

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Smoky Hollow Project

Smoky Hollow

O.H. 128

SUE QUATRO

Interviewed

by

Annette Mills

on

April 14, 1976

SUE QUATRO

Sue Quatro was born in Smoky Hollow, July 10, 1907 at 359 North Watt Street. She married Fred Quatro on May 12, 1928. She has a son, Fred J. Quatro, who is an Osteopathic Physician and is currently attending the University of Michigan working towards his surgical degree in Osteopathic Doctors University.

Mrs. Quatro relates that her parents were strict and being from the Old Country were set in their ways and did not readily adapt to change. Not until after her father's death were they privileged with an inside toilet.

Mrs. Quatro still owns the house she was born in in Smoky Hollow and states she wishes she still lived there. Mr. and Mrs. Quatro moved out of Smoky Hollow in the late 1960's because it was closer to Mr. Quatro's work. She stated she liked the location in Smoky Hollow and how it was within walking distance to town or church. The people were so different than her neighbors today, although they are nice enough, they aren't as warm and neighborly as the people in Smoky Hollow. It was like one big family.

Annette Mills

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INTERVIEWEE: SUE QUATRO
INTERVIEWER: Annette Mills
SUBJECT: Smoky Hollow
DATE: April 14, 1976

M: This is an interview with Sue Quatro for the Oral History Project on Smoky Hollow. The interviewer is Annette Mills, at 37 Upland Avenue, on April 14, 1976, at 8:30 p.m.

Mrs. Quatro, would you like to begin please.

Q: Well, my name was Sue Worrellia before I was married. We lived at 359 North Watt Street down in Smoky Hollow, right in the heart of Smoky Hollow you could call it. We had an old, old home with a basement kitchen and five rooms upstairs, all bedrooms. We had a stairway leading to the upstairs rooms from the outside. In the wintertime, it sure was cold when we had to go to bed. We didn't have a furnace, and we didn't have a bathroom. In fact, we didn't even have an inside toilet, a his and hers, with running water.

So later on, as time went by and the family started getting bigger, my dad added another kitchen downstairs, and two more bedrooms upstairs which made the total of seven bedrooms upstairs with three kitchens downstairs.

I went to Wood Street School when I was six years old. I went there until the fifth grade and then I was transferred over to Madison School. I didn't even graduate to eighth grade. I got out before I entered the eighth grade and went to work at a store. It was a clothing store for women. When I was small, I had a sister who used to work for the--I can't remember what the name of

it was--but she used to make the mantles for the gas lights. She would take the work home and I would help her do it.

M: Mrs. Quatro, you said something about in your home, that you had to go outside to go upstairs to go to bed at night?

Q: Right.

M: I would imagine it did get pretty cold because we had snow. During the winter months you still did this?

Q: We had to go outside, to go upstairs to the bedrooms. Then when my father added the other kitchen and the two bedrooms upstairs he enclosed the outside steps into the house. Then we got to go upstairs on the inside.

M: Then you had an inside approach to the upstairs?

Q: Right.

M: Then you mentioned something else too that I was kind of wondering about. Were you born in that house?

Q: I was born in that house. My brother and I were born in that house. I have a brother they used to call "Mac". We used to sell papers down on West Federal Street.

M: Is this brother still living today?

Q: He is still living today and he is living with me. He used to sell the "Telegram." We don't have the Telegram now, but it used to be the Telegram.

M: All right, could you tell us a little bit about that Mrs. Quatro, because this generation, I'm sure, would know nothing about the Telegram. Could you elaborate a little bit on the local Telegram?

Q: Well, we used to have two papers at that time. One was the Telegram, and one was the Vindicator. That is what he would sell. Then after a while, I don't know what happened, but it kind of dissolved. I can't remember whether the Vindicator took over or if they just went out of business.

M: Now, while the Telegram was in operation, was the Vindicator also publishing papers?

Q: Right.

M: All right then, you had two papers?

Q: Yes, we had two papers at one time.

M: Do you think that this would be a good idea today?

Q: Yes, I think so. It would give a different view in different papers.

M: Maybe we would get a little bit more competition between the two papers, and maybe get broader news, do you believe?

Q: I think so.

M: There were some other things that I would like to know about your childhood and what you felt about growing up. You mentioned an outhouse. Of course, that still had to be used during the winter months also?

Q: Right, winter and summer. That was the only place we could go.

M: All right, could you tell us a little bit more about your own growing up and your own family, something about your own family?

