

Oral History Interview
Evelyn Lorenz MacKenzie
WH063

(written transcript and digital audio)

On September 1, 2009, Evelyn MacKenzie was interviewed at the Evergreen Center by Brenda Velasco at 10:30 A.M. Finally I've been able to rope Evelyn MacKenzie for this interview. You usually associated Evelyn just with Evergreen but there is far more to it than that. So I'm so glad she agreed to this interview.

1. Identify individual –name, section, date of birth.

Evelyn MacKenzie: I'm Evelyn A. MacKenzie. My maiden name is Lorenz. I'm originally from Bloomfield and I now live in Colonia. I'm eighty-two years old and my birthday is February 8, 1927.

2. How long have you lived in Woodbridge?

Evelyn MacKenzie: I've lived in Colonia for fifty-five years. The house I live in was built by the Summer Brothers. The section I live in now was all built by them. They built a couple of sections in the township. When we first came down here, because my husband was stationed on the parkway.....

Brenda Velasco: Okay, before we go any further, what was your husband's career?

Evelyn MacKenzie: My husband was with the State Police and at the time we came down here he was stationed on the Parkway.

Brenda Velasco: So then you moved here in what year, do you recall?

Evelyn MacKenzie: It was '56.

Brenda Velasco: Okay 1956. So the Parkway was already built?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, just that section of the Parkway was built.

Brenda Velasco: Okay.

Evelyn MacKenzie: That's where he was stationed on the Parkway at the time. He had seen the house from the Parkway and he came down to look at it. He came home very anxious and very excited. He said, "Oh there's a house you've got to see in Colonia". I said, "Who wants to move to Colonia"? That was my first reaction.

3. Why did you or your family originally move to Woodbridge?

Brenda Velasco: Okay so you were from Bloomfield?

Evelyn MacKenzie: I was from Bloomfield, sure.

Brenda Velasco: And right next door was Newark with all the big shopping and everything.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Oh, yes, everything was there, surely, and Bloomfield was actually a built up community. I had a beautiful home up there with my mom and I had everything for me going up there. The school was close; my school was five minutes away from where my child went to school. We came down here and, so what happens? We put a big ten dollar deposit on the house, went away for three weeks for vacation and came back and brought my father and my father-in-law down. They both looked at the house and my father said you'd be crazy not to buy this house. I

said, look I'm going to move so far away from your dad. He said, "that's alright". He said, "We can always come down on Parkway". That's when the Parkway was completed, so it was good. So we moved in and have been here ever since and have enjoyed it ever since.

Brenda Velasco: How much did you pay for that house do you recall?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Fourteen thousand and five hundred dollars.

Brenda Velasco: Wow! That would be a bargain today.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Then a year later it went for seventeen thousand and five hundred dollars.

Brenda Velasco: And that was in 1956.

Evelyn MacKenzie: 1956, yes.

Brenda Velasco: How long did it take your family to get to your house from on the Parkway?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Half an hour, just a half an hour.

Brenda Velasco: So you really weren't that far away.

Evelyn MacKenzie: No we really weren't. But you know, at that time, we were very close to my mom and dad and his mother and father so that's what the problem was. He was an only child. And then, of course, I had a little girl and my father was crazy about this little girl. But he'd come down every third or fourth day to see her to take her to school and take her out to lunch and things like that. So there was no problem there at all, he could handle the ride.

4. *What physical changes have occurred over the years in the area you lived? -houses, streets, services, stores, houses of worship, schools, etc.*

Brenda Velasco: When you moved into your house did you have sewers?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, we had everything because they had to put them in. At that time the township made them put in sidewalks, sewers and everything. Down here, when you walked down here to Inman Avenue, there was just a two lane highway with no sidewalks. There were no curbs and I don't remember too many trees either along the road; but of course, then the Parkway had just been built so they were just renewing everything down here. I guess the County had to come in to do all the work.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, because Inman is a County road.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Right, I know that.

Brenda Velasco: So you had the overpass on Inman Avenue?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, right here. And when we first moved down here we used to get off in Iselin on Semel Avenue because they had the opening off the Parkway there between the gas stations.

Brenda Velasco: Yes which now just has a gate, so that's where the exit was for you.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Then we were told there was going to be an exit right here on Inman Avenue but then that changed too.

Brenda Velasco: Never materialized.

