

October 11, 1999

Oral History of Michael Kuretich

Jerry - Michael, I'm happy to welcome you as an oral history interviewee. Usually the way I begin these interviews is to ask the people when they were born and where they were born.

Mr. Kuretich - I was born in 1945, May the 9th, and I was born down in St. Francis Hospital in downtown Los Angeles.

Jerry - How did you end up in Glendale?

Mr. Kuretich - We had had family in Glendale and my mother and father at the time moved here in 1950 and bought a house at 506 Lincoln Avenue and that's how I came here. We were called here because of other family members that lived here for years and years.

Jerry - Can you tell me a little bit about the family who lived in Glendale?

Mr. Kuretich - Yeah. My dates may be a little off but they were living in Montrose in the 1920's, 1930's. At that time it was before they had the storm channels that were going through Glendale and there was a rainstorm that was as bad as the one we had a couple of years ago. In that rain storm, as I recall, one of our relatives whose last name was Kurtis, K U R T I S, the original name was Kuretich K U R E T I C H, but they were in business and it was just much easier to make it a more English name. I understand that when they had the flood, one of the members was drowned. As a result of that, they built those storm drains that go through Glendale and so far we haven't had that bad of a storm.

I originally went to John Muir Elementary School, that's on Chevy Chase, starting in 1950. I can remember Chevy Chase overflowing up to the steps of the school and I can also remember some young men floating down Chevy Chase in a ?? and they had to be rescued. At the time I was in First or Second grade. I went all through John Muir and then I went to Wilson Jr. High School. After that I went to Glendale High School. I graduated in 1963. Then I went to Glendale College for a year--actually I worked for a year. I got married, had a child and then I went to Glendale College for a year. Then I got a letter from President Johnson saying 'Greetings, you are hereby ordered to report to the United States Army.' This was during the Viet Nam Conflict. I went into the Army and became a radio operator, Morse Code radio operator. I was stationed at Fort Ord and then as we got our shipping orders. Out of our class there was 780 people and 775 went to Viet Nam and five of us went to Germany. I had no idea why I went to Germany. I still knock on wood.

Jerry - Probably a lucky assignment.

Mr. Kuretich - Right. So I was in Germany for the next year and a half and came back with my wife and we rented over on the west side of Glendale. Then I acquired a job with Southern Pacific. I worked for Southern Pacific for 20 years and they sent me through college. Just as I graduated, they went out of business or in other words they were bought by ?? Topeka and the Santa Fe. Now that railroad is the Union Pacific.

My mother worked for Southern Pacific from 1942 and she put in 30 years.

Jerry - What did she do?

Mr. Kuretich - She was a telegrapher. She lived in Glendale. The only reason she got a job, at the time on the railroad women weren't hired--but her father used to be a telegrapher for Rock Island Line and as a girl she learned Morse Code. So when World War II happened, she went down and applied and they immediately put her in becoming a telegrapher for the railroad. She worked all the outlying stations, Santa Suzanna, Saugus, places like that that were at the time nothing but farm country which is now a city. My father worked for the Southern California Gas Company. The family that was here, their last name was Kurtis, Frank Kurtis was a sports car enthusiast. He loved to build cars. He was approximately 6 foot 8, 6 foot 9, and he was good with his hands and he couldn't fit in any of the cars. So, he started building cars to where he could fit in them. He started getting into racing, racing a circuit around Glendale and around Los Angeles, building cars, and he opened up the firm in the 40's, actually late 30's over by San Fernando Road. The name of that firm was Kurtis Craft Race Cars. In that period in 1950's, my figures can be off, but 1950's he won out of that year, that decade, he won 7 Indianapolis races with those cars.

Jerry - Did he sponsor those cars?

Mr. Kuretich - He built them, then drove them there. He hired the drivers to do it. Now there was another very famous driver, one of the most famous race drivers was from Glendale and that was Bokavich. Bokavich won almost every race in the 40's and the 50's and he went into the Air Force as pilot and came out. Unfortunately, I forgot what year it was, in the early 60 s or late 50's, in the Indianapolis race in a Kurtis Craft Car, and at that time there was 13 cars that were Kurtis Craft in that race, Bokovich went around a corner and for some reason he flipped. Unfortunately he was killed in that particular instance which also meant that Kurtis Craft Race Cars now had a bad name because the most famous race car driver of the decade was killed in the Kurtis Craft Race Car.