Q: Well, my dad and mother, they were from the old country. They didn't have too much money and as far as far as toys and things were concerned, we didn't know what they were. Christmas time would come around and I would try to hang my stocking up by our stove. Our stove was a coal stove. That coal stove was a cooking stove and a heating stove in one. The next morning when I would get up, I wouldn't find toys because there was no such things as toys. I didn't know what a doll was. I would find oranges and an apple and some nuts, and a little bit of candy in my stocking. As far as dolls were concerned, I used to make them out of towels. I used to roll them up and tie them, and fix them up so that they would look like a doll.

M: You mentioned about coming down and getting your stocking on Christmas morning. Was that kind of a treat for you though when you found oranges and candy?

Q: Oh yes. To us it was a treat, sure, because we didn't know what toys were.

M: You didn't know what toys were. What about fruit, why would that be necessarily a treat?

Q: Well, because they figured that that was something to eat, and it was good for you. Where toys were nothing to eat and that is what they thought most about.

M: Fruits and candy, were they plentiful during that time?

Q: Yes, they were plentiful. They kept us in good supply with fruits.

M: You always had all the fruit you wanted?

Q: Yes, that is true.

M: So this was just an added treat?

Q: Right.

M: Okay. Could you tell us a little bit about your mother and your father too?

Q: Well, my father, he was a hard working man. He worked in the sewers. He used to make a \$1.25 a day, and he had to keep eight of us children. My mother, she had to keep boarders to make ends meet. We used to make our own bread. My mother had an outside oven. It would be nothing for her to take a 98 pound sack of flour and mix it all up because she used to sell it to the boarders too. She would cook all of her bread in an outside oven, and boy, was that bread good.

M: Could you tell us a little bit about how this oven was heated?

Q: She used to take and put pieces of logs in it and she used to get a fire going. After that got real hot, she used to take out all the ashes. She used to wipe out all the ashes with a wet mop. When she had it down to a certain heating temperature, why then she would put the bread in it.

M: She probably had some tools, a board, paddle or something of this nature?

Q: A big paddle with a long handle that she used to set the loaf of bread on that paddle, and used to slide it into the oven as far back as it would go. She used to get all of her loafs of bread in there at one time.

M: Now, were these loaves of bread, were they placed in bread tins or were they placed right on the open oven?

Q: Right on the hot floor of the oven.

M: Without a pan?

Q: Without a pan.

M: The bread would be raised, and then it would be just without a pan and placed right on the oven. That is something unique, because we certainly wouldn't do that today in our ovens would we?

Q: No, but before she put the bread in, my mother used to have a mop with a bucket of water. She used to go in that oven and she used to wash it out and get it down to the temperature that she wanted for the bread. That floor would be clean.

M: Then it would also take away the ashes from the wood, and things of this nature to have it clean?

Q: Yes.

M: So was that bread good?

Q: Oh boy, was it delicious.

M: Okay. Could you tell us something else about some of your home cooked foods during the time? Some of the things that you remember as a youngster?

Q: Well, we were practically raised on Italian foods, such as spaghetti and meatballs, macaroni and beans, potatoes, fried potatoes, greens, a lot of greens, and a lot of soup.

M: Now, was that homemade soup or canned soup?

Q: No, homemade soup, no canned soup. They didn't know what canned soup was.

M: Is there anything else, special occasions that maybe you can remember? Things that were extraordinary, like baptisms or a wedding, or something along that line that was kind of traditional?

Q: Well, the baptisms were held at small levels. They weren't too much, but the baby, all they cared about was to take the baby to church and get it baptized. There would be a little dinner afterwards, but the weddings were usually big.

short dress. It was a white chiffon dress. Afterwards, I took it and I dyed it a beautiful shade of orchid. I wore that dress, and I wore it until I couldn't wear it no more. I made good use out of my wedding dress.

M: A lot of them now are still wearing the long dresses. Of course even going back now to the ivory and antique white and the long dresses, but again, they probably won't be able to wear them again.

Q: With those trains and everything, they would have a hard time wearing them.

M: Could you tell me then, something about the Hollow itself. The neighborhoods and some of the things that you did. I realize that you were kind of restricted because your family was strict to a degree. Was this pretty common among the people during the time that you were young?

Q: Yes. I can speak for most of the Italians. They usually were kind of strict with their daughters. We weren't allowed to go out dating. We weren't allowed to play out in the street. The only time that we would play was when our fathers were working and then we would get out in the street and play kick the can and hide the stick and hopscotch, and things like that. That was our entertainment.

M: What would happen if you got caught playing out in the street?

Q: We just got called in the house.

M: You got called in, that was the end of it right there?

Q: Right.

M: Could you tell me then, something about your mother?