Evelyn MacKenzie: No, that never materialized.

Brenda Velasco: And we're happy about that.

Evelyn MacKenzie: I am too.

Brenda Velasco: But Semel Avenue wasn't far from you then?

Evelyn MacKenzie: No it wasn't far it's still not far really. I still have to go out that way or go out the park to get on the Parkway so it's not that bad really.

Brenda Velasco: Okay.

Evelyn MacKenzie: But when I first came down here, too, I didn't know what church I was going to go to because I'm Protestant. I'm looking around for a church and it was funny, the old church up on the hill, the Methodist Church, the little white church.....

Brenda Velasco: You're talking on New Dover Road.

Evelyn MacKenzie: New Dover Road in Edison, yes. And around here there was a church on Lake Avenue, the little chapel over there.

Brenda Velasco: Yes.

Evelyn MacKenzie: So I went there a couple of times but it was just a little place that hadn't even gotten up to speed really. Then we were going to the Presbyterian Church over in Iselin but I kept coming back to the Methodist Church up on the hill. Now they call it the little flea market church.

Brenda Velasco: Well that's because every Tuesday they have a flea market.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Right.

Brenda Velasco: And that church wasn't far from you either.

Evelyn MacKenzie: No, it was close.

Brenda Velasco: It was in Edison but it was close. It was just a few more blocks past Semel Avenue.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Sure, not bad at all.

Brenda Velasco: No, so everything was starting to get close.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes it was. That's how it started. That's how I started making my friends around here too because at the time, it was funny, we had two hundred and nineteen homes in our development.

Brenda Velasco: How many homes?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Two hundred and nineteen homes in our development.

Brenda Velasco: Wow that was a lot!

Evelyn MacKenzie: And out of the two hundred I think there were only nineteen Protestant families. I think there were about fifty-six Jewish families and the rest were Catholic families. We knew they were going to build a new church down here for the Catholic people so where were we going to go? But the Jewish people, I think they went to a church over here somewhere too, their synagogue.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, on Temple Way.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, on Temple Way they went there. Most of us went up to the church on the hill. Still to this day there are still some there that I remember.

5. What public buildings/property were there?-post office, library, parks, firehouse, schools etc.

Brenda Velasco: How was New Dover Road back then?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Well, it was just a two lane highway and I remember when I was younger I was teaching Girl Scouts, I had Girl Scouts at my house, and we ended up having the parades down here and we would march and every time you came back your feet were dirty because the roads weren't even paved hardly.

Brenda Velasco: Okay and this was on Inman Avenue?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Inman Avenue. Yes, it was terrible. You'd walk along, you know, and your shoes would get a mess, the poor kids.

Brenda Velasco: And when did you have the parades?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Memorial Day was one of them. I know we had Memorial Day a couple of times. But then after that we didn't have too many parades. It's only been in recent years that we've had parades again.

Brenda Velasco: And that was because of George Vassiliades with the Colonia Pride Day parade.

Evelyn MacKenzie: That's right, which worked out real well. The buildings down here at the end of the street, we didn't have a post office yet. The post office was off of New Dover Road, the one that was underneath the bridge.

Brenda Velasco: Okay.

Evelyn MacKenzie: We had that. The school wasn't built when I first moved in here either. That came in 1957 I believe.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, what school?

Evelyn MacKenzie: This school. (1954)

Brenda Velasco: Okay, this is School No 17 which is closed now and this is where Evergreen is.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Right.

Brenda Velasco: So where did your daughter go?

Evelyn MacKenzie: She had to go to the School Street School.

Brenda Velasco: All the way in Woodbridge?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, they bused them into Woodbridge for a year and then this school opened so they came here. I think I got the year right. Maybe it came earlier than that, maybe it came in '54. I should have written this all down. Then when we moved in, I think we were only in our house for three weeks, and she fell on the slates that went up. She had to go to the hospital for fourteen stitches in her knee. Miss America was gone. I'll never forget it because the first aid squad came, Bill York, do you remember him?

Brenda Velasco: I remember the name.

Evelyn MacKenzie: He was head of the first aid squad and he came to help her. What a big help they were! They were very active in the township, the Yorks.

Brenda Velasco: I think they lived on Dewey Avenue.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Dewey Avenue, yes.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, right on my corner.

