

Edwin Morris Prentke

Born: February 27, 1904.

Father was a men's wear salesman. He travelled throughout Ohio, staying overnight sometimes. Mother was not employed. She was Hattie Morris before marrying my father. My middle name is from her family.

I had a sister Dorothy five years younger. She married and moved to New Jersey where she was the mother of two sons. They both live in Edison, NJ. We write once in a while.

Grew up on the east side of Cleveland. Went to Columbia Elementary School, Columbia Avenue off East 105th Street. Went to East Tech High School. I was in the ROTC. There was a foundry. I sang in the glee club (also at Case). Graduated 1922.

Always interested in electronics, chemistry, sciences. Built a lot of crystal radios. Case was nearby and had a great reputation. I was able to live at home.

During the war there was a great need for teachers. One of the things I did is that I was hired by Jack Martin, professor of electrical engineering at Case, who asked me to teach a class in elementary electronics. I wrote the course material and set up lab experiments. Students were men and women. Shortly after that I was asked to teach at Fenn College (now Cleveland State University). During that period I met a fellow who wanted to manufacture equipment of the military. We formed a partnership called Tech Machine Limited and went after subcontracts. First of all we couldn't get a contract unless we had machinery. We bought an ancient Warner & Swasey lathe. Eventually we got drill presses and milling machines. We made small components such as eye bolts, cluster hooks. This was located on St. Clair Avenue near East 100th St. I was teaching at Fenn and working in the machine shop. Esther ran the camera store.

After the war I got a job with Cleveland Institute of Electronics. I wrote mail order courses and devised a kit of electronic components with which to do experiments. This was a full time job for a few years. Esther ran the camera store.

1955 Studebaker Speedster

This is a 1955 Studebaker Speedster with V 8 engine. It was ivory and brown. I drove it at 95 mph over the Main ave bridge one morning when there were no cars in sight! One day the car was parked in front of our apartment and was hit by a car whose elderly driver must have had a stroke. His lady passenger was killed. The lovely car was demolished!

1929 Model A Ford Coupe

Titusville, Pennsylvania. Father in passenger seat. This was my second car. Shortly after I graduated from Case, I bought a third hand Chevy. I did all my own repairs. I painted it jonquil yellow with a brush. Most cars were black in those days.

1946 Oldsmobile Convertible

This was the first car to have a hydromatic (automatic) transmission. It was black. This photo was taken in front of the oil can church (Methodist). The interesting thing about this car is that new it cost me \$600 cash plus my old junker.

Prentke Laboratories

I started this business shortly after I graduated from Case (1926). Immediately after graduation I tried to get a job and there weren't any. So I started doing radio repair, visiting clients' homes. I don't remember if I advertised or how they learned of me. After I met Esther and asked her to marry me, she insisted that I rent a store and get into business. So I rented a store near on the west side of East 105th St. just north of Euclid Avenue. It was a retail sales business. We put in a line of radios and record players. There was a service shop in the business. Most of the instruments (tube tester, oscilloscope, oscillator) were made by Hickock Instruments.

One of my hobbies was photography. I belonged to the Cleveland Photographic Society. Eventually, we began to stock and sell cameras, enlargers and accessories (chemicals, paper). Eventually the photography sales became greater than the radio sales. Around 1946 we moved to the north side of Euclid Avenue just east of East 101st St.

I got involved with an architect from Lorain who manufactured prefabricated houses. I was treasurer until 1964.

We sold the store in 1956. In 1964 I met Dr. Charles Long, who had moved into our apartment building. I discovered that he enjoyed sailing and so invited him to sail. When he saw the electronic gadgets on the boat, he asked if I would consider a job at Highland View Hospital where he was working with hand research. I told him I didn't know much about medical electronics, but agreed to try it. I started in May 1964. I was soon working full time. The work involved electromyography, measuring electrical potential of muscles. I build measuring equipment. He needed a part time secretary, so Esther was asked to help two or three days a week. At that time I had a British sports car with a carburetor that wouldn't allow it to start in cold weather. The carpenter at the hospital ran an extension cord to the parking lot for me to connect a dipstick heater. Don't ever buy a British sports car.

I worked at HVH until 1979 when the hospital moved to combine with Metro General Hospital. I worked there until December 31, 1991, twenty-seven years. When they built a new cafeteria and had a contest to name it, I submitted the winning entry, the Atrium Grill. I miss going to work there, although I now don't have to get up at 5 AM anymore. Now I get up at 7. I still go back from time to time to have lunch with my friends.