He then went into midget cars. Midget race cars. There's actually one right now down at the Peterson Auto Leasing. Right down on Wilshire. He started manufacturing midget cars and continued to do that, and then occasionally he'd go and do designs as far as race cars are concerned. He was the first person, I wish I could remember the names of the engines, but the engines started getting bigger and bigger and they wouldn't fit in a race car. So, he thought and thought about it. One day he decided well lets just put it on its side and put fuel injection in it. So he put it on its side and they won the Indianapolis race with that particular design and from then on, that's how people would...

Jerry - So it's kind of a transverse?

Mr. Kuretich - Right. Just put it on its side so it would fit in the race car.

Jerry - How interesting.

Mr. Kuretich - During World War II he was so tall that he couldn't get drafted. So he manufactured here in Glendale. He had a manufacturing plant. He was manufacturing motors and things of that nature for the United States military.

Jerry - For automobiles?

Mr. Kuretich - Automobiles, some aircraft. He also designed a platform that was kind of a one man helicopter and he was in conjunction with Lockheed in doing it. This was in the 50's where they would actually lift the infantry men up and they could go over the terrain in this particular thing. As far as I know, nothing came of it. Then he retired and he died 10 years ago and had a funeral. He's buried here in Glendale. The funeral was over there at the Catholic...

Jerry - Holy Family?

Mr. Kuretich - Yeah, at Holy Family. That's the story.

I have one brother who went through all the schools here. We all played football.

Jerry - Let me take you back a little bit to your schooling. You said that you went to John Muir Elementary. Can you tell me a little bit about the school as you recall?

Mr. Kuretich - I lived on Lincoln and the school was approximately a mile away-- a mile and a half away. At that time it was enjoyable to walk back and forth to school. I see now today that that's not being done very much. When I got

into second and third grade I had a bicycle and that was more fun. At that time John Muir was basically a brand new school. They redesigned the building or built a brand new building, I think it was in conjunction with they expected a big baby boom. I was always the first person in that baby boom and now that I'm 54, I'm no longer in that baby boom.

Jerry - I can understand that. I can identify with that as well.

Mr. Kuretich - But I went through kindergarten through 6th grade and had a very enjoyable time.

Jerry - What was the student body like? I know that now Glendale has many minorities. There's a very large Armenian population, Hispanic and some Asian people as well. Were there minorities while you were in school?

Mr. Kuretich - When I was going to John Muir it was basically Caucasian, with a few Mexicans, good people, and one or two Hawaiians and that was it. The rest was Caucasian.

Jerry - When you went to Wilson Jr. High?

Mr. Kuretich - That was basically the same there. Then when I went to Glendale High School, it was basically a Caucasian school. We would have Hispanics, more and more, but Glendale was an ethnic Caucasian society at that time.

Jerry - Do you notice that the neighborhood has changed significantly?

Mr. Kuretich - I now have the chance to voice my opinion. When the City of Los Angeles passed rent control years ago, Glendale was not prepared for that. The developers, Los Angeles was growing by leaps and bounds as it is today. The next thing you know Glendale was not prepared, nobody wanted to build apartments in Los Angeles and they came to Glendale. I think they ruined the neighborhood. I don't think, I know they really ruined the neighborhood atmosphere. Right now I live on a corner and across the street is a large condo complex and on the other side of the street are many apartment houses. Parking is really a terrible problem. Traffic is really bad.

Jerry - So when you were a child it was primarily a single family residential area?

Mr. Kuretich - Single family residences and it was kind of enjoyable. I delivered the Glendale Independent from the time that I was 8 years old until I was about 15.

Jerry - This was on your bicycle?

Mr. Kuretich - On my bicycle and my father helped deliver 350 papers.