Evelyn MacKenzie: That's right. They brought a wheelchair for her and they brought the crutches for her. They brought everything for my little girl. We moved in in September and on January 1st I had my second child.

Brenda Velasco: You were busy.

Evelyn MacKenzie: I was busy, sure.

Brenda Velasco: And you also had a daughter who was in a wheelchair and crutches.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Right. She got over it quickly though thank goodness. She was going to school with crutches. The bus came, picked her up and took her to school with crutches. She went down to School Street for school. I think it was nice because the community came together a lot more than they do now, I feel. Our development alone was together all the time. We all worked together.

Brenda Velasco: So we mentioned the streets weren't in the greatest condition but you were okay on Amherst.

Evelyn MacKenzie: On Amherst you see we were only supposed to go half way up, we were not supposed to go through at the time. (to Inman Avenue)

Brenda Velasco: To New Dover Road.

Evelyn MacKenzie: No, New Dover Road we were supposed to go up to; we weren't supposed to go out to Inman.

Brenda Velasco: Oh!

Evelyn MacKenzie: We were supposed to stop up there. When we came home it was all fenced off. When we came down to buy the house it was all fenced off and they told us that the street wouldn't go through that it would be good for the children. So we thought, well that's great. But then when we moved in, I think we were already in not only a year, they opened up the street all the way through. So it worked out for the better anyway because we were a part of Colonia anyway.

Brenda Velasco: That was a lot of houses.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes.

Brenda Velasco: They all had paved streets then.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, we all had paved streets and the next development over did too. They all had paved streets. They were all put in about the same year. They had to put in the streets, they had to put in the sewers and they had to put in the curbs. We had everything. Our house was all finished when we moved in. We had a beautiful home when they first brought us in. Everybody took care of them too.

Brenda Velasco: And it's still a nice neighborhood.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Oh yes it's still a good neighborhood, it is.

Brenda Velasco: It's still well maintained.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Overall I think Colonia is a good neighborhood. It's a good place to bring your kids up in and everything I think.

Brenda Velasco: Oh yes.

Evelyn MacKenzie: They have good schools.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, and how about the stores now?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, there were nice big stores down there too. We had one big food store, the hardware store, the bakery came in later and at the end of the couple of little stores we had there, Don Newcombe lived, of the Dodgers.

Brenda Velasco: And you're talking by the Bank of America.

Evelyn MacKenzie: By the Bank of America, right in there yes. I remember his house because it was red. I loved red so I kept looking at his house. We all went down one time and he came out and met us all. We talked to him.

Brenda Velasco: His house is no longer there though.

Evelyn MacKenzie: No, it's gone. All those houses went out there. The bank wasn't there the Bank of America. It came after.

Brenda Velasco: Okay.

Evelyn MacKenzie: I remember that it came after. The houses are all gone up to that corner. But that corner is all stores now. **Colonia Drugs** came in after that.

Brenda Velasco: Right.

Evelyn MacKenzie: There was a delicatessen that was there that was very good, a Jewish delicatessen. When we moved to our development they opened the Jewish

delicatessen and it was very good. I remember that. He was one of the neighbors because he bought the house with us.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, we have houses of worship because the Catholic Church will come in 1959.

Evelyn MacKenzie: The schools, Lynn Crest School was built since then. (1959)

Brenda Velasco: Okay.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Fifth grade, I think, is when she came into that school so she didn't have to take the buses anymore.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, and by the time she was going there your other child.....

Evelyn MacKenzie: She didn't have to go on the bus at all.

Brenda Velasco: And your second daughter.....

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, my second daughter went to school there.

Brenda Velasco: Okay.

Evelyn MacKenzie: And then the boy went there too.

Brenda Velasco: Then Colonia Middle School.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, they came here.

Brenda Velasco: Okay.

Evelyn MacKenzie: I mean there.

Brenda Velasco: Right, behind Evergreen.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, they all went to Middle School here.

Brenda Velasco: And they could walk to that.

Evelyn MacKenzie: When I came here with Craig, he was the youngest one, I felt like a grandmother because I was the oldest, I think, mother here. Because when I had him I was older. They were all young. I was pretty old when I had him. But he's a joy now, believe me. He's forty-one now. I remember coming here to school with him. It is a nice school. There were a lot of children. Oh God we had a lot of children, you know, from all developments around they all came here so there's a lot of children here then.

