Voices of OKLAHOMA

Catharine Kingsley

A love of languages took her to D.C in 1944 to do her part in the WWII effort as a code-breaker for the FBI.

Chapter 01—0:57
Introduction

Announcer: Catharine Kingsley grew up in Stillwater, Oklahoma, where she attended Oklahoma State University. She graduated in 1943 as a language major. She mastered five of them—English, Spanish, French, German and Latin. During World War II, Catharine worked as a code breaker and a spy-buster. She was one of many civilians who worked to protect America from enemy agents. In 1944 Catharine moved from Oklahoma to work for J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI in Washington, D.C. She was paid $200 a month, working eight-hour days and six days a week. The work involved scanning intercepted correspondence and looking for repetitive letters and words forming a pattern, which in turn conveyed a secret message. Catharine Kingsley never wore a uniform. In fact, she was never issued a gun as she served our country during WWII.

Chapter 02—2:07
Family

John Erling: My name is John Erling. Today's date is November 17, 2010. Would you, Catharine, state your name please?

Catharine Kingsley: I'm Catharine Benson Kingsley. Benson is my maiden name, Kingsley is my married name.

JE: Your date of birth and your present age.

CK: I was born October 31, 1922. I'm eighty-eight years old. I was born in Oakland, California. I'm going to live to be 103, that's what I tell everybody.

Our first grandson was born on Christmas Day. And I felt real sorry for him having to have Christmas and birthday at the same time. So, I had read where Robert Louis

Stevenson had given his birthday to a child born on Christmas so I thought, *Well, I'll just give him my birthday.* Well, everybody laughed at me in the family 'cause I was born on Halloween. He only got another holiday, but at least he could have birthday then, I guess.

I was fifty-five when he was born so I tell him I'm fifty-five. Of course, they don't believe me but they think I'm some older. And I said, "I'm going to live to be 103."

And they said, "Well, that's an awful long time, don't you think?"

And I said, "Well, I thought I'd be in good health for a long time." And I have been. But I think I came from my maternal part of the family. They were independent and we did all these things and kept strong. And when I got older and I knew that I had some osteoporosis problems I didn't mind going to the doctor to find out what I could do to keep my backbone straight and everything. So that's what I've done.

JE: Tell me the name of your grandfather.

CK: James H. Kirkpatrick.

JE: And your grandmother?

CK: Ida Grove Kirkpatrick.

JE: Your grandfather, when was he born?

CK: He was born in 1860, and my grandmother in 1864.

JE: And they met where?

CK: I don't know. I expect in Kansas because she was born in Indianapolis and he came from one of the Carolinas. So they probably met in Kansas. They were married in Arkansas City but they lived in Douglas.

Chapter 03—5:37
April 22, 1889

John Erling: How did your grandfather come to Oklahoma?

Catharine Kingsley: He participated in the April 22, 1889 run into the unassigned lands. It was the great land rush.

JE: So he came out of Kansas?

CK: Yes and I do not know where the dividing line between Kansas and Oklahoma was where they shot the gun off at noon and they all made a run for their land.

JE: And he was there—

CK: There when it was done.

JE: ...when that shot was fired?

CK: Yes.

JE: So he found his 160 acres where?

CK: South of Perkins, Oklahoma, which is south of Stillwater. Which would be about eleven, thirteen miles, something like that. They had the army engineers come and stake out all the land in the 160 acres. And they had stakes on them. And when you got to the piece of land that you thought was going to be yours you had to go and pull up the stakes.

Well, maybe there was somebody else on the other corner so they all had to fight it out. But he had the stakes that he needed, and the land grant office then was in Guthrie, which was our first capital.

After they had lived on the land and produced whatever they could grow, at the end of five years you went back to the land grant office and you showed proof that you had actually proved up on the land. And then you got it. You actually earned your 160 acres.

JE: Prior to the run, and he didn't go Sooner then—

CK: No. He was not a Boomer Sooner, no.

JE: All right. Did he register then with the land office? And then those stakes, how were those stakes placed there? Had he gone out ahead of time so that he—

CK: No he didn't know.

JE: Somebody else from the land office—

CK: The land office and the army engineers did all the work about the stakes and where the 160 acres were. And anybody that wanted the land then they had to pull up the stakes and have them in their hands when they went to register that that was the farm they got.

JE: So they'd go back to that land office—

CK: Yes.

JE: ...and say, "I have these stakes."

CK: Uh-huh (affirmative). But if somebody else was on the other corner, well then, you had to fight out who was going to get that stake.

JE: On the other corner of the 160 acres?

CK: Uh-huh, um-hmm (affirmatives).

JE: He didn't have to fight?

CK: I don't know, he never told me.

JE: But some of them were duking it out right there, weren't they?

CK: Oh yes they were. And over in Enid they had the 1893 Cherokee Strip. Some of them took their family in the wagon with them, you know. And they pulled the wagon with the children in it. This one little girl fell off so they just left her there on that piece of land 'cause they knew the bare land was further on.

Well, when they got there all the stakes were pulled up so they had to go back and get their little girl. Well, stakes were still there so they pulled them up and that's what they took. And in later years it is one of the most oil-producing farms around Enid anywhere. They're a wealthy family now. Girls—

JE: Because they went back?

CK: 'Cause they went back to the farm nobody wanted. They didn't think it was good to farm on, was their problem.

JE: And the little girl was there?

CK: Yes she stayed there till they came and picked her up.

JE: This was all within the same day, I would imagine.

CK: Uh-huh (affirmative), it was the same day.

JE: And it turned out that that land was oil-producing land?

CK: Yes, um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: This was a relative?

CK: No it's just I know some of the things that happened that people tell me. I have a daughter over at Enid and she knew all about it. And she was telling me that and I says, "Well, my grandfather didn't have that luck. We didn't get an oil-producing farm."

JE: So I guess he went into the land office and then there was a map showing—

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...where—

CK: Where it was.

JE: ...and had already been claimed. And so that one hadn't been claimed yet, so he got...

CK: So he got his name on it.

JE: Was he in a covered wagon?

CK: No he rode a horse. He did that because he thought he would get there quicker than if he was hauling the family. So he went back to Douglas, you know, to get his family. And he brought them down and he had three daughters. They lived on that land.

JE: How soon was he able to build any structures to live in?

CK: They had sort of a log house and when I was a girl we went down and I saw the house they lived in.

JE: So he built that log house—

CK: Yes.

JE: ...beginning days, I suppose, after—

CK: I suppose so.

JE: ...they claimed the land.

CK: Uh-huh (affirmative). And he was a drayman. And I don't know if you know what that is or what a dray is.

JE: Tell us.

CK: A dray is a wagon that is pulled by a horse or horses. And he made scheduled trips to Kansas to go get flour and sugar because they didn't have that and there weren't grocery stores very much. He did that and he helped them move their furniture and different things. He was kind of like what we call a moving van now.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

CK: But he went periodically to bring back things that they needed that they didn't have in the stores in Perkins or Stillwater. And then when they later moved to Stillwater he was still a drayman there for the city of Stillwater.

JE: Was he married at the Land Rush Day?

CK: Yes he was.

JE: And so then he—

CK: They were married in 1884, on my grandmother's birthday. So she was twenty years old when they got married, which is old for a lot of people at that time. If you weren't married when you were about sixteen, well then, you were an old maid.

JE: We don't know how long it took for them to move—

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...the family there. It was after he built the log cabin.

CK: I expect.

JE: And then they lived there—

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...and began to raise a family.

CK: And my grandmother taught at the eighth grade school, which they had. She also helped all the things on the farm that a wife would do then. They had hens. They kept the eggs and she took them to Perkins to a little store to sell them. And she rode on horseback sidesaddle. It was about five or six miles. She had to ford the Cimarron River to get there. She had nine dozen eggs and they sold for three cents a dozen.

Chapter 04—4:10
Education-OK-A&M

Catharine Kingsley: And when all the girls had finished, more or less, the eighth grade, which she taught, she knew that women needed education and she knew about Oklahoma A&M College, that it was a land grant school. Set up by Abraham Lincoln and Senator Morrill. In about, I suppose, 1862, because there's a lot of land grant all

down the middle of the United States; like Iowa State and Kansas State. And a lot of those are land grant schools.

So they moved to Stillwater then in 1903 so their daughters could go to college, which is unusual. Very few women got to go to college then.

John Erling: And your mother was one of them?

CK: One of them. She graduated from A&M in 1909. I had an aunt in 1910, and another aunt in 1911, and they all got their college degrees. And the only really school building over at Stillwater was Old Central. I think it is the oldest college building in the state, and it has a bell and a clapper, you know, where the kids would go to class.

JE: Your mother graduates from OSU.

CK: Uh-huh (affirmative). See, when they got there they had what they call prep school, which was equivalent to high school, which they had to finish first. And then they had the four years of college. So high school and college was all thrown together in the years they went to school and got their degree.

JE: Your mother then goes to Oklahoma A&M, and does she meet her future husband there?

CK: No. She went ahead and went to Colorado State University. Home Economics is what she majored in. She got a degree from there. And then she went to work in Glacier National Park, in what we'd call food services now.

My father was an immigrant from Sweden and they met there. I think a lot of the Scandinavians came to the northern part of the United States, like you did with your family. Because it reminded them more of the climate they had in the Scandinavian countries.

They were married in Portland, Oregon, and then moved to San Francisco, more or less. And we lived in Oakland, California, when I was born.

And I know very little about my father. Where he got his citizenship was at the immigration office in San Francisco. It all burned down and there's no records at all. I know everybody thinks our immigrants came in by Ellis Island. That's not true, some came in the West Coast. But he and his brother served on, I suppose you'd say, Swedish naval ships all around the world.

JE: You said you knew little about your father.

CK: Well, I mean, I don't remember him as a person, I just know that's what happened.

JE: Because, did he die?

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: How old were you when he died?

CK: Oh golly, I don't know. I don't suppose I was more than three or four, something like that. So my mother decided she'd come back to Oklahoma where her family was, and that's why I have all my education in Oklahoma schools.

JE: Your mother comes back and lives then in Stillwater?

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative). And she could get teaching jobs, she taught school places, but her health was very bad. And she died when I was a young teenager. So I had a grandmother and a grandfather who raised me. We lived through the Great Depression and the dust storms before World War II started.

JE: Let's go to your first school you attended. Elementary school, where was that?

CK: Eugene Field there in Stillwater.

JE: And then you went on to, was it a—

CK: The junior high, Stillwater Junior High and the Stillwater High School. And I think there were about eighty in my class. Most of them, of course, we were living in Stillwater so we all went to college together at the college. And, of course, it was Depression time when I started and if you lived at home, well then, you didn't have to pay room and board. All you paid was your tuition and you walked every place you went anyway.

JE: So you graduated from high school in what year?

CK: '39.

JE: And then you were at Oklahoma A&M—

CK: I started in '39 and graduated in '43.

JE: '43.

CK: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Chapter 05—2:40
Depression — Dust Bowl

John Erling: The Great Depression, what do you remember about that?

Catharine Kingsley: Well, we didn't starve. The family was able to support what we did, but we rented out a room to a college student. You know, there were things you did without. And my grandmother's famous sayings were: "Waste not, want not." So whatever we had to eat we had to eat three bites of it even if we didn't like it, 'cause we couldn't throw it away.

We also saved for a rainy day. And if we didn't have the money we didn't buy things. And I remember as a child, some of my friends had patent leather shoes to wear on Sunday to church. And I just had regular sport type shoes then. I wanted them and I was told no, I couldn't have them, we didn't have the money. And I cried 'cause I wanted to be like the other girls. But kids' feet grow so fast and they have to buy new shoes about ever five or six months for the next size. And we couldn't afford them.

But I didn't know I was poor. We had our own gardens, we did our own canning. And I learned to sew so that we could do the best we could with what we had.

JE: This was in the thirties.

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: You're talking about times when you were eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve years old?

CK: Yes. Then a little later with all the dust storms and everything that came along—

JE: What do you remember about the dust storms?

CK: It was terrible. You couldn't see where you were going. If I walked home from school it was blowing so hard I was being like stuck by needles, that those little stones were coming and hitting me, see. You couldn't see where you were going and the houses were not real built at that time and so the dust drifted in all the windows and under the doors and what-have-you. We had dirt everywhere, there wasn't anything we could do about it.

JE: It was tough to keep everything clean then, wasn't it?

CK: It was very hard and we had no air-conditioning. What we did was we might wet a towel and hang it from the doorway and then we'd have a fan to blow that on us. In 1936, one day in the summer it was 115 degrees in the shade. As a kid, what we did it was too hot in the house so we had a little blanket we laid on the front porch. 'Cause a lot of houses had front porches, and we slept on the front porch 'cause it was cooler outside than in the house.

When I finally started to college, well, things were changing quite a bit then but then everything was rationed. That wasn't hard for us to accept because we didn't have money to go places or do things.

JE: You'd come out of the Depression and then it was rationing because of the war?

CK: Yes, um-hmm (affirmative).

Chapter 06—2:20
Ration Stamps

John Erling: I'm holding a war ration book for it says here that was issued to you, Catharine Benson, your maiden name. Inside there are all these stamps. What would you have been able to buy with these stamps?

Catharine Kingsley: I think we could buy flour and sugar and some items that were hard to come by. Shoes. When it came to gasoline and tires I'm not sure whether they used those stamps or not, but we had to have permission from the ration board to do it. Where these were issued to us and we could go to the grocery store and get what we needed.

JE: See now, here's a ration stamp that's marked coffee. Many of them are coffee. Many of these it's printed "Spare." What does spare mean? That you can just use it for anything?

CK: I expect, I don't know.

JE: And then on the back it says, "Never buy ration goods without ration stamps. Never pay more than the legal price. And when you have used your ration salvage the tin cans and waste fats—

CK: We did that.

JE: ...they are needed to make munitions for our fighting men. Cooperate with your local salvage committee."

CK: So we saved everything. We saved tinfoil and I don't know what they did with it but we had a lot of tinfoil with your gum or candy. We saved all our fat, they needed it. And any cans, they were used. We really recycled. And this we did with everything. We knew they needed it and we knew then that whatever we saved it would help for the boys that they could have the coffee and things that we didn't have.

JE: In the dust bowl days do you recall neighbors moving and going to California?

CK: The ones that went to California were mostly the ones that lived on the farms out more in western Oklahoma. *The Grapes of Wrath*, the way it was written, a lot of those people were from small farms that were more in eastern Oklahoma. They couldn't cultivate the land and make any money. Where out in western Oklahoma the dirt all blew everything away. And so a lot of them just left their farms and they maybe gave them to a neighbor for ten dollars or whatever so that at least somebody would own the land. And now that land is gas- and oil-producing, and they also have the windmills out there now.

Chapter 07—2:17
Languages

John Erling: Let's talk about your high school days because you were to be proficient in languages. Did you show that proficiency in high school?

Catharine Kingsley: Yes I did.

JE: Tell us about that.

CK: Because they wanted me to go to college, back in those days they thought as a person you would do better in college if you took Latin. So I took two years of Latin. And then I thought, *That was pretty good, I kind of liked that*. So then I took two years of Spanish, and my Spanish teacher I dearly loved. We really got along, you know, I really was more proficient in it.

And one summer after my junior year they had a summer program at A&M where they were bringing in a teacher from Mexico for six weeks, from eight to five, and everything had to be in Spanish. He was a real good teacher and I enjoyed that.

And that's kind of like what they do with students now. You can get college credit while you're still in high school. And I think the younger you learn a foreign language the easier it is to learn.

We had Bible studies and we did all kinds of things. We ate out together some. We learned a Mexican dance and we sang songs and a lot of things that we learned the language better.

So when it was time to go to college my family said, "What are you going to major in in college?"

And I said, "I'm going to do Spanish." And they all despaired because they didn't think there were very many jobs for people that spoke Spanish.

Then when I went to A&M I think there weren't very many in my freshman class. I found out that a lot of the people who were students at that time, if they came from the farm, their parents sent their sons to college but not their daughters. They couldn't afford to send them all. And the farm families generally had a lot of children to help with the crops and whatever they were doing.

But I kind of thought it was fun because there weren't very many women that were going to college when I did so we didn't have any problems with having a good time with parties and things that we didn't having a date.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

CK: But when Pearl Harbor was hit, well then, that just changed everything on campus.

Chapter 08—2:44
December 7, 1941

John Erling: You began Oklahoma A&M in 1939?

Catharine Kingsley: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And so then 1941, December 7th, the bombing of Pearl Harbor took place. What do you recall about that day?

CK: It was on a Sunday. I heard about it Sunday afternoon right after our Sunday dinner. And I had a meeting I had to go to with other people, who were majoring in languages, with one of our teachers. And we all heard it on the radio that it had been bombed.

Now president of Oklahoma A&M was Dr. Bennett and he went to Washington the next day and he offered all college facilities to help train the troops. We had a real good school of business so they brought in a lot of people that would learn how to run an office and all sorts of things. So there were both men and women who were trained

there. And when they came they turned over all the dormitories to the army and navy personnel.

The boys that were fraternity men, well, they all got drafted. So the college made a deal that we'd move all our women to the men's fraternity. Well, I lived downtown so I didn't have that problem, I was a town girl. One of the fraternity houses was brand new, it had just been built. Everybody thought, *Oh that would be nice, it wouldn't be like the older ones*. But when they built the shower room for the men there were eight or ten showers but there weren't any partitions between them. The boys just all went in and took their showers. And the girls didn't like that, they're looking at each other getting their shower.

After the men were drafted and they all went off to war, well then, there were more women on campus. But then there was a Royal Air Force group at Ponca City. They came down and, as girls, we entertained them on our campus so we got acquainted. And some of them did marry the RAF fliers.

So there were things that we did, you know, to help and still get our education.

JE: You said President Bennett offered the use of the facilities—

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...for troops to come in? Or—

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative), we had troops.

JE: So there were troops that were in there.

CK: They were ones that were being trained to, I suppose, work in an officer's, wherever he was, the commander, and he had to have secretaries and file clerks and all sorts of things. And sometimes it was girls and sometimes it was boys that learned that. But they came in and I don't know if they had like six months' training or what. But they got to live in all the dormitories we had.

Some of the dormitories were pretty brand new. They were built in 1936. They were new so they were pretty nice. So I imagine they were better than when my husband went to for his training.

Chapter 09—5:00
FBI

John Erling: You graduated from Oklahoma A&M in 1943.

Catharine Kingsley: Um-hmm (affirmative). And I had a scholarship then to the University of Colorado.

JE: And you were twenty-one?

CK: Twenty-one, uh-huh (affirmative). So I went there, Boulder, Colorado, University of Colorado. I lived in the sorority house. My husband had a cousin and she says, "I want you to meet my cousin, he's stationed at Lowry Field in Denver." And she introduced us and that's how I met him. So when he was transferred wherever he was going, well, we'd write letters to each other.

And then I wasn't very happy really at Boulder. I'd never been that far away from my family so I didn't go very long. When I had a chance to come home, I did. So I went up to the offices that had the foreign languages to ask them things and they told me that the FBI was looking for people who could be good translators and do cryptanalysis. So I applied and was accepted.

JE: And that then would have been in 1944. How many languages did you say you could speak when you made that application?

CK: Spanish and French.

JE: So on August 31, 1944, you received a letter from J. Edgar Hoover.

CK: Yes.

JE: And I have that letter here. It says:

"Dear Ms. Benson: You are hereby offered an appointment in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Department of Justice, as a laboratory technician in grade SP5 with salary at the rate of eighteen hundred dollars per annum. (About two hundred dollars a month.)"

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: "Less 5 percent reduction for retirement purposes, plus overtime compensation approved by Congress—"

CK: Which we never got any of.

JE: You worked six days—

CK: Six days a week.

JE: ...at eight hours a day.

CK: From eight to six.

JE: So you worked your Saturdays and had no idea you were going to be working six days a week?

CK: No. We didn't get paid for overtime either.

JE: And it says here, "That employee receiving eighteen hundred dollars per annum is $390.00 of overtime, making a total remuneration of $2,190.00 per annum for a forty-eight-hour week."

CK: I worked—

JE: But that never came.

CK: That wasn't it.

JE: "All salaries are subject to the Federal Withholding Tax of approximately 20 percent." So by the time they took out the deductions it was less than two hundred.

CK: Yes.

JE: But did that go very far in sustaining you as you lived there in Washington?

CK: Well, I, since I'd lived through the Depression I had money enough to do what I wanted. And then they came in and they wanted you to buy war bonds. So I bought a lot of war bonds. I put a lot of my money in war bonds 'cause I didn't need it. I think my room where I was, and I lived in a barracks, was like twelve dollars per month.

JE: Then it goes on to say: "This letter, which should be considered strictly confidential and given no publicity, should be presented when you reach port for duty."

CK: Uh-huh (affirmative).

JE: "At the time of reporting for duty evidence to verify the correct date of your birth should be furnished. For your information upon arrival in Washington all appointees are required to submit to a chest X-ray, the expenses of which are to be borne by the government. Advise by wire collect of your acceptance or declination of this appointment. If you do not report for duty by the aforementioned date the appointment will be canceled. Sincerely, John Edgar Hoover, Director."

CK: So didn't go by airplane, we went by train. There was another Stillwater girl, she had been offered a job with the State Department. So we rode the train together and we lived in the same barracks, but she worked one place and I worked the other. On weekends we could do things together, but a lot of times at the FBI if there were things that we were needing to do they had to know where we were. In case an emergency came up they'd call us back on Sunday.

There were no lights on any of the buildings in the district. They thought the Germans would come to bomb Washington, DC. We had blackout curtains so that if we had lights on they would be all closed, even if we worked later at night.

All messages that we got came by telegraph or radio, and sometimes over the phone. They were stamped the date they arrived and the time they arrived. And we had twenty-four to do what we had to do to either try to break the code or to decipher a code that had been broken. And so if the message was supposed to have gone to the army or the navy or the marines, the State Department or the OSS, the forerunner of the CIA, Congress had mandated things that the FBI would do, which was more security for the United States. And we didn't do any of the codes for the armed services.

Chapter 10—3:45
Code Breaking

John Erling: Let's talk about what it is you did. Cryptanalysis, also known as code breaking.

Catharine Kingsley: Yes.

JE: Cracking the code.

CK: Yes.

JE: What was that? And how did you do that? What—

CK: Well, you see some of these books, these are the ones we studied. So we learned what they said, the codes were like. And then there are books that the FBI had that were classified and you couldn't take them home. You just studied them at work. So then when a code came that we hadn't been able to break, well then, some of us worked on them. And we had to decide which particular code that they used. The ones that were really harder to break I expect were the German ones. The Germans are not anything but intelligent.

But the Japanese were easier broken because their written language is all those little brush things with the ink. And they had to turn all those into telegraphic like our Arabic alphabet is. So they were easier broken.

But if we got a lot of codes that came from about the same place, and we thought that was so, well then, they could be superimposed. And you could kind of figure out, "Well, here's this." And sometimes there would be a little blank space, sometimes if they came by telegraph it was garbled so that made it hard to even decipher if the code had been broken.

The thing that the Germans did that I thought was real interesting and it's now been released, we had people in the United States—and this is one of the things that the FBI did, we tried to keep people who were called "double agents." They might have been first generation Germans and they still had a lot of relatives in Germany and they wrote back and forth. And some of them were businessmen here. So they would type a letter and some of those spies would be in surveillance of our armed troops or the ammunition dumps or whatever it was. And they would take pictures of things and they would reduce those pictures to the size of a dot. And they would put it on that business letter that the spy was sending to his relatives in Germany.

And when the Germans got the message they pried off the little dot that was on the typewriter dot and they blew it up and then they knew what they were surveilling for the help of the German government.

JE: That seems like something that you could only do today but they were doing it back in the forties.

CK: Back then. Um-hmm (affirmative). As I say, the Germans have a real good intelligence. And one of the things we had to do as FBI people was to read all prisoner of war letters that were sent back home to the people they knew. A lot of the Germans that were captured in the war in Europe, they didn't want to go to Great Britain because they were really on starvation there. And they had been bombed so much by the B2 rockets they wanted to come to the United States.

One told me eight and another one told me twenty prisoner of war camps. And they were all in the middle part of the United States, most of them. What they did when they had them here, the German POWs, the farmers whose sons had gone off to war needed help so they worked on the farms in the daytime but they had to show back up at the prisoner of war camp.

A lot of them who did that and were prisoners of war in the United States, after the war they came back and have settled and become American citizens. They wanted to be here 'cause they were treated pretty well in the prisoner of war camps.

Chapter 11—7:50
What Is a Code?

John Erling: Let's go back to what a code might be. Is it true that certain letters in a language appear more frequently than others?

Catharine Kingsley: Yes. In English the letter that is the most is the letter e. At the end of a word it's liable to be an *s* or a *t* or an *n*. And if there's just one letter, well, it might be the letter a or the letter *i*. Generally when messages were sent from a certain place they'd be the same every time. And if you worked on it and you were able to break those letters, and they'd give the name of the camp it was sent from, if you could do that then some of those letters would be ones you could put in with the others. But every language has a different, which one of their letters is the best to pick out first?

JE: And then most likely in pairs of letters too, like *th* would probably be.

CK: That's one and like the double *s*'es, the double *c*'s, the double *l*'s.

JE: So somebody trying to write in code would try to cover up the use of that letter e?

CK: That's sort of—um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: They'd use another—

CK: They'd use something else. Lots of times there were just like little boxes like you see in the things in the paper for Sudoku and those sort of things, you have to fill them in. And the Japanese ones were easier broken because they were not familiar of how to send messages because they had to send them by telegraph.

JE: In German then, what letter was theirs that—

CK: I don't remember that part. I just know that when you study German grammar everything is backwards and it's more like Latin. When you study English and Spanish and French you have a subject and a verb and a direct object or like that. Well, in German they do all these other things and the verb comes last. You just have to know how they talk and how they speak and what they do. And the German language is harder to learn than the romance languages that came from Latin. And that's French and Spanish and Portuguese. And like Switzerland, which was a true neutral country, they actually speak four languages there.

JE: Your math skills came into play.

CK: Yes you have to have that because just like when you do crossword puzzles they give you a clue and you see, well, there's only five spaces or ten spaces, whatever it is, and you have to find a word that fits in there. Well, it's the same way, you have to understand the language well enough to know which words come first and in the middle and whatever.

JE: How would the coded messages come to your superiors?

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: How were they intercepted?

CK: Well, anybody has access. Well, they did during the war, anyway, to the telegraph.

JE: Okay, so it came off the telegraph?

CK: A lot of them, um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Because the Germans were sending messages to?

CK: Their agents. And I expect we had our spies in their country too.

JE: So it was between spies—

CK: Sending messages. And one thing they did in the United States, somebody would be a person who was collecting information and they needed to get it to the spy that would transfer it to Germany or Japan, they had meeting places. And it might be in a park on a certain bench. Whatever information they had collected they stick to the bottom of the bench. And that spy would come by two hours later and pick it up and then could send the message on.

So there were people who were helping the spies here too.

JE: Americans you think were helping?

CK: They're probably other Germans, I imagine.

JE: Yeah.

CK: Now I will tell you one thing we did with the Japanese and everybody thinks it's fantastic. During the war in the Pacific some of our navy ships were damaged. They were brought in to dry dock in the Seattle area and were being refurbished. And if there was a hole in the side or whatever they'd fix. Well, I know there were a lot of Japanese that were in

concentration camps but there are people that were still there that were more loyal to Japan than they were to America. They could spy just past the shipyard where they were repairing those ships, they had the names of the ships, they could see that. And if the damage was in the stern or wherever it was, then they relayed that message to Japanese, who were people in Lima, Peru. There's a big Japanese group in Lima, Peru. That was sent on to Tokyo. And the armed services in Japan knew how much damage they had done to American ships that were dry docked in Seattle.

And then they had a doll hospital. I'll tell you about that one.

JE: A doll hospital?

CK: Well, you know, if you have a doll and it's one you want to have repaired and it's a real expensive doll and everything, you'd be willing to pay to get it fixed. And they called it a hospital. I guess there are people now who do antique things, they fix them back up. It would be that sort of thing but they called it a doll hospital. That doll represented a ship and they would say, "Well, this doll's arm was broken and we had to do this."

Then when the Japanese got that, what was supposedly fixing a doll, was actually passing information of what had happened to the ships that were in the dry dock.

JE: So they would, say, take the arm off a doll—

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative). If it was the left arm it was that side of the ship, see?

JE: Well, it was the port side—

CK: Uh-huh (affirmative).

JE: Or the starboard side.

CK: Yes, um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Starboard would be the right arm.

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And the port would be the left arm.

CK: So then they'd know the damage, which side of the ship it was.

JE: Somebody in the doll hospital then received the doll and they sent the message back to Japan?

CK: Or to Lima, Peru, see, and then sent it.

JE: That this doll indicated this ship's name and so now we know where the damage was to the American ship?

CK: Yes.

JE: And that was important for the Japanese—

CK: To know.

JE: ...to know.

CK: Yes.

JE: That they had done that damage.

CK: Yes. The other thing that I think you'd be interested in, the Germans had two-man submarines and they did set foot on American soil on the East coast. I really have never been told how the FBI knew they were landing but they were apprehended as soon as they landed. And they were ones that were coming to infiltrate, I guess you'd say, American troop activities and such so they could send the message back, 'cause they all had radios with them.

JE: Germans submarines—

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...actually landed?

CK: On the East coast.

JE: Where?

CK: Well, it'd be like New Jersey and close to New York City.

JE: You kind of wonder how a German submarine could come that close.

CK: Well, I don't know how they got unless they were on board some ship and got so many miles close to the coast and then they put them in the submarine. They were a two-man one. And they hoped they got there, but if they were sunk, well, they only lost two men in a little, tiny submarine.

JE: But the FBI—

CK: They knew about it and I don't know how they got the information. Because there were some people instead of just being a spy for one country they maybe were double spies. They were playing both ends. And sometimes they were triple spies.

JE: Triple spies?

CK: They were getting information and sending them to more than one place. They'd send them to two others.

JE: And they were motivated for political reasons? Or was it money they were getting?

CK: I don't know that they got money, they maybe did. I think some of them, and I know it's particularly true of the Japanese, they revere the country where their parents came from and they were more liable to do some things. But the Germans did it too. And I'm sure it goes on today now. We have people that spy all the time in different countries.

Chapter 12—6:18
It Was Not a Sweater

John Erling: It must have been exciting for you and others working that when you were reading a message you broke the code and knew what they were saying. That moment had to be—

Catharine Kingsley: Well, it was good for everybody in the laboratory. We had maybe about a hundred workers there and I know we had people who did it in the smaller FBI offices too. But the big office was in Washington, DC. So if one happened it was really a good thing and we all patted him on the back. And everybody was working at it so we were part of it. A lot of codes were broken and then once they were broken we would decipher all of them.

When Pearl Harbor happened there was an FBI agent in Honolulu, and the head man there immediately called President Roosevelt and he told him on the phone that very day what all was happening, all the ships that were hit and the Japanese coming in. He had direct contact that day of December the 7th.

JE: They weren't saying, "They're coming in," they were telling the President—

CK: Which ships—

JE: ...had been bombed.

CK: Which ships had been bombed in Pearl Harbor.

JE: Right.

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative). But I really think our government more or less thought that that was going to happen. And so they were more alert so that when it did happen.

JE: When you broke a code what was the message? What were they saying?

CK: Generally the things that we did were more for safety of the United States, you know, that there were things we had to be a little sharper about and protect them more. They were sending messages that we thought would be detrimental to our side.

JE: And what would they say?

CK: They might say they knew there was an ammunition place in such and such a place and they were manufacturing certain ammunition things because I'm sure they all knew what type of guns we had, and rockets, and tanks, and everything.

JE: So the Germans were sending that message that they knew ammunition could have been down here in McAlester, as a matter of fact.

CK: It probably was, yes.

JE: Right.

CK: Then wherever we were building airplanes and tanks and whatever all, they probably knew about as soon as we knew what we were doing. And even now, it would be faster with all this electronic stuff.

JE: Was there any kind of use of computers back then at all?

CK: The only one I know is when they broke that one that the submarine guy didn't destroy the code because they had a computer that was the size of a house that they were able to do the code. The Enigma code.

JE: When you say they, who was that?

CK: The British and the Americans.

JE: The Enigma Code?

CK: The British had it but they asked for Americans to help with the intelligence.

JE: And they had a computer?

CK: Yes, but it was the size of a three-bedroom house. It was that big. Now it's that size.

JE: We're thinking back in the forties maybe they didn't even think about computers but they did.

CK: No they did have at the beginning of it, let's say.

JE: The messages that you broke the code on, they were talking about ammunition points in the United States? Those kinds of things they were talking about?

CK: Yes and, of course, we read a lot of Spanish things. Some of those came from South American countries. And some were more acceptable to the Japanese or the Germans. And we were, there were things that we saw that they were sending or writing letters back and forth. And we actually read a lot of people's personal letters.

Because the thing about code is if you're going to do this you and somebody have decided how you're going to do your code. So if it's going to be a written letter, they might write a letter and after each dot—you'd write a sentence and put a dot, and maybe the next sentence the third word would be one of the words. And you'd keep reading and after the next dot, well, it might be the fourth word. They had a plan that after each dot so many words would be the message. But they would write what the message was going to be, like, "We fired on..." whatever it was and this happened. They had to figure out how to put it together so it sounded like a good letter when they sent it to whoever they sent it to.

Well, some of them didn't do a very good job and you'd see, "Well, now that third word doesn't fit in with the rest of the sentence." So we read a lot of letters.

JE: Personal letters?

CK: Personal letters. Maybe they had a relative that was an officer in that country's armed service, see, and they would write to him.

JE: Some are rather clumsy.

CK: Yes.

JE: And then some were pretty good.

CK: Yes. The armed services ones were really a lot better. It was these ones that were written by people to other people. When you got to working with them you could tell there was a cover-up. And so you just had to kind of figure out, "Well, now is it after this dot or this comma?" Or whatever it is, you know, and read that. And lots of time people gave away some things because they might put their address on there and you knew were it was coming from. Then you knew that person was sending information to somebody else if they put their address on it. They weren't real careful with some of the letters.

JE: And in the world of codes, did you find the formulas kind of were the same? You just kind of changed them around a little bit?

CK: Well, you did sometimes and each country has their own setup of how they want to send codes. Especially with the armed services or the State Department or wherever.

But now with all these computer things they're a lot harder to break, I know.

JE: For an example, there was a German officer who was sending knitting instructions.

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative). We had a prisoner of war, he sent directions on how to knit a sweater, it was knit one, purl three, and that sort of a thing. The ones who worked on it, they said, "Well, I wonder if we really could make a sweater." So they figured out, "Well, no, when you got through with it it was just a long string of letters." But it actually was a preconceived code and they knew that if it said, "Purl three," or "Knit five," whatever it was, then that was part of their code. But you couldn't make a sweater out of what he sent. It was more like a scarf that didn't even hold together, but it was not a sweater.

Chapter 13—3:25
Met J. Edgar Hoover

John Erling: People you saw while living in Washington. Did you meet J. Edgar Hoover?

Catharine Kingsley: Yes I did. When we had finished our cryptanalysis studies and everything and then we were actually working on the codes and deciphering everything we all had a nice reception and he shook our hands. And I've never had such a good handshake in my life. He was a real strong man. He'd congratulate us all and he talked to us and that's how I met him. It was graduation from my studies.

JE: Was he a personable, outgoing person?

CK: Oh yes. I liked him real well. Everybody liked him. In later years they say things about him I wonder if it's true, but it wasn't true in wartime.

One thing he did, when he was asked to be Director of the FBI he says, "I do not want my employees to be on civil service." Once you're on civil service and you work for the government, if you work there for three yeas and you're okayed they can't fire you. He says, "I want to be able to have people who are reliable and follow the rules."

So one day when we got to work there was a note on this gentleman's desk that he needed to report to his superior and to clean out his desk. And we wondered what happened. We found out that some of these books, like these, you can check them out from the FBI so he took one home. And on the way home he stopped at a shoe store to

get a new pair of shoes and he left that book there. The man who owned the shoe shop called the FBI and they came and got the book.

And, of course, they knew it had been checked out to this man. And they said, "If he was so careless that he couldn't keep track of a book he was not an employee." So he actually was fired.

And that's what J. Edgar Hoover wanted to do. He wanted to have people who were reliable.

Now when I went there were very few women who worked for the FBI, they all had to be men. I know a lot of people when I say I work for the FBI they think I was an agent. There were no women agents at all when I worked there. Then all the ones that were highly trained in intelligence, the army, the navy, the marines, and everybody took them and so that's why they had to have women come in to help break the codes. Because a lot of the men were in the armed services.

JE: We should point out you have a book here, and I'm holding this book, *The FBI: Peace and War*, by Frederick Collins. And inside is written: "Best wishes, J. Edgar Hoover."

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Were you there for the signing of that?

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative), yes.

JE: So you saw him sign that?

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Did he give you this or were you buying it?

CK: I bought it. He was a real nice person, I thought, and the thing is living in Washington, DC, during wartime, Eisenhower came back for some sort of a meeting and there was a parade for him. And Roosevelt died during the time I was there and they pulled the case on down this street. They wouldn't let us off of work but we went up at the top of the building when it was due to come by.

No building in Washington, DC, is any higher than the Washington Monument, so it's only about like five or six floors. We could walk up there and we could watch the procession go by. As long as we got to see Roosevelt case on and then we had to go back to work. We weren't allowed to do a lot of things.

JE: What building was it that you were working in?

CK: In the Justice Department building.

JE: And what street was that?

CK: Well, it's the one that when they're inaugurated and they go down to the White House, it was on Independence.

Chapter 14—5:13
Harry Truman

John Erling: Was it a nervous time to be in Washington, DC? Did you think that maybe the country could be eventually under attack?

Catharine Kingsley: Well, you thought that, but I think we thought our armed services was doing their jobs. And we did everything so they would have what they needed. We did without so they could do.

JE: In 1944 was the presidential election. That's when Franklin Roosevelt ran for his fourth term and he ran against Republican New York Governor Thomas Dewey. That would have been in the fall. So you were there then?

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And remember all of that?

CK: Oh I remember.

JE: Any recollections?

CK: But we didn't have all this media coverage like we do now. I remember that and some of the things that were said.

And then when Truman was his vice president and he died in Georgia, Truman got to be president. This I remember vividly, everybody, "Well, he was just a hick from Missouri. He hadn't gone to Yale or Harvard or anything." He didn't have education and his business went bankrupt and he didn't know how to do and sort of things. He wasn't very well liked by a lot of people in the district.

And they sure didn't like Bess, because when she was in the White House they did not serve any hard liquor. She says, "I don't want to have any banquets where we have hard liquor." Which was pretty prominent every place you went.

He wasn't very well liked, but, of course, he was the one that said, "Well, the buck stops with me." I think he has been better liked in what he did to end the war than when he was president.

JE: Yeah.

CK: I think he is held in high esteem by a lot of people now. And they weren't real sure about his daughter.

JE: Margaret.

CK: Yeah. It didn't bother me that she had to have a piano but they thought that was frivolous, you know, some of the things she did.

JE: And they criticized her piano playing.

CK: Yes they did.

JE: Do you remember in 1945 when the Italian dictator Mussolini was captured and was assassinated?

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Was that, you were there in Washington?

CK: Yes, well, you hear about him on the radio and the newspapers. We didn't have all the things like we do now. And the messages came through, but I will tell you, we knew some of the things that some of our enemies were probably going to do and we knew ahead of time that certain things were going to take place. And then they did.

JE: Can you name one of those moments that you would have known ahead of time?

CK: Yes, we knew when the Japanese were about to surrender and finish the war. See, we had finished the European sector and everything was in the South Pacific.

JE: Hitler's death on April 30th of 1945, he decided to kill himself because he didn't want to have happen to him what happened to Mussolini. You remember when he committed suicide?

CK: Yes all those wartime, you knew about when they occurred and they were certainly in the paper and some of them we knew a little bit ahead of time.

JE: Right.

CK: And, of course, we couldn't talk about them. I rode the bus back and forth. I was in Arlington, Virginia, where the barracks were, right across from the National Cemetery. We had to be real careful. The thing is, you might say one little sentence and there's somebody else on another bus said another sentence. And some of those people who were working as spies for another country if they had people who could help them, they could put together what the FBI was doing. That's why we couldn't talk about what we did. Just one little clue somebody might pick up and be able to put it with another one.

So we didn't say anything. I didn't write home anything after I told my family I got to Washington. I only told them if we ate down at the Iron Gate Inn or we went to the Library of Congress.

I got to see the Magna Carta. During World War II the British sent that for us to take care of because Britain was being bombed so much. So I did get to see the Magna Carta and I went to—

JE: Tell us what the Magna Carta was.

CK: It was the beginning of what I call democracy. Great Britain set up because they'd always had royalty and everything and they'd set up the Magna Carta. And then I got to see the Declaration of Independence and our Constitution in the archives. They're kept in controlled air and humidity things all the time, over at the Smithsonian Institute we went to on Sundays.

I was told at that time, "If you walk past every exhibit they had at the hours they were open and you really tried to see what you could see it would take you five years

to see everything in the Smithsonian. And I have no idea what it would be now. But, of course, everybody wanted to see the flag that Francis Scott Key saw when he wrote the "Star Spangled Banner," and it's there with some holes through it. And they have all the inaugural gowns that the presidents' wives wore. They're there and everybody wants to see those. And then they have the Hope Diamond. It was real interesting what they had.

Some of the things are in the Smithsonian because Congress fixed it so that we have a national park system and a lot of things that we have.

Chapter 15—2:28
Abraham Lincoln

John Erling: Back to the spies, did you sometimes wonder if you were surrounded by spies?

Catharine Kingsley: Well, I don't know that I was but we were told as women not to go by ourselves places and we just didn't talk about things. And we didn't know who could be picking up a message. So we were just real careful where we went.

JE: Did you like it there?

CK: Oh I liked my job. The one thing I thought was real nice, down at Watergate, where we hear so many terrible things about now—

JE: The Watergate Hotel?

CK: Well, it's down there below toward the Potomac River from where the Lincoln Memorial is. There's a whole lot of marble steps. And the army, navy, marine bands played at least one day a week. And we could go down for a free concert and hear them play. So, we all after work, we walked down there quite a while, got our seat, and we got to hear that music. And sometimes the music was on the east steps of the capitol where they played for us. The Big Bands, Glen Miller, and some of those who came and they'd have free concerts for us.

There were things that we could do and I went to the DAR building where they had really nice things. And I got to hear my first opera in a real good auditorium, and it was *Aida*, so I guess that's my favorite—the first one.

JE: You were like twenty-one and twenty-two years old again—

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...when you were doing this. And did you do any dating?

CK: Sometimes.

JE: That person would probably would ask you, "What do you do?"

CK: Well, I just remember one of my dates, I went to the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church and that was a church that Abraham Lincoln attended. He was never a member

of any church, but in that church Peter Marshall was the senior minister. And he was the chaplain for the US Senate. And there have been books written about him. He's a wonderful speaker, so I decided that's where I wanted to go to church.

Well, I got to sit in the Lincoln pew, where he sat when he went to church. Of course, he was the one that signed the land grant business. So I thought that was kind of nice. All the other pews were just, you know, real modern as possible and it's a nice church.

Well, then they had things for government workers and the armed forces that were there about every other week. And I did meet some of them and one of them was with the Signal Corps in the army. Well, we didn't talk about anything because I didn't think he was supposed to tell me what he knew, and I sure couldn't tell him.

JE: So you'd have to say, "It's a nice day," and that was about it?

CK: And that's about it.

Chapter 16—3:19
Husband Bob

Catharine Kingsley: By that time Bob was in the service and we were writing letters to each other. And sometimes we got them and sometimes we didn't. He went from island to island. He might get five or six letters at a time, and some of them he never got. And I probably didn't either. He was the staff sergeant.

John Erling: And we're talking about your husband again now.

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative). In the Pacific it was a real different area to fight in than in Europe. It was hot tropics and they were so far apart from island to island. He was on a B25 as a tail gunner and all he ever told me when he got home was, "Well, I saw where we had been but I didn't know where we were going."

He was short enough and didn't weigh so much but what he did back in the tail of the airplane. His two officers over him, they were on R and R in Australia, so he was put on a navy ship and sent up to Leyte Gulf in the Philippines. I think the navy thinks that's the biggest battle of World War II is the one at Leyte Gulf.

They were there on this ship that was taking things to the troops in the Philippines and they had high octane gasoline for the planes, among other things. And what they had to eat was soda crackers in a box and Spam, or something like that. There they were, but they couldn't land because the Japanese snipers were up in the palm trees. So he was on board ship and two kamikaze pilots dove their airplanes into that ship. He was wounded and I think there were about 160 that were killed.

So since he's like he is and like I am he just knew he'd better write down what he remembered of that because he might not remember when he got home. So he took one of those cracker boxes and he wrote on the back of the thing and he got some of the information from a navy ship next to him that sent the message on to the Pentagon in Washington, DC.

So after he got out of the service he says, "I think I deserve the Purple Heart."

So I typed it up and they sent him the Purple Heart and all his medals that he should have had. But none of his things ever caught up with him, see? If he hadn't recorded some of that on the back of that cracker box there would be no way of knowing what had happened for sure.

He was in the hospital then there in the Philippines and the Philippine girls were doing a good job taking care of him but he got that jungle rot, which is in that article. They gave him penicillin and sulfa and we found out later he was allergic to it, why he was having so much trouble with it. So finally they sent home to Topeka, Kansas, to a hospital there and he was discharged then. And I think he got 20 percent veteran's pension, I guess you'd call it.

JE: Could you have left any time you wanted?

CK: No.

JE: You couldn't?

CK: No. I didn't ever get home.

JE: Even if somebody wanted to.

CK: Well, I wanted to one day but I asked for it and I got turned down so I didn't ask any more.

JE: Why did you want to leave?

CK: The aunt that had a lot to do to help me grow up after my mother died was having major surgery and I thought I ought to be there. They said, "No, this is wartime." I stayed up there the whole time.

Chapter 17—2:23
VE Day

John Erling: May 8, 1945. All forces under German control cease activity on active operations at 2301 hours, Central European Time on May 8, 1945.

Catharine Kingsley: Well, I remember it was a big celebration. The Justice Department wasn't very far from the White House so we all walked down there and we could see through

the fence. The fence around the White House is really nice. All these different people were coming in from different countries and a lot of times they had a chauffeur that drove us so I don't know what kind of a car it was but the mount had the flag of their country. Different country ambassadors were there meeting with our president.

It was a real big celebration and we all danced in the streets and we were having a gay time that night. Of course, we had to go to work the next day, which we did.

JE: But the war was over.

CK: But we went—it was over in Europe but it wasn't over in Japan.

JE: So that one became known as Victory in Europe and VE Day. A lot of celebration—

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...dancing in the street.

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And you had to be euphoric, excited, everybody was happy.

CK: Oh yes!

JE: And then you also knew your job was coming to an end then.

CK: Well, it was for there except we still had the Japanese.

JE: Okay. So tell us then how long you stayed on.

CK: Well, I stayed on until the war was over.

JE: Which was June 5, 1945.

CK: And it was later than that. When I got ready to come home and I know things had been settled more or less in the Pacific was, "Well, if you quit now you will not be rehired by the FBI because we're only going to employ all the men that come back from the service. We don't want women in the FBI."

JE: Humph.

CK: Everything was masculine then. But when I got home and the war was ended in the Pacific, of course, Bob was home. And since he was in Kansas, well, he could come down and visit for a while. And that's when everybody hitchhiked. And so he hitchhiked down to see me.

JE: When did you leave Washington, DC?

CK: I don't remember exactly except it was probably closer to Christmas because Bob came down and that's when we got engaged. After the war. But he was finishing his college; he had one year left. And so his birthday is in April. He graduated from his college in May of '46, and we were married on June 16, 1946. And we've been married sixty-four years now.

Chapter 18—4:00
General Douglas MacArthur

John Erling: Do you recall when you were in Washington, did you ever see President Roosevelt?
Catharine Kingsley: After he was dead.
JE: Okay.
CK: That was it.
JE: Any other notable people like—
CK: Well, Wainwright came back and there was a parade for him. We—
JE: General Wainwright.
CK: He was in I'd say southeast Asia. We had troops in Burma that flew over the hump. Eisenhower came by in a parade.
JE: And you saw him?
CK: And saw him.
JE: Did you ever see Douglas MacArthur?
CK: No. My husband wasn't very happy with Douglas MacArthur and I'll tell you why. He was in the South Pacific and he was allowed to have his family with him because he was a general. And none of the other officers did, none of the troops did. They were moving him from one place to another and he had a refrigerator moved with him. The boys out in the field, they had beer for him and cigarettes but with the temperature at 115 or 120 how do you drink hot beer? And he had a refrigerator for his.

The boys in the Pacific didn't have a lot of the things that you think the troops would have, of the ones that were in Europe. They were better supplied.
JE: Who was better supplied?
CK: The troops that fought in, well, Africa and over in Italy and into Germany.
JE: Okay, but it was those in the South Pacific who didn't have—
CK: They couldn't keep up with them. What they had was fruit cocktail in a can and something like Spam in a can, which he called Billy Beef. So ever since we've been married we haven't had any of those things 'cause he had all he wanted, 'cause that's what he had in the Pacific.

My husband's brother was on the hospital ship, he was in the navy. So he had a lot of things. They had ice cream and all sorts of things on that hospital ship. He didn't really have a hard time like Bob did; he was out in the jungle.
JE: So they didn't like MacArthur because they felt he should have lived the way they were living?
CK: They felt like he was taking advantage. I don't know that General Eisenhower ever did something like that. And I know George Patton was real well thought of by his troops. I've been told you either hated him or you loved him.

And I met General Nimitz when they came to do Nimitz Junior High here. The thing that he said that I really liked was he says, "I could not be where I am without the sailors that serve under me." And I will tell you my car tag, if you didn't pay any attention to it, I asked for the number [beep] so I could remember. But then the letters that come after it are DCZ. So that I can remember them I say, "Washington, DC, Krazy."

JE: That's a tag that you have on your car right now?

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: DCZ.

CK: Z. So I call it DC Krazy. Because some things our government does I can't figure out.

During World War II both the parties and the Senate and the House worked together and everybody did everything they could to promote the war and we all did without. And they all worked together real well. Really, I will say that the Depression really ended, more or less, when we started building all these planes and all these things and the economy got a lot better. But we were doing everything for the troops. We did without here at home so they could have it.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

CK: I think all those legislators did a heap better than the one we got now. All the time since then our legislators up in Washington they always give themselves a raise every year or two. And they have all kinds of perks. They're living the life of Riley, I guess you'd say, and the rest of us, we're struggling along doing the best we can with what we've got.

When Bob and I got married he had a bicycle; that was our transportation. And we had war bonds, that's all we had.

Chapter 19—1:00
War Bonds

John Erling: That was pretty big, the war bonds then.

Catharine Kingsley: Yes.

JE: Explain that system.

CK: You paid, I think it was like eighteen dollars and maybe twenty-five cents, I'm not sure. And when it matured then you would get the twenty-five dollars. But the money you put in then helped the war effort and bought all the things for the troops. And we just hoped that the government would have enough money that you'd get twenty-five dollars that was drawing interest.

Well, we did that and they were good, I think it was like twenty years. But anyway, I found out we could have them for another few years and so we just left them there. Well,

that time the government didn't want to pay all that interest on that money so we had to take it anyway. But we used that money then to send our girls to college.

JE: So again, you buy a bond and then it would mature how many years later?

CK: Well, I don't know if it was like ten years or not.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

CK: But the government was to pay it back. So they actually borrowed the money from us and now we're borrowing the money from who knows.

Chapter 20—3:15
Charles Chibitty

John Erling: Native Americans were also kind of in your business. We were sending coded messages ourselves. You knew the American Indian code-talker Charles Chibitty, and he was a Comanche.

Catharine Kingsley: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Using their language, why was that? It was fairly easy for them.

CK: Well, the thing was if you took a Comanche or a Cherokee, whichever their language was, they didn't have the words "airplane," and "tank," and all those sort of things. So they had to figure out what they were going to do. And what I thought was interesting, the word for "turtle," was the word they used for "tank." They substituted their Indian words for whatever they were talking about. And I don't really know what the others were, for what they would call for airplanes or anything like that. But I was really fascinated that a turtle was a tank.

JE: We use their language to transmit secret messages.

CK: Yes. And they did that like on the phone talking to other people in the trenches in Europe I know.

JE: Choctaw Indians were used.

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Navajo Indians were used in the Pacific Theatre.

CK: Yes.

JE: During World War II. It seems like the Germans nor the Pacific Theatre Japanese were able to decipher the codes because of what you just said.

CK: I think the Germans, I don't know if they had help from people here or not except I just think they had better intelligence than a lot of countries do, the Germans did. Both in World War I and in World War II. When you think of the ones that came from Germany that helped do all the rocket and astronaut things, see, they're highly intelligent people.

JE: You met Charles Chibitty?

CK: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And what kind of a person was he?

CK: He was fun to talk to but I think a lot of Indians are. I enjoy getting to know some of them and I have some friends. One thing I know about Indians I think is really nice, if you are an Indian and one of your tribe members shows up and needs help, if they are an Indian who has a job that he can do that, he welcomes all in and they get to spend the night and he feeds them. They're very hospitable people, and I think some are really good.

And one of Bob's students is Larry Daylight. He has his masters degree from TU and he's a teacher there over at Tahlequah. He's a wonderful young man. And we have one of his pictures that he's done. He's very artistic. He was sent by the State Department to a lot of countries to represent America and he did the Indian Hoop Dance and some of those things too. And he's very artistic. I think highly of the Indians.

When I was in Washington, I think a lot of people that live in the eastern United States do not know what it's like out here in the middle United States. So some of them said to me, "Do you have any Indian blood?"

And I said, "Oh yes I have, I'm part Delaware." Well, I thought that was a tribe they might not recognize.

So then another friend said, "Do you have an oil well?"

And I said, "Sure, I have one pumping in the back yard." And they believed me. And you know, they just think we're all cowboys and Indians, or whatever. At least they did then.

JE: Right.

Chapter 21—5:52
Thank You for Service

John Erling: Well, I want to thank you for your conversation today and for what you did for your country. How you used education to help during World War II. We admire you and thank you for telling your story here today. It's very nice of you.

Catharine Kingsley: Well, I was just glad you'd listen to me.

JE: You're very interesting and you're a very good storyteller.

CK: I thought that it would be important that maybe thirty, forty years from now if we didn't tell our stories they wouldn't know what some of us did on the front line.

JE: Right. And to hear your voice telling it I think adds an extra dimension to this too.

CK: I just want to tell you something that the FBI lab does. It hasn't anything to do with codes. There was a letter who came and it had something in it, I don't know what it was, but back in those days on your envelopes you licked the flap, you know, and put it down. So the FBI discovered that the person who licked it wore lipstick and they were able to tell you what the color was and what company made it.

Whoever wrote the letter, they needed to know a little more about. I don't know whether they were in the spy system or not. So they went to the store in New York City, the only one that sold that cosmetic, and they said, "Could you tell us who bought this lipstick?"

Well, they had the records and they knew who it was. And they went and talked to then.

So then I also heard that if you were in a car wreck and the paint from the other car was rubbed off onto your car, they had all the cars that they did at that time that if it was painted green they could tell you what car it was on and what year that model was made. So then they only had to check all those cars then to find out which one ran away from the wreck.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

CK: They have a lot of things they can do that way that you don't hear about, you know. But I didn't think that had anything to do with the code.

JE: Right. That's interesting though that they can do that.

Math skills were important.

CK: They are.

JE: Why were they important to breaking codes?

CK: Some codes the way they're made and the number of slots they have to put the letters in or however they do their certain number of spaces, then when you get the words that you think it might fit in—like when you're doing a crossword puzzle—you get a clue. To me some of the clues the spaces they give you might be five and I think it ought to be seven. But then when you work it through you find out the clue wasn't what you thought it was. Because sometimes they give me the clue and the word that fits in sometimes isn't one I know so I look in the dictionary.

JE: And so that was math that helped you do that?

CK: Yeah, the math helped you along with the language, you know. To break the code you have to know is it a little box and do they go around the outside until they get to the middle or whatever they do to send their code. 'Cause sometimes this is the way it was.

The other thing that I could tell you that I think is real interesting is in the big cathedrals of Europe they have a maze on the floor of some of them. And the one in Shar is one of the best. It's a little deal where you go in and they have all these things go around and you can't go through some places so you have to backtrack to get into the other till you get to

the center. And the center refers that this church is a place of worship. God has control of your life, see? And if you don't go the right path, well then, you don't get there.

We have mazes now in other places because we went one place in Britain where there a hedge everything. We walked around and we liked to never found our way out because we weren't going the right path.

That's kind of the way it is when you're doing a code. You go different things and you find out you can't do that and then you have to kind of backtrack and start over and maybe get along a little bit and you finally get to the answer.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

CK: But it's like a maze when you do it.

JE: Have you ever wondered if a spy could have infiltrated your building and your office and the code-breakers?

CK: Well, it's pretty hard to get in there when I was there. You had to check in down the stairs where you just get in the door, where you got off the bus. And if you were going up to where the FBI lab was you went through several places where you had to show your card. I don't think they could, but what I thought was a little bit strange was there was somebody that was a big movie star, they let them tour the FBI and they'd see us working. How they got past I don't know but maybe they were good citizens. I don't know.

JE: What movie stars do you recall coming through?

CK: Oh they were the cowboy ones. I can't remember what his name is now but I was real surprised because we had very few visitors. Whenever we worked we had thirty minutes for lunch and we couldn't be going to the bathroom all the time because we had a little piece of paper where we had to fill in how many minutes we worked on this code, how many whatever we did on the others. It was all a time thing. We had to fill it in. Every day we filled in what we did so you didn't dare go to the bathroom very often 'cause they'd soon find out you hadn't been doing what you'd been putting down, you know. So they were real careful about how you did.

JE: Were they real careful about making sure you weren't taking any material out of the building?

CK: That's right.

JE: Were you checked with security or you—

CK: Well, if you checked out a book that was one that you couldn't take home, well, you just left it at work. You didn't dare take it.

JE: Who would stop you from walking out the door with something? Couldn't you have concealed a book on you?

CK: Well, I didn't want to try it.

JE: No.

CK: I expect you could but I didn't.

JE: But that was a big notice, I would imagine, you can't take anything out of this building.

CK: You can't take it out and you can't talk about it.

JE: Yeah.

CK: And that was it. So it was real regimented, I'd say, but we knew what we could and could not do.

Chapter 22—0:33
Conclusion

Announcer: (music) This oral history presentation is made possible through the support of our generous funders. We encourage you to join them by making your donation, which will allow us to record future stories. Students, teachers and librarians are using this website for research and the general public is listening every day to these great Oklahomans share their life experience. Thank you for your support as we preserve Oklahoma's legacy one voice at a time on **VoicesofOklahoma.com**.