having scarlet fever when the Health Department came and sealed all the doors leading to the apartment on the second floor so no one could come down. We received our food by the dummy waiter.

I was baptized Wilber William Kruse on August 31, 1917 at Cora and White Street in Des Plaines Illinois. The only thing I remember at the above address is when my uncle and Aunts told me is that we had geese in our fenced yard and that no one could come near me because the geese were my protectors.

When we were living south of Oakton Street, I was around 4 or 5 years old. In front of the house where we lived when it rained the open ditch in front would fill with water and I would catch crabs and snakes. I remember at the rear of the house we had a Deleco light plant. Against the house the house wall was glass batteries and a small generator and in the house was one light socket hanging. For water there was a hand pump. In the winter with the cold weather, I would have to pour hot water on the pump casing to thaw out the plunger before the pump could be used.

The house had a dedicated garden. At the rear of the lot was a chicken coop with a fence. I can remember helping my mother catch a chicken and held the same while the head was chopped off. After the chicken stopped wiggling, it was dropped in the near by hot water and then plucked. South of the chicken coop was a 1 1/2 car garage made of wood with a dirt floor. The rear of the lot was an alley made of dirt with lots of ruts. In the winter ashes were dumped in to the ruts. There was an old factory about a 1/2 mile from the house. Us kids use to play hide and seek and pick up some things that were white and we could write on the sidewalks.

Two lots south of our house was a two-story building. Down stairs were fire equipment that was pulled and pumped by hand. Upstairs was a dance hall or meeting room with a stage. I remember watching people dancing.

I can remember having my tonsils and adenoids removed at Dr Kruger office. I could eat all the ice cream I could eat.

Starting in 1<sup>st</sup> grade the school was in the north end of the block where we lived. When you walked in the front door there was a wall with many hooks. At the end of the hall was a class room and a large desk for a teacher. To the right was a stove that heated the room. There was a door for the outhouse, one for boys and one for girls.

There was a grocery store called Esginbucker with a meat counter. There was another store around the corner where a man with no legs had store chair with rollers at each chair leg and

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scooted around with a stick with claws on the end. He waited on you (no helping yourself). He had a big assortment of penny candy. His car was a model T Ford equipped with long handles to operate the car.

Across the tracks was a tavern which is still open. Being the 1<sup>st</sup> grandchild, grandfather would pick me and I would spend the day with him. He was the road commissioner in Main Township. (Maine Township role was to provide government service in the un-incorporated areas of a county)

Heat for the house was a potbelly stove located between the living room and the dinning room. There was a coal bin that had to feed the stove. The kitchen had a wood burning stove. For the bathroom we had a galvanized tub. In our bedrooms we had feather bed coverings. In the winter when we got up, had to dress quickly and run down stairs to stood next to the stove to keep warm.

I remember driving to Jefferson at some address to pickup five cans of alcohol to spike the near beer. Sometimes my mother came along to pick up some meat at the slaughter house (Wilson and Company). After the beer we came back.

The family got into the newspaper business. We had a small store in the Edward Busse Building. We sold newspapers, magazines, cigars and tobacco. I use to go to Des Plaines for the tobacco. The business grew and we started a home delivery. My route was the south side of Mount Prospect, northwest and the east side of Cumberland. My brother Marvin had the middle of town while Dad took care of the rail road station.

In the winter time we had to keep the car in a heated garage so it would start during the cold weather. Busse Buick. I would be wakened by my mother at 4 am to warm up the car to pick up and fold the newspapers that we would start delivering. Prior to the using a car, we use to roller skate or use a bicycle. When a new family moved into town I would stop at their house and ask if they would like a paper and magazine delivered. When I had 5 to 6 new customers, I would send a notice to the newspaper route man and I would win prizes. The prizes consisted of skates, bicycles etc. Once or twice a year the newspaper company would send out sales people to cover the town to get more customers.

After eight grade I went into business school in Chicago. I would take the train to Clyburn Station, the last stop before the Chicago Loop Station. I would ride a street car to Milwaukee Avenue. The classes were from 9 am to 4 pm. Then I would get back on the train to go home to work my afternoon route. I did this for six months till my school money was all spent.