Brenda Velasco: Because you had Lynn Oaks, Oak Ridge.....

Evelyn MacKenzie: Oh sure, Lynn Oaks came over here too, yes they all did. In back, every place, so there were a lot of children. But it was good, they all got along. They had a lot of activities but nothing like we have now. People don't appreciate what they have now I don't think. You know, there are a lot of activities here. I mean when I look at the senior center, myself, I think to myself there should be more people coming here because it's open to them. Today we're slow, on Tuesday, I don't know why. We have yoga in the morning and that's about it. But there's a senior's club that meets today, the AARP meets on the same day, Tuesday; and that means that's where the people are going from the area.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, but we have activities for every age group.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Oh yes, we do.

Brenda Velasco: We have for seniors but we also have for young people.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Young people, everything.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, it's a very active community

Evelyn MacKenzie: When we first moved down here, the development itself had an organization, the Civic Club, and if I could think of the name of the place I could tell you what the Civic Club was named after. I'll think of it by the end maybe. But we

had a Civic Association and they used to meet once or twice a month and, I don't know why, but at that time we had fires in the backyard. We'd sit outside and have fires and we'd put potatoes in the fires and the kids would run around. It was fun then. I mean, all the activities, just around your families alone you would stay there. You didn't go out of town or anything. You didn't travel or go any place, you stayed there because we were all so busy.

Brenda Velasco: And you had enough kids in the area anyhow.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, you'd send them in the house for a drink of water or send them in the house to go to bed and that's about all you did. But that was your activities then. I didn't go into the center of town too much then.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, when you say the center of town what did you.....

Evelyn MacKenzie: Woodbridge Proper.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, Woodbridge Proper.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, right. Well, see, that's one big town.

Brenda Velasco: Yes.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Then I got the job there.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, so that was the big focal point for you and were you able to drive?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Oh, sure, we could drive anywhere. You had to have a car. You know when we first moved here too there were buses because I remember a bus going into New York right along New Dover Road. They don't do it anymore.

Brenda Velasco: And that was into New York.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, into New York.

Brenda Velasco: Not Newark but New York.

Evelyn MacKenzie: And then there was another bus coming here that went into Elizabeth. I think that's still in operation.

Brenda Velasco: Yes.

Evelyn MacKenzie: 62.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, that bus is still.....

Evelyn MacKenzie: At least you had some place to go and we used to use that DeCamp bus. A lot of us used to go to New York because if we wanted to see a show or take the children at Christmas time. We used to do that often.

Brenda Velasco: What about the firehouse?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Now where was the firehouse? It must have been in the same place but it was small.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, on Inman Avenue.

Evelyn MacKenzie: On Inman Avenue, yes. It was small then because it only had two places for engines in there, I remember that. When my son got older he went to the Iselin Fire Company because they had the place on New Dover Road.

Brenda Velasco: Right, which once again was close to you.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, everything was close. That's what I'm saying everything was close which was good.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, we covered the schools and we covered the firehouse in Question #5, how about the library?

Evelyn MacKenzie: The library at the time, the one on the corner of New Dover Road that was our only library.

Brenda Velasco: And Chain O' Hills.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Chain O' Hills Road. That's right that was the only library. The park was there, that was a big park.

Brenda Velasco: Inman Park was there then already.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Oh yes. It was small, it wasn't like it is now but you could go down and use it.

Brenda Velasco: Did it have any equipment?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes at the time it had swings and things like that but it didn't seem like they last very long because the kids were sometimes destructive, which was sad. But then in 1975, when I started to work for the township, that's when I saw how much they did around the township for the kids with all the different parks around the towns. They're always sending people out to clean up the parks.

Brenda Velasco: Oh yes, still, and we have one of the largest amount of parks for a community.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Oh we do. That's why I can't get over the size of this community and the things that we give to people and they don't appreciate it. Look at last they were from all over, not from Woodbridge but just from all over. So we're lucky to have that too. It's amazing to me.

Brenda Velasco: You're talking about the concert last night?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes the concert.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, with the *Infernos* last night.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, right. I particularly didn't like them so I didn't go. I like Johnny Maestro.

Brenda Velasco: He was here. The *Infernos* have been with us for.....

Evelyn MacKenzie: I know they have, I like the *Duprees*.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, we've got a big selection there.

Evelyn MacKenzie: We're very fortunate to have that.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, I think we just about covered Question 5.

6. What did you do for recreation?

Brenda Velasco: For recreation you mentioned so much of it was with.....

Evelyn MacKenzie: With your community, you have to be with your community all the time. Right here with your neighbors. This is the way you get to know your neighbors.

Brenda Velasco: And you had the children, you had three children.

Evelyn MacKenzie: I had three children so I mean they were all together. So many things I think of and my neighbors too. My husband used to come home from work and he would wash the diapers and things like that and hang them on the line. Well you should have heard the ladies. This was on the side, they always kidded him about it: "You wash diapers, my husband doesn't wash diapers". You know things like that. When I think about it I laugh at them.

Brenda Velasco: We're talking cloth diapers.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, cloth diapers sure.

Brenda Velasco: Right, because you didn't have the *Huggies* or the other type of diapers.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Disposable, yes.

Brenda Velasco: No, this was all cloth.

Evelyn MacKenzie: That was so funny when I think about the neighbors, you know. But my next door neighbor was Margie Lee, do you remember her at all?

Brenda Velasco: No.

Evelyn MacKenzie: The Lees, they were good people. She couldn't do enough for her neighbors and she was always head of every kind of committee you could think of.

Brenda Velasco: So you had like a little neighborhood committee then.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, Civic Club.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, that was the Civic Club.

Evelyn MacKenzie: The whole development of the two hundred and nineteen homes.

Brenda Velasco: Where did you meet?

Evelyn MacKenzie: In the backyard, everybody's backyard. We'd make hamburgers and hot dogs and in the wintertime we would, naturally, go into somebody's house. Then when Lynn Oaks opened we'd go there and meet once in a while. You see they were fighting for different things: stop signs and things like that so we would get together for that.

Brenda Velasco: Well quality of life.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Buses and stuff like that.

Brenda Velasco: Then you also have a bridge over the feeder to Pumpkin Patch Creek.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, we do. We didn't have too much but in the back of the school I remember big puddles all the time like Pumpkin Patch down here. But up there in the back of the school kids were always in the pools and they tried to get that straightened out. They did. It's better now than it was anyway.

7. What was the focal point of your community at that time?

Brenda Velasco: The main center which dominated your life.

Evelyn MacKenzie: I don't really know because we were altogether in the development, we'd always be there. We'd go to the library together.

Brenda Velasco: Then I think it was your neighborhood.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Neighborhood, yes, I would say the neighborhood really because everybody was always together. They'd say, I'm going here you want to go with me? I mean they always offered things to you.

Brenda Velasco: You had a small community within a community.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes we did.

Brenda Velasco: Were there still farm areas in Colonia at this time?

Evelyn MacKenzie: No where we were built was the Dunn Weaver Estates we were the last section for Dunn Weaver. I know on New Dover Road there was an airport down further.

Brenda Velasco: And that went into Iselin.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, right.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, the airport there.

Evelyn MacKenzie: That was on Oak Tree Road I believe, wasn't it?

Brenda Velasco: It was off of Correja somewhere.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Because I remember that. I remember a nightclub, **Deep Purple**.

Brenda Velasco: And where was that?

Evelyn MacKenzie: On Oak Tree Road. Do you know who I went to see there?

Brenda Velasco: Who?

Evelyn MacKenzie: The one that changed her sex, Johnson. Well anyway she changed her sex. She was a man and she wanted to be a woman, the first one. Yes, she was there. I had to go see her. My husband took me and he said what do you want to see? I said I just have to see her so we went there to see her.

Brenda Velasco: Where on Oak Tree Road, right in the center of Iselin?

Evelyn MacKenzie: It was up on the hill further. Now all the stores are there now way up on the hill.

Brenda Velasco: By the Parkway bridge?

Evelyn MacKenzie: No this was up towards Dr. Lombardi's office up that way.

Brenda Velasco: Oh, gotcha.

Evelyn MacKenzie: It was probably in Edison more than anything and that's where I think the airport was too.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, so there was an airport and.....

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, **Deep Purple**. I never forget that, **Deep Purple**.

Brenda Velasco: Okay.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Christine Johnson, that's what her name was. She was the first woman to be changed. She had boobs and everything else, you know. She was funny.