Q: My mother, she was a beautiful woman. She tried to help everybody. I remember the time when I was small, in 1918 that bad flu came around. She was so scared about us kids getting the flu that she used to sew the garlic on strings and hang them around our necks because she thought that the smell of the garlic was going to keep the flu away. People would ask for her to go and help them out because their families were sick. Thank God, she never caught the flu.

- M: Even though she was feared for her own family, she still went out and aided those that needed her help. Could you tell me if you know how old your parents were when they came to America and settled in Smoky Hollow?
- Q: My parents came when my mother was about 26 years old, and my father was 23. They migrated in New Castle. And from New Castle, they came to Youngstown. When they came to Youngstown they went straight down to the Hollow, down there on the corner of Watt and Adams. That is where my brother Tony, they call him "Mac", the one that used to sell the papers, and I were born.
- M: All right, did they move down there because they had relatives or friends, or did they just go down there?
- Q: No, they just moved down there that is all. They didn't have any relatives there.
- M: Did your parents, did both of them die in Smoky Hollow?
- Q: Yes, my dad and my mother both died in that house, 359 North Watt Street.
- M: The reason I mentioned that is because I was certain that they were both deceased, and I was just wondering if they were still living in Smoky Hollow at that time.
- Q: My mother died in 1935, down in Smoky Hollow, and my father died in 1948 right in the same house.
- M: Is there any members of your family still living in the Smoky Hollow?
- Q: No, I have a brother that lives next door, in the same yard, but the house that my dad and mother lived in is empty. I am hoping for the Youngstown College to take it.
- M: Your brother is still living there, and was he born in Smoky Hollow too?
- Q: No, my brother was born in New Castle.
- M: He was born in New Castle.
- Q: Then he came here as a little boy, right down into Smoky Hollow.
- M: Then you are younger than this brother?

- Q: Way younger, a lot younger, yes.
- M: Okay, fine. He lived there ever since he came to Youngstown, he has been in the Smoky Hollow, and is still in the Smoky Hollow?
- Q: He is still in the Smoky Hollow.
- M: Then I would imagine he had family that was raised there also.
- Q: He had a family that was born and raised down there, and they are still down there.
- M: All of his family is still living down there?
- Q: One boy is still living in the house down there. There is one boy, Frankie Worrellia, that is living on Walnut Street.
- M: They are still true to the Smoky Hollow then?
- Q: They are still true to Smoky Hollow.
- M: There are some people that, I am sure, have lived down there all of their life, at least in the Youngstown area or since they migrated to the States. Could you tell me then something else, Mrs. Quatro, something about your own experiences in the neighborhood? Even after you got to be more of an adult, you mentioned going out and working. Could you tell me something about the neighborhood itself?
- Q: The neighborhood was just like one big happy family. If ever anybody needed help, there was always somebody there to help them. If they needed anything, if we had it, they would get it. Everybody did their share.
- M: Could you tell me then, something about when you met your husband and your own marriage?
- Q: I was still living down in the Hollow and he had just come to town. He was a stranger in town. Of course, I wasn't allowed to talk to him because I wasn't allowed to talk to men, but we had little secret meetings and things like that. We had a short engagement because my father didn't believe in long engagements.
- M: It was a short time after you met your husband that you married him?

Q: Yes, in eight months we had gotten acquainted and we were married. We still lived down in the Hollow.

Let me tell you about our home. We didn't have a bathroom in our home. So then after my father passed away, my sister and I, we got together, and we decided that it was time to put a bathroom, just a commode in the house.

M: Of course you had the flushing commode and toilet. Did you eventually then get bath facilities put in also?

Q: Not bath facilities. We did put in a shower. And then we put a hot water tank in the house. We didn't even have hot water. We only had cold running water. We didn't know what to do about running the pipes in the house because it was so old, and we didn't know where to run the pipes. So we just made little holes between the wall of the utility room and into the big kitchen where the laundry tubs were. We had just one spigot, one hot spigot. The three kitchens would use the hot running water from there.

M: Okay, it was kind of a community hot water source then, wasn't it?

Q: Right.

M: Could you tell me something about the house itself? You did tell me about the outside stairs that you had to go up to the upstairs bedrooms. Did you have a big lawn in front of your house, or could you describe where the house sat on the lot?

Q: Well, I can tell you, the house sat right on the lot and that is it. We just had a little spot in the back of the house and of course my father had it all fenced in. When we were small my father had chickens too. He had made a chicken coop back there, and they raised their own chickens. In front of the house, five steps and you were on the sidewalk.

M: You were that close to the street or sidewalk then?

Q: The sidewalk.

M: Were all the sidewalks in at that time?