I started a rural route business. The newspapers arrived by train at 1 pm at the Mount Prospect train station. I would pickup the newspapers and started my route from Northwest Highway to Golf Road to Rand Road crossing the bridge to Ballard Road to Milwaukee Avenue to Dempster Road. I had another home delivery route at the town of Wheeling. It started at a drug store north of the town of Half Day then east on route 22 for 3 miles. Then North on Milwaukee Avenue for 4 miles back to Half Day then west to the town of Prairieview. Traveled on the route to the town of Buffalo Grove, then south on Buffalo Grove Road to Dundee Road to Prospect Heights and

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then back to Mount Prospect. I was usually done by 5 pm. Had Dinner and was free from then on. I also worked part time at the Pure Oil Gas Station.

After a while on my morning route, I would open up the gas station as I had the newspapers at the train station. The last train was 8:05 am and the owner would come in at 9 am. I would pick up my money and any left-over newspapers and head back to Mount Prospect. I would then have some breakfast and started collecting money from my customers. That is another story.

I got a full-time job at Schimming Oil Service station. It used to be a milk bottling plant. I almost forgot that at the same time I had an intown milk delivery route. The milk companies were Bowman, Borden's and Buffalo Grove. In winter time I would go with the milkman and deliver newspapers when the roads were not open due to the snow. We used horses on sleds and covered the milk with horse blankets to keep the milk from freezing.

I remember sometimes I had to walk with bags on my back and I would get so cold that I would lay down out of the wind to warm up. I even had some customers make me come in to their house to warm up. On Sunday when weather permitted, we would walk the rail road tracks to the movies in Des Plaines. There was no train service on Sundays. On other days when went to the movies, we tried to plan take the 4:30 train back to Mount Prospect. There would 5 to 6 of us going to the movies and catching the train.

On Sundays the newspapers were bigger than the other days so we took old tire tubes from bicycles and slid them around the large Sunday's newspapers.

Often while I was working at the Cumberland Gas Station, another lad named Gene Andeson and I would drive to Lake Waconda to swim. After they closed the swimming section there was a small restaurant that served homemade noodles, pies and milk shakes. At this time, I was working full time at the Mount Prospect Gas Station.

On my day off I would go to Evanston and see If I could get a full-time job with a pension at the Illinois Bell Telephone Company. The man I talked to, Mr. Lawerence, said that they were not hiring at that time. I happen to think that on my south side paper route was an Illinois Bell Telephone Company man and he had a company car. I made a point one night to stop after supper to talk to him. I told him what I was after (he knew me) and he said he new Mr. Lawance and he would talk to him the next time he was in Evanston. About 3 weeks later I got a call for temporary help.

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## Dates

Name Wilber William Kruse  
Born August 31 1917 Des Plaines IL  
Death December 1 1996 McAllen TX  
Age 79  
Fathers name Rudolf Kruse  
Mothers name Octilla Rateike  
Cause of Death Heart Attack

**Military Service** 3 years 1 month and 26 days

Drafted into the US Army October 1 1942  
Separated from the Army December 5 1945  
Unit: Headquarter Company 1610<sup>th</sup> Service Command Unit Camp McCoy Wisconsin.  
Service Number 36-379-121

Rank: Sergeant

Travel pay from Camp McCoy to Park Ridge Illinois \$26.45 and \$200 mustering out pay

## Summary of Service

When Bill Kruse was drafted, he was married to Lois Friganiza and was working in Utah for the Long Lines Divisions of AT&T installing telephone lines across the United States. This was 1940 and war was expected. He married Lois Friganza on Jan 3 1942. She was 19 and Bill was 25. His new wife Lois was with him when he received his draft notice.

He reported to Camp McCoy Wisconsin for his basic training. On his second day in the Army the commander discovered that he was an experienced telephone man. The next day they made him a Sergeant and started teaching the art of being a telephone man. He remained at Camp McCoy for entire time in the Army.

## Service with Illinois Bell Telephone Company

Hired August 20 1937  
Retired March 1 1982  
Worked 44 years, 11 months and 10 days

## Primary Position

Construction foreman  
Duties – Installation of buried telephone cables.  
Managing up to 7 crews and equipment.

## Work addresses

2045 Shermer Road, Northbrook Illinois 60062  
301 Author Ave Mount Prospect Illinois

## Kruse's Tavern

## **Note from Wilber (Bill) William Kruse**

Now called Mrs. P and Me Restaurant  
100 E Prospect Ave, Mount Prospect Il 60056