8. What did you like about living in your section of Woodbridge?

Evelyn MacKenzie: I liked the community it's a good community for growth and everything else. To bring up children, I wouldn't move out of it.

Brenda Velasco: No because you're eighty-two and you've got kids scattered all over.

Evelyn MacKenzie: No, why should I move? I have everything I want here. I like my home and I like my location. I abut the Parkway. Sunday I was sitting outside and the trees are real high and I thought if that ever comes down it's going to hit me right on the head because they're right in back of the house. They were blowing so hard and I said it'll hit me on the head and I'll be out like a light. But it's nice where I am really, very nice.

9. Did you experience any significant happenings in Woodbridge-construction, accidents, sports events, riots, discrimination, etc.

Evelyn MacKenzie: No, none of that. I think for construction I think it's nice how the schools have all been built for the people that live here, you know what I mean. That's a big thing right there all the schools for children.

Brenda Velasco: And they've become community schools.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Sure, that's the nice part. I don't remember any riots. Oh yes I do, we went on strike in Town Hall.

Brenda Velasco: Oh! When was this?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Oh, when was it. You know, I went to work for Town Hall in 1975. I went to work for CETA at first and I was on CETA for six months and then I went right to the Township.

Brenda Velasco: And CETA was Federal.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, federal and then I went to the Township. My husband was very friendly with one of the girls that worked in the office downstairs in the judge's office. When I went looking for a job I didn't go see her but she came up to see me. She said: "Oh I met your husband". And the next thing I knew I was hired. I went to work for Freddy Zullo at first. That's when I found out all about the parks system in the Township of Woodbridge which has been and will be a very good place to work. But it was nice. He was good to the people of Woodbridge, Freddy, you know he really was. People don't realize that either because he put on Easter shows, they had Easter egg hunts in the park and they would give away bicycles.

Brenda Velasco: Wow!

Evelyn MacKenzie: Oh, yes.

Brenda Velasco: And where were these Easter egg hunts?

Evelyn MacKenzie: In the big park here, Roosevelt Park.

Brenda Velasco: Roosevelt or Merrill?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Merrill Park.

Brenda Velasco: Merrill Park.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, we had Easter egg hunts. I had an Easter egg hunt and put them out at five o'clock in the morning and by seven o'clock they were all here looking for the eggs.

Brenda Velasco: Oh, yes, kids are like that.

Evelyn MacKenzie: They were here at seven o'clock in the morning. That was my job, one of my jobs, for him.

Brenda Velasco: Okay.

Evelyn MacKenzie: But see things like that was fun that was one of the fun things. I'm trying to think, at Christmas time you always had Christmas parties. Different schools he'd have a Christmas party maybe.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, so they were held in the schools then.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, they were held in the schools the Christmas parties were.

Brenda Velasco: Did they have the Christmas parade back then?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, they had the Christmas parade. He started the Christmas parade from what I understand.

Brenda Velasco: Freddy Zullo?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Freddy Zullo, yes.

Brenda Velasco: Well, that's quite huge.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, because he used to send up all the fellows that were working with me all the different pageant things that they have all the time.

Brenda Velasco: The stands and everything?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, he'd send away for them. They'd have to drive them down and then they'd put all the different decorations on them.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, the floats?

Evelyn MacKenzie: The floats, yes the floats.

Brenda Velasco: Well between the two of us we got it, didn't we?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, you got it.

Brenda Velasco: Eventually.

Evelyn MacKenzie: It must have been about fifteen of them, a couple of days before they'd go get them so they could build them up for the parade.

Brenda Velasco: And that was in the Recreation Department?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Recreation Department, yes.

Brenda Velasco: So this tradition about having holiday parades sponsored by the Township goes back a long way.

Evelyn MacKenzie: It sure does. I went to work for the Township in '75 and that's where I first worked right there. I mean that was in '75 so probably in 1976 was the first one they had.

Brenda Velasco: And then when did you come to Evergreen?

Evelyn MacKenzie: 1988.

Brenda Velasco: That was even more convenient for you.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Five minutes from home. I was lucky that I came up here I really was because I had taken the exam for here never thinking that it would be, you know, me and politics.

Brenda Velasco: But that was.....

Evelyn MacKenzie: Fortunate.

Brenda Velasco: But you had to have an exam and everything for this position.