Q: All the sidewalks were in, the curbs were in, and all the streets were brick streets. They had the red bricks and

they were good streets. Sewers and everything was in.

M: Do they still have brick streets today?

Q: Yes, they do, they have the brick streets down there today yet.

M: Could you tell me something about what the neighbors did for entertainment during that time?

Q: All the neighbors would do for entertainment was get on each other porches at night and just reminisce and have coffee.

M: Kind of just a gab-fest kind of thing?

Q: Right.

M: Do you remember when radio came in?

Q: I think we were the first ones to have a radio and it was really something. We used to have an old phonograph record player. We used to play the records on that, but then, when we got the radio, it was nothing like the old phonograph.

M: It was kind of a different thing. You had to listen to what they had on the programs, you couldn't listen to anything you wanted to.

Q: Right.

M: Could you tell me something else about your own family, your own immediate family? How many were in your family?

Q: I have four sisters and three brothers besides myself. Now some are deceased. There are three sisters and two brothers living.

M: How about your own family?

Q: My family, I have one son. His name is Dr. Fred Quatro, now. He was born in 1936. Today he is not home, but we are expecting him back to work at home. He is in Des Moines, Iowa now. He is an orthopedic surgeon.

M: He is a doctor there in his particular field and he is a surgical doctor in orthopedics?

Q: Yes.

- M: He is in the State of Iowa, but he was also raised in Smoky Hollow?
- Q: Right. Well, when he started to school, he started at Wood Street School. Then when he was in the second or third grade, I think, we moved up onto the South Side. Before he entered the eighth grade at Taft, we moved back down into the Hollow again. He went one year up to St. Columba School. Then for high school, he went to East High. He played football for the Youngstown University.
- M: Was it the University at that time?
- Q: It was Youngstown College at that time.
- M: It was still Youngstown College? Then it went to the University after that?
- Q: Yes.
- M: Could you tell me about how you feel about the Smoky Hollow, your growing up there, and your raising your family there?
- Q: Well, I don't think any other place would be like the Smoky Hollow. We were born and raised, respecting our parents and the good kids came from there. There is a lot of boys that came from the Smoky Hollow that are doctors today, that are school teachers, they are even real estate men. They never regretted living down the Hollow, that was the best place to live.
- M: Did you think that just the boys in the Smoky Hollow bettered themselves, or do you think this held true for the women also?
- Q: The women too. The women were all good people.
- M: Could you tell me, Mrs. Quatro, what you would have changed if you could have, looking back over your experiences in the Smoky Hollow? If there was anything that you could change and what it would be?
- Q: I would like to be living down in the Hollow if it was the right place. Nowadays, it's all being torn down. There is just nothing down there anymore, but I would like to be living down in the Hollow.
- M: You would like to be still living down there?

Q: I would, I would really like to.

M: Do you think if you still lived down there that you recapture what you had all the time that you lived there?

Q: I think so.

M: You think so. Maybe some of your neighbors wouldn't be there, do you think it would be the same?

Q: Well, there are some neighbors down there yet, but I think that it could still be the same.

M: You still think that it could still be built up to where it was?

Q: Right.

M: Or, what it always has been as far as you can recall. Is there any time that you could remember in the past, in looking over the past, that you felt was again, more difficult than others, like say during the Depression, and how you managed, and how the people of Smoky Hollow managed?

Q: Right after we were married, the Depression set in. It was really tough. My husband couldn't get a job and it was a good thing that we were living down in the Hollow, because I don't know what we would have done. We used to go up to the store, and we got credit at the grocery store, Nicky Nuzzerine's grocery store. We were living in with my dad and mother because there were three kitchens. I had the one kitchen downstairs and two bedrooms upstairs. If it hadn't been for them, I wouldn't of been able to pay rent anyplace else. It was really tough. We got very little help from the City as far as food was concerned.

M: Do you think that this was a pretty rough period of time? Of course, everybody was going through the same thing at that time.

Q: Right, everybody was going through that.

M: Their jobs were scarce, and of course, money was scarce because of not having jobs and one thing or another. How do you think, as a whole, you and your family, and all the other people of Smoky Hollow fared and got through this period of time?

Q: I don't know how they got through it, but they really got through it. It was a long time ago, but sometimes I just sit back and wonder how we did really go through

it.

M: It was a pretty rough time then?

Q: It was really rough, really rough.

M: Because of the Depression, were the people depressed because of it?

Q: No, I don't think so. They just took it as it came. It seemed like everybody was happy. They would sit around and talk. We would go over to each other's homes and maybe serve a cup of coffee if we had it. We would just sit down and reminisce and that was it, but I don't think that they were depressed about it.