Jerry - Oh my gosh, that was a huge route.

Mr. Kuretich - Yeah. Once a week or twice a week. I would go around door to door and collect 35 cents for a subscription. At that time the Glendale Independent was just a throw away but I got to know everybody in the particular neighborhood that I lived in, on Rock Glen. I really didn't have any problems and if there was a problem, I knew there was a problem and I never went back to that particular place. But on Rock Glen, where there's now a large condo complex, there was this old, old lady. She lived in the back of this lot and there were about three lots, and she lived--I wish I remembered her name--she lived in Glendale since the 1890's. Of course when I knew her, she was in her 90's and rather frail and everybody wanted to buy those lots and she would never sell and they never sold until she died. But the neighborhood was good.

Jerry - Are there any landmarks that stand out in your mind, any particular buildings?

Mr. Kuretich - Over on Verdugo and Griswald, I can be off, there's a monument to the original family who had a farm there. Now I can't remember the name but it's been there, the monument's been there for 40 years. I remember that. Most of the buildings have been torn down. On Colorado and Verdugo there's a Ralphs Market, I've seen all three different markets.

Jerry - Oh it's gone through a whole... When you were in junior high and high school, even in elementary school, were there any particular forms of recreation or entertainment?

Mr. Kuretich - I really enjoyed the sports system that the City of Glendale school systems had. We played flag football, baseball. The park system was fantastic. We'd go to Maple Park, Fanny Briggs Car Park. They always had people there. You know being a boy, once and a while you'd get into some fights but there was nothing very serious but they always had a director there. The park system couldn't get any better, you know, growing up.

Jerry - You said that you played football in high school. Do you feel like the park system playground atmosphere kind of led you into it?

Mr. Kuretich - Yeah it did. In fact I think everybody that was playing baseball, football, and basketball in sports--the park system really developed it and made some really good athletes out of Glendale. In fact, I wish I could remember names, but some of the people won Super bowls, Canadian Super bowls, and I'll probably think of the names. I haven't seen some of the people.

Jerry - How about movie theaters, were there any?

Mr. Kuretich - Yes and would--I lived over by the Eagle Rock line but I would always walk to Brand Blvd. There was a Roxy Theater, there was the Capital Theater, there was the Alex Theater and we would always have a lot of fun. During the summer or on the weekends all the kids when I was in grammar school would ride their bikes to the Alex Theater. We parked out bikes out front --there'd be 50 or 60 bikes out there--and we'd all go in there and watch Hopalong Cassidy and other westerns.

Jerry - Was that like the Saturday matinee?

Mr. Kuretich - Yes, the Saturday matinee.

Jerry - Do you recall how much that cost?

Mr. Kuretich - I think it was 25 cents, you know, something that wasn't very expensive. When I was in high school I got a job with a department store that 's no longer in existence here and that's called Webbs. That was an experience.

Jerry - Could you tell me a little bit about it?

Mr. Kuretich - Webb's Department Store really catered to the people in Glendale and it was a full department store. Men's clothing, gifts, dishes and things of that nature. That was on Brand. I don't know why they went out of business.

Jerry - Brand and ?

Mr. Kuretich - Probably Brand and Broadway.

Jerry - So, where the Galleria is now?

Mr. Kuretich - Yes. An excellent store, but its gone.

Jerry - What did you do at the store?

Mr. Kuretich - I wrapped packages and delivered them. Then I would also direct people in to departments.

Jerry - Were there any controversial issues that you recall in the City when you were younger?

Mr. Kuretich - Actually growing up, I don't think there was that many issues. There was always the issue of course, our family was making sure that there was plenty of storm drains and that we weren't going to have another flood. I know the Army Corps of Engineers put a good system through there and I

just remember that we were--my parents were always worried about making sure that that was in place. Then the other controversies, I went in the United States Army in 1966 and we used to go on 'G Hill'. There's a radio tower, and the reason it's called 'G Hill' is because the students at Glendale High School would go up put lime 'G'. I went away for two years and I came back and the hill was no longer there, they had built a freeway right through it. I thought, life has really changed.

Jerry - You said that you worked for the railroad. Can you tell me what you did for them?

Mr. Kuretich - When I was 18 I was a brakeman. At that time you worked 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. Being that young I wasn't--it was hard work. I would usually work the run from Los Angeles to Indio and then back, the main line. Then we would do some switching. Then I went back to college and quit them because at that time being a brakeman you made a lot of money and I was married. Then when I got drafted I came out I started to work as a clerk for the railroad. They were really fantastic because the minute they said you're a veteran, come on down. I worked as a payroll clerk for about a year and then I got into becoming a telegrapher. I worked at the different outlying stations and then I became a freight agent. My assignment that I worked for 7 years was at Saugus and I was the freight agent at Saugus, California until they closed that down. Then I had one year left before I graduated and when I was working as a freight agent I could get the work down and I could study. So I took a job underneath the Burbank Boulevard bridge directing trains to San Luis Obispo and Mojave, incoming, and I would work from midnight until 8:00 in the morning. Then I finally graduated from college and from there I went to doing freight claims and in buying and selling freight???

Jerry - Where did you go to college?

Mr. Kuretich - Glendale College and then Cal State Los Angeles.

Jerry - What was your major?

Mr. Kuretich - Transportation.

Jerry - So everything kind of followed. It kind of sounds like you had a family legacy in the communications in the railroad.

Mr. Kuretich - Right, right. My grandfather was originally from Oklahoma and as a boy he would be plowing the fields and would look over the field and see this train. He said 'I don't want to be a plowboy anymore.' He immediately went and learned how to be a telegrapher. Then he boomed all over. He was born in 1884 and booming on a railroad means that you work a job for a while, you get tired of it, you quit and you move on. At that time being a

telegrapher was like being a technician today. You could work any place. He worked all types of--all over the west then came back and got married when he was about 40. Then he became a station agent in a little town in Kansas. This was in the 1930's, he retired. They had just started railroad retirement and I think he'd only worked a year ?? for retirement. Railroad retirement is like social security except it happened about 20 years before. So he retired after only putting a year's wages into that full retirement. Then my grandmother said 'Lets move to God's country.' So they came to Los Angeles and that's how that portion of the family got here.

Jerry - What year was that?

Mr. Kuretich - 1930, 1931, something in that time.

Jerry - You had been telling me about your uncle who had built race cars. Do you have any more specific information about the Indianapolis races that he won and why he chose to build in Glendale?

Mr. Kuretich - I think he chose to build to Glendale because at that time Glendale was an area of a lot of high tech entrepreneurs. There was a racing crowd here and there were some tracks.

Jerry - In the City itself?

Mr. Kuretich - In the City, but they were dirt tracks that they closed down. At that time they had the airport which was a very famous airport. What's that lady, that famous aviator that ...

Jerry - Amelia Earhart?

Mr. Kuretich - Yeah. Amelia Earhart lived in Eagle Rock and so she would go to the airport and they were all very interested in the latest technology. Glendale was a business friendly city, especially for entrepreneurs.

Jerry - Even then? Because I know even today there's a business friendly attitude among government officials as well.

Mr. Kuretich - And then actually the City, as his business grew and his plant got bigger and bigger and bigger, so they actually would locate some places for him. You know, the zoning was correct.

Jerry - So he actually did work with the City on that?

Mr. Kuretich - Yes, he did. Also Glendale at that time was really not that big of a town.

Jerry - Do you recall visiting his shop at all? Can you describe it?

Mr. Kuretich - Well the first time I visited it, it was over on the other side of the railroad tracts off of San Fernando and it was, I would say 10,000 to 15,000 square feet and in that they had chasses and men working with the metal and shaping race cars and midget cars. Then he downsized and moved on to Colorado. There was a small plant there and that's where you get on the freeway. That's where he was making midget race cars and then he just got so old he had to retire.

Jerry - Did he pass it down?

Mr. Kuretich - His son, Arlen Kurtis, got into drag boats. He was living in Glendale until 10 or 15 years ago. In the drag boat industry, his boats have won several championships. But they had to move out of Glendale because of the fact that water was so far that they actually moved to of all places Bakersfield. He's manufacturing racing boats up there.

Jerry - So he was closer to lakes?

Mr. Kuretich - Yes, he was closer to lakes and I guess he could expand and then also with drag boats you're dealing with polyethylenes and fiberglass and things like that. To be honest with you, Bakersfield is not environmentally as strict as Los Angeles is.

Jerry - So he went where the climate was a little bit better for his business?

Mr. Kuretich - For that business. There's still a cousin that lives over in the Hoover district. I can't remember--her last name is Kurtis but she's a resident over there.

I married a Glendale girl. Audry Sibbald and she was a year younger than me and she was going to Hoover High School. Her father, Mr. Sibbald, had a cafe over on that district just above Glenoaks.

Jerry - How do you spell her name?

Mr. Kuretich - S I B B A L D. He ran this cafe. We had some problems but most fathers and son-in-laws do on occasion. He worked this cafe and he always bought the best quality food.

Jerry - Do you recall the name of the cafe?

Mr. Kuretich - No, I'll have to ask Audry. He died of a heart attack and his wife at that time was working for the Unemployment Bureau which is now called the Employment Bureau. She retired.

Jerry - An interesting shift in names.

Mr. Kuretich - She moved to Florida. Now my daughter... At that time I had moved to Van Nuys. My daughter went to grammar school in Van Nuys, junior high school and then I moved back to Glendale. Actually Christine went to first and second grade in Glendale then she came back for high school and then she graduated from Glendale High School.

Jerry - From the time that you graduated from Glendale High and the time that your daughter graduated, did you notice a significant change?

Mr. Kuretich - Yes I did. We had some problems with that. I'm a person who really likes everyone and I'm not trying to be a prejudice person here. My daughter is 6 ft. tall, beautiful redhead, full figured and it's something that any man would look at as they go down the street. But, we had Armenian boys come through and they would do a lot of cat calls. Sometimes some really nasty, nasty, nasty things.

Jerry - What year was this?

Mr. Kuretich - This was, my daughter's 32 now, so we got to figure back. It was in the 70's. We had some problems with that and on several occasions she was pulled over by these boys and I taught her--it was pretty tough so she had a railroad brake club. But that's the problems we had with them. Nothing against Armenians. I think it's just a cultural thing where the women are not treated as well.

Jerry- Did she go to Glendale Junior College as well.

Mr. Kuretich - No. She went into the movie industry and she got married to a Grip and now she has two children and is staying at home.

Jerry - Good for her.

Mr. Kuretich - I wanted her to go to college but...

Jerry - Speaking of the movie industry and the years that you were growing up, did you notice any of the studios filming in Glendale?

Mr. Kuretich - All the time and I went to school with Timmy Rooney which was Mickey Rooney's son. He was always a good guy.

Jerry - In Glendale?

Mr. Kuretich - In Glendale.

Jerry - Did they live in Glendale?

Mr. Kuretich - Well Mickey had a lot of wives.

Jerry - I think he was married five times.

Mr. Kuretich - Five times. So one of his wives and family lived in Glendale. It was up in the Rossmoyne district. I remember as a kid they had a house up on top of the hill and we used to have dirt clog fights and one time we were throwing dirt clogs at Mickey Rooney.

Jerry - What a great story.

Mr. Kuretich - Then the movie industry, they've always done a lot of stuff in Glendale. I think the movie industry is really an industry where man you've got to really work hard. You know, 20 hours a day. Glendale's close to the movie industry.

Jerry - You said that you worked for the railroad. You eventually got out of that. Did you work for any other companies in Glendale?

Mr. Kuretich - Southern Pacific went out of business and was done with some other people. I was given a golden handshake by, at that time, Santa Fe. So as a result I had always wanted to do some traveling. I took a year and a half off, I learned about air courier. My daughter at that time had decided, I think she was 18, decided that she was a woman and was going into the world and didn't want to go to college. I also had her college money and I threatened her. I said 'You don't go to college, I'm going to spend this money.' Well, she called my bluff so I spent a year and a half in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, all over the orient just traveling getting to know people, learning about business and having really the time of my life. I then came back and got into the real estate industry. I sold real estate in Eagle Rock for about another 5, 6, 7 years. We were at Glendale. I had unfortunately gotten divorced and then gotten married again and we moved to LaQuinta ?? down in the Palm Springs area. My wife was a marketer for a hospital but that marriage didn't work out. I had come back here and I was building several houses and I was kind of in between a rock and a hard place. I only lost one house and I finished another house in Pasadena.

Jerry - Did you build any in Glendale?

Mr. Kuretich - No, but I have two homes here. Then the real estate industry, nobody was making any money and there weren't any jobs so I took a class at the University of California in San Diego on lead hazards. I actually had to borrow the \$800 to take the class. I took the class and in the class the instructor, who owned an environmental company called Bar and Clark, hired me out of the class. Of course it wasn't a lot of money, he was only paying me \$13 an hour but at the time \$13 an hour was \$13 an hour. So I started getting into lead hazards, childhood poisoning cases, then I would

go and learn about asbestos, molds and other things in homes that cause problems mainly for children. I've been doing that since 1993 and now I'm working for the City of Long Beach doing their--I'm the head hazard control officer for them. Hopefully I'll be doing it for Riverside--I don't know yet. But that's how I got into that field. It was not like it was chosen, somebody offered me a job.

Jerry - To kind of switch gears a little bit, coming back to Glendale, when you were a kid you rode your bike around you said. Were there other forms of transportation that you used as well? Was the Red Car still around when you were a kid?

Mr. Kuretich - I loved the Red Car. The Red Car in Glendale--I was too young to take at the time. It used to go up Brand and then made a left on Glenoaks Blvd. They had taken that out. But I can remember walking to, 8 or 9 years old, 10 years old on a Saturday or Sunday, walking over to Eagle Rock Blvd., getting on the Red Car, going all the way down to the Pike in Long Beach, going around to all those amusements, getting back on the Red Car, taking me up to Colorado and Eagle Rock Blvd., going home and my mother never knew. The Red Car was a fantastic system and they took that out. That was a conjunction between ??? and General Motors. I like this new system they have here in Glendale now. I like the way the old Glendale train station has been converted.

Jerry - Have you seen it?

Mr. Kuretich - I've taken several--if I ever have a chance, I will take public transportation.

Jerry - The railroad depot is one of Glendale's designated historic resources. As you may know, my prime duties are historic preservation planning in Glendale. So I was involved at least in the planning stages of that depot and they did a wonderful job.

Mr. Kuretich - Oh I know. I actually worked there myself. Then when Amtrak took it over, I can't remember these gentlemen's names they were quite a bit younger than me. They actually went to the other stations that they were closing down and some of that furniture was not original, it came from other train stations. Those gentlemen really did a fantastic job. I can't remember their names now but you know, we always knew each other and they really kept that up.

Jerry - You said you worked at the Glendale station. What did you do there?

Mr. Kuretich - I was station agent there and then I was also a ticket agent.

Jerry - What years was this?

Mr. Kuretich - Sixty-eight, 69, yes 69 and 70 and then they did away with passenger trains. I can still recall sitting in the train station, and at that time not very many people were taking the trains, and a gentleman comes in and says 'I want 32 tickets to Tehachapi.' I said the train will be here in about 25 minutes and he said 'And I want separate tickets.' I'm said, 'No, lets just do one ticket for 32 people.' What is was was the Boy Scouts of America and he wanted each one to pay the separate ticket. He insisted upon separate tickets but there was no way I could do that. I started doing 32 tickets and by the time the train came--when the train came I had to stop. I had to put up train orders and do all this other stuff and I think I had about 20 more to go. I told the conductor 'get the tickets.' That was a little story about the Glendale train station. The agent that worked there for many years was a gentleman by the name of Aaron Heightner. He really maintained that station. He'd go out during the day and clean up himself. He was a freight agent at that station.

Jerry - He wasn't really responsible for doing that.

Mr. Kuretich - No, it was supposed to have been the railroad, you know janitorial staff, but he helped maintain things. Then they did away with the station as a railroad point for Southern Pacific and he was transferred to Van Nuys. Aaron Heightner was somebody that really cared about that station and kept it up. He used to do--they used to do a lot of filming of films there. He would help the station, in other words he would get some filming of the things going on there. I think Aaron Heightner retired from the railroad in 75, something of that nature.

Jerry - He retired while working there?

Mr. Kuretich - No they did that in the end.

Jerry - Oh, then they sent him to Van Nuys.

Mr. Kuretich - Yes, Van Nuys. He worked there for a good 10 or 15 years. Perhaps one of the best agents they ever had there.

Jerry - You know Grand Central Air Terminal is just up the street from the railroad depot. Do you remember seeing planes taking off and landing there when you were a kid?

Mr. Kuretich - I always heard about it but actually I can't remember because I lived on the opposite side of Glendale. I remember I used to climb all of these hills all the time that are over by Chevy Chase and 'G' Hill and seeing the planes. I remember as a little kid hearing the planes every night at 9:00 p.m. flying over.

Jerry - When you hiked around in the hills are those hills developed now?

Mr. Kuretich - Most of them are.

Jerry - They were pretty vacant?

Mr. Kuretich - They were absolutely vacant. There would be paths and they'd have large trees and we'd play cowboys and Indians, dirt clog fights and just go hiking in those mountains. At the time there were a lot of skunks, some raccoons and once in a while we'd even see a rabbit.

Jerry - Really. How about deer?

Mr. Kuretich - No, we didn't see any deer at that time. It was pretty dry. Sometimes we'd go up there and put water around, you know in bowls and we'd come back .

Jerry - To try to attract the animals?

Mr. Kuretich - Yeah to help them out. There was always fires. I was going to Glendale College 1964, 65 which was one of the worst fires Glendale has ever had. That was at the time that the Fire Department came down to the college and said 'Are there any volunteers?' So they gave us shovels and they put us on the hills behind Glendale College. That burnt several homes, many homes, but that was when a lot of the students, men students, went up and started fighting fires.

Jerry - So you had some experience doing that as well?

Mr. Kuretich - Right. They came back and we said 'OK, here's a shovel' and nobody would take a shovel. I've had that shovel for years and years.

Jerry - So its kind of a memento.

Mr. Kuretich - Right.

Jerry - Did you ever have any experience with City government at all?

Mr. Kuretich - Yes I did. When I was in junior high and high school, the City of Glendale had a Jobs Program for Youth and I was a member of that. I was a member of that organization and, I can't remember the lady's name, she's since died, but they would publicize for people who wanted, you know, odd jobs done. This was basically for junior high school and high school kids. So I was part of that program and I would do a lot of cleaning of ??? windows, and things of that nature, mowing lawns and it was really a great program to put money in my pocket.

Jerry - So this was for private citizens?

Mr. Kuretich - But it was run by the City. It was good program and we had a lady who made sure that every, any of the boys or women did a good job. I always did a good job but if you didn't she was all over you like a cheap suit in a rainstorm. Then we had a youth council. I was a member of the youth council of the city for a while. In fact, it was in this location here. Nothing came of it, I guess.

Jerry - What did you do as a part of that?

Mr. Kuretich - As a youth council we were trying to set up some type of employment for youth, some recreation, some entertainment because at the time Glendale, in my opinion at that time being a teenager, there just wasn't enough for teenagers. They took part in the Days of Verdugo Parade and things of that nature.

Jerry - You know Mike, we've been talking for about 45 minutes. Are there any other things that you can think of that you'd like to talk about?

Mr. Kuretich - Actually I'm doing all this talking and time goes fast when you're enjoying yourself.

Jerry - I'm enjoying it also because were contemporaries and you're reminding me of some of the things that I did when I was a kid that I haven't had a chance to think about lately.

Mr. Kuretich - I like the Glendale system. Actually I like the Glendale Police. I never really had a run in with them. No, I never had a run in. When I got --I got a traffic ticket every so often, but when I would go to the Alex Theater or something in 9th grade, 10th grade, at that time my mom would let me stay out until 11:00 p.m. and I'd walk the two miles home and the Police would pull up and look at you, you know, see that you're just walking and you'd go on. In Glendale, I think in the 40, well 50 years that we've been here, we've only been burglarized once and that was in the 1950s.

Jerry - I think Glendale, for many, many years has had a reputation as being one of the safest cities in the U.S.

Mr. Kuretich - My mother lived here and she had had a heart attack, this was in the 80's. Boy, the Glendale Fire Department was there within 5 minutes. Actually saved her life. She died several years later, but they saved her life. They were fantastic, they knew what they were doing. I wasn't there but I was told they were there within 10 minutes, giving her oxygen and all the other things.

I do have something I don't like about Glendale. I don't understand why we're paying so much for water and electricity. My bill is about \$250 a month, single man, I work 10-12 hours a day so the only time I'm really

home, you know, is after 8:00 at night, then I sleep. I just don't understand why we have such a high bill and what I really don't like is putting all these taxes on the bill, you know, all these other??? I know other people who are paying \$300. It's a two month bill but I think that our power system is something that has to come down.

Jerry - Have you noticed a change over the years, an increase in the amounts?

Mr. Kuretich - Oh yeah. In fact the bill is almost as much as my mortgage. I'm going geese. I also own another house at 711 Columbus. It's below Colorado and it's probably one of the few one bedroom houses in Glendale. My Grandmother bought it in 1950 from a life insurance policy when her husband died, so we've had that one bedroom house for, since 1950. In that period of time we've only had two renters.

Jerry - Oh my gosh. So in 40 years, almost 50 years.

Mr. Kuretich - Fifty years. So I finally got enough nerve to raise the rent to \$500 but that was because I had to tear off the old roof and put a new roof on. We've had that house and no problems with it, you know, whatsoever.

Jerry - Is that one of the Craftsman bungalows in that area?

Mr. Kuretich - Yeah, a real small house. We've had the house many, many years. These are the two properties that I own here.

Jerry - You know we've been talking, I said, for about 45-50 minutes. Usually I try to keep the interviews an hour or so and I usually end the interviews with a question. I don't mean to put you on the spot, but what I usually ask is if you could describe Glendale with one word or phrase, what would that be? Feel free to elaborate on it.

Mr. Kuretich - Let me think about it. Glendale has changed over the years because of the Los Angeles City's rent control. The Southern part of Glendale is just overcrowded. Northern Glendale's too expensive. I would say that Glendale has some problems.

Jerry - Where do you see it going in the future?

Mr. Kuretich - They down-zoned a lot of these things which is a good thing but I think they're going to have to really beef up the schools in the southern part of the City, crowd control, there's just too many people. The parks now are -I don't understand the parks. I haven't been to the park for years but there's so many Armenian gentlemen standing around, you know, playing. A lot of people I know, women, are afraid to go there because of that, who live in the area. I have nothing against that but... I see Glendale increasing their park system, which is a good thing. They've increased Maple Park.

Maple Park used to be a lot of fun. But I see that really increased itself. You know, we'll make a place for everybody here.

Jerry - Mike, on behalf of the City and myself I'd like to thank you very much for taking the time out of your day to participate in this interview.

Mr. Kuretich - One other thing I'd like to add. What I'll try and do the next month or so, I'm going to Finland next month for a couple of weeks. I have some photos of Kurtis Craft Race Cars, Glendale, California and I'll try and get those.

Jerry - That would be great. We could even scan them if you don't mind and return the photos to you.

Mr. Kuretich - Yeah and then we have one where some race car driver in Indianapolis won the race car thing and there's 'Kurtis Craft, Glendale, California.'

Jerry - I'd really like to see those and we'd like to make that a part of our files too. If you don't mind what I'd like to do is scan them perhaps, make a copy and give it to our special collections room in the library as well.

Mr. Kuretich - I'll get a hold of those for you. That will be about a month.

Jerry - That would be great. Again, thank you very much Mike.

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