Evelyn MacKenzie: I passed it and I was given the job to come up here and be with the seniors and take care of the seniors.

Brenda Velasco: So you basically launched this.....

Evelyn MacKenzie: No the seniors had been here. They started here in 1983. It was five years old but they closed for five months because they had to put more bathrooms in and they had to have a convenient spot for the handicapped upstairs and things like that. So they closed for six months and repainted and they did the bathrooms and everything. So that's when I came in right after that.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, a refurbished building.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes.

Brenda Velasco: And we're still refurbishing and updating it. You got the new windows in.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Oh, that's beautiful. It's going to be a beautiful area now.

Brenda Velasco: And they're going to reconfigure the office space for some of the rooms.

Evelyn MacKenzie: They have to do the rooms back here, yes. They have three rooms already set aside for them that they will use. Once they get that that will be nice, it really will.

Brenda Velasco: And we're utilizing the building for, once again, the community.

Evelyn MacKenzie: What's going to be hard for me are our computer rooms. If they start using them, I just hope and pray that they take care of them because right now the seniors take care of those. But that's the only thing I worry about but then I think to myself, the Township pays for them anyway so why do I care but I do care? See, that's my problem.

Brenda Velasco: I'm sure they'll be monitoring them.

Evelyn MacKenzie: I sure hope so.

Brenda Velasco: Because this is a great location.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Another thing is the police at night. We need police here at night time.

Brenda Velasco: Well, this will be good.

Evelyn MacKenzie: See we have to have it.

Brenda Velasco: We have a presence at the Community Center too.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Do they? I didn't know they had one.

Brenda Velasco: Yes.

Evelyn MacKenzie: That's good then, I'm glad of that.

Brenda Velasco: As well as surveillance and so on.

10. What do you like about Woodbridge today?

Evelyn MacKenzie: I love the activities here in Woodbridge, I do. I think there's just everything for everybody to do. Stay with the community and do things together.

Brenda Velasco: And you provide a lot of activities at Evergreen for the seniors. You had yoga this morning.....

Evelyn MacKenzie: We have yoga, we have exercise for fun on Mondays and Fridays, we have dancing Mondays and Wednesdays, we have western dancing on Thursdays, we have small (inaudible) repair on Fridays and we have a painting class on Thursdays. In the fall we're going to go back to painting on two afternoons, a different kind of painting. We have movies on a Thursday afternoon now. We try everything.

Brenda Velasco: And it gets people out.

Evelyn MacKenzie: We have bocci.

Brenda Velasco: Yes I remember because.....

Evelyn MacKenzie: Nobody is coming for it though. I feel very bad about that but Toni plays it, Toni and another girl. We were supposed to have a team but it didn't develop. I was hoping they would go to the Olympics.

Brenda Velasco: That would have been great because we're hosting the Olympics.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Maybe next year.

11. Do you have any family members still living in Woodbridge?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Yes, I still have a son living in Iselin.

Brenda Velasco: So that's not far at all.

Evelyn MacKenzie: No, he takes care of Mommy. That's why I'm still here so he can take care of Mommy.

Brenda Velasco: Great and I know some of your children are in Florida too right?

Evelyn MacKenzie: Two, I have two girls in Florida. They want me to move down but I'm not going to move.

Brenda Velasco: We want you here so that's it.

Evelyn MacKenzie: I'm going to retire.

12. Are there any other stories or events that you would like to discuss that we haven't?

Brenda Velasco: Because you've worked under several mayors.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Nine mayors I think.

Brenda Velasco: Nine mayors.

Evelyn MacKenzie: I started out with Cassidy, DeMarino, Cerria, DeMarino again, McGreevey, Pelzman and McCormac. I had a life with the Township.

Brenda Velasco: Yes you have and you've done a good job.

Evelyn MacKenzie: I'm here thirty-four years.

Brenda Velasco: And very successful.

Evelyn MacKenzie: I'm ready.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, anything else you want to mention?

Evelyn MacKenzie: If I think of anything, I'll call you.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, but I thank you.

Evelyn MacKenzie: Shore Crest, I knew I would think of it. We were Shore Crest and that was Shore Crest over here.

Brenda Velasco: You were Shore Crest. Okay so I thank you very much and I'm glad I don't have to get that call at two o'clock in the morning.