M: They never let it get the best of them?

Q: Right.

M: They kept their spirits up then and they were still glad to have anyone come in, like you say, for a cup of coffee?

Q: Right.

M: How would you compare that neighborhood, without going into too much detail, with your own neighborhood today?

Q: It is very different. I can sit in the house day after day and I won't see my nextdoor neighbors. I have a few friends from the Hollow, that I will go up to see them or they will come down to see me. Outside of these, the new neighbors from this new neighborhood that I moved in, I moved in up here, it has been twenty years now that I have been living here. I very seldom get to talk to my nextdoor neighbors from either side.

M: There just isn't that close knit then, that you had in the Smoky Hollow?

Q: No. I'll tell you, one night I was waiting for my husband to come home from work. It was snowing real hard. I don't know how many inches, when I looked out, our car was just completely covered with snow. It looked like a hut. And I thought, "Well, before my husband comes home and breaks his leg, getting up the steps in the back here, I'll go out and shovel and sweep the steps off." When I went to sweep the steps off, I broke my leg, I broke my ankle. I am telling you, I had to hop. It was about ten o'clock in the evening. I hopped from the back door to the front where my telephone is, and I called the cops. I told him that I needed help. And he said,

"Well, stay where you are at, I'll come and get you". I saw the people looking through their window, when the ambulance came. It wasn't one of these up-to-date ambulances. It was a police ambulance, but it was one of those old types. It came to take me to the hospital. Nobody came out to help.

M: Now what do you think might of happened if this same thing would have happened to you in Smoky Hollow?

Q: Oh, I know they would of all ran. If I had had to go to the hospital, somebody would have came with me. I am positive about that.

M: That was the kind of thing that everybody did do during that time?

Q: Yes, they helped each other out.

M: They always helped each other out. Mrs. Quatro, is there anything else that you would like to include in this tape that maybe we overlooked earlier, or anything that you can think of that you would like to include?

Q: Well, I don't know. I can't think of anything more to say.

M: You can't think of anything more to say?

Q: If you ask me something maybe it will come to me.

M: You mentioned about the food and I think you carried that through pretty good. When you were a youngster, could you tell us some of the games you played?

Q: They weren't games, they were like I said, playing kick the can, and tag, you are it, or hide the paddle, or hide the stick.

M: How did you play that - hide the paddle?

Q: Well, we used to go in the wintertime, we would go into our parent's homes, and just take a little paddle, a little ruler and try to hide it. Whoever found it, if you didn't run, you would get whacked with it.

M: That was played right indoors then?

Q: Indoors, yes.

M: Would the adults play this too?

Q: Yes, the adults, adults and kids, altogether.

M: Men, women, and children?

Q: Well, not so much the men. The men, maybe they would be off at work or bowling, or something like that. The women would get together with their kids.

M: Then they would do it?

Q: Yes.

M: Okay, is there anything else that you could think of that you would like to add?

Q: I can say one thing, the Hollow was right in the heart of town. It took us about ten minutes to go to town, to West Federal Street. That was the nice part about it, because, at that time, I don't remember any buses running. If we wanted anything from town, we had to walk, but it was up Walnut Street and down Walnut Street and we were down on Federal Street.

M: Right, it was just up the hill and then down the hill and you were in downtown Youngstown. It was centrally and conveniently located then?

Q: Right.

M: Is there anything that you think that was unique about the Smoky Hollow itself and all of its people?

Q: I think it was pretty well knit, a close family. There was a mixture down there, but we never had that as a setback to us. Whether you were Jewish, or whether you were Italian or Polish, even the coloreds, we all respected each other.

M: Did you feel that there was any discrimination or animosity between one nationality or the other?

Q: None, none whatsoever.

M: Then no matter what nationality or color they were, they were pretty much accepted as a member of the Smoky Hollow?

Q: Right.

M: There wasn't any of this bitterness or anything of this nature that you can recall?

Q: None.

M: None at all. Okay, fine. Mrs. Quatro, if there is anything else that you would like to add now before we conclude this tape, would you go ahead and do so.

Q: I don't know, it just seems like I lost it all. You think you can have so much to say and then you just forget everything. I think the Hollow is a nice place, and when that is gone, that will be long remembered.

M: The Smoky Hollow then kind of has a soft spot in your heart?

Q: It sure does.

M: Mrs. Quatro, if there isn't anything else that you can think of at this time, maybe perhaps we can get together again. If not, I do want to thank you so very much for allowing me to come into your home and for taking up this time to interview you and your husband both.

Q: I am very glad you came.

M: And thank you again.

Q: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW