

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Youngstown YMCA Project

Remembrances

O. H. 803

ROBERT DOYLE

Interviewed

by

Jeffery S. Collier

on

August 7, 1975

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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INTERVIEWEE: ROBERT DOYLE

INTERVIEWER: Jeffery S. Collier

SUBJECT: Personal history, introduction to YMCA, jobs  
at YMCA, period of 1940 to 1975

DATE: August 7, 1975

C: This is Jeff Collier. I'm speaking with Mr. Robert Doyle. We're at 17 North Champion Street in the Youngstown YMCA in Youngstown, Ohio. Today's date is August 7, 1975. It's approximately 5:10 p.m. I'm working with the Youngstown State University Oral History Program concerned with the history of the Youngstown YMCA.

Bob, could you tell me about your past and sort of bring us up-to-date, if you would, on how you became affiliated with the YMCA? Start, if you would, with where you were born, raised and your high school and college education.

D: Well, I was born and raised here in Youngstown on the south side. I went through Youngstown public schools until I was a junior and then moved to Boardman. I graduated in September of 1956 from Boardman High School.

I started here at the Y as a youngster of about eight or nine years of age when my grandparents purchased my first membership for me. In October of 1951, I was given my first paycheck from the Y in that they hired me to work in the youth department cloakroom on Saturdays offering a salary of 35¢ an hour.

Other than a stint in the U.S. Coast Guard for six months of active duty, I haven't missed a paycheck since that 1951 date.

C: Did you work at the YMCA here when you were attending Youngstown University also?

D: Right.

C: What job did you do then?

D: Well, after graduation from high school, I was put into what our Y calls the director-in-training program. That is college students who are interested in going into the YMCA field thereupon graduation of college. At that time, I was assigned in the youth department with the title of associate youth director working with the nine to twelve year old age group primarily in club work here at the Y, special interest programs and this sort of thing, not necessarily in the physical angle of the youth program.

Then during the summer months, I was village director at camp during that period of time, again working with the younger age groups programming for that, what we called village at camp.

Then upon graduation from college from Youngstown State University in 1961, I went immediately into six months active duty in the Coast Guard. Then when I came out, I was assigned to our McDonald branch in McDonald, Ohio as branch executive, and stayed there for about a year and a half and then came back to the Central branch as program director for about a year and a half and then was appointed youth director in about 1966 or 1967. I can't remember for sure.

Then in 1970, I was appointed membership director. Then in 1974, January 1974, I was appointed Central branch director and membership director.

C: Could you fill in some of the spots that you had just mentioned? Let's talk first a little bit about Camp Fitch. When you were at Camp Fitch and you worked there in the summertime, you mentioned being a village director. Could you elaborate a little on what the duties of a village director were at that time, and also, a little bit, if you would, about Camp Fitch, perhaps some of the programs, what Camp Fitch is, as well as if you could remember the number of people that were involved?

D: Yes, Camp Fitch is a branch of the Youngstown YMCA. It is a resident camp operation. A resident camp, of course, is where you go to a camp and you're staying overnight. We also run a day camp program, which is a camping program during the daylight hours. Camp Fitch is 300 acres in North Springfield, Pennsylvania. It's about seventy-five miles from Youngstown, located right on Lake Erie.

A boys' camp and a girls' camp are conducted simultaneously. The ages of campers for the in-camp program are nine to fifteen. We also have some out-camp programs, such as a Canadian canoe trip, Lancaster County bicycle trips, a ranch camp in Columbiana County. Oh, we have reading camps, aquatic camps. We had a trailblazer camp, which hiked through the Appalachian Mountains and this sort of thing.

But the in-camp program is for nine to fifteen years of age. The boys' camp, like the girls' camp, is broken down into three age groupings: nine and ten year olds, eleven and twelve year olds, and thirteen to fifteen. Then, of course, the program is geared for each one of those age groups with a village director in charge of the programming for each one of those groups.

C: As far as the individual camps go, then they are further broken down into tents. Is that correct?

D: Right, you know really, the total chain of command here in the line of organization is your camp director and your assistant camp director. Then, you have your six village directors. Those are the three in boys' camp and girls' camp that I just announced. Then under the village director comes the tent leaders. There are seven campers and one leader in each tent. Of course, there's a number of specialists at camp: the waterfront directors, the rifle directors, archery directors, the dish crew, and some maintenance staff.

C: Who were the camp directors when you were at Camp Fitch?

D: Back in 1951, which was my first year as a camper, it was Dick Alsh. Then Dick Alsh left the Youngstown Y, I believe, in 1952 or 1953.

C: In what capacity did he. . .

D: He was a camp director and also the youth director here at the Y in other seasons. He went down to Charleston, West Virginia from Youngstown. Then after Dick Alsh was Joe Check. Joe Check was there for three or four years.

In 1956, Bob Thompson, then the youth director of the YMCA, was appointed camp director. Now, this is. . . When I say youth director, back in the 1950's and 1960's camp was only a summer operation. So, they had other jobs here at the Y, such as youth director or physical director or something like that. Since at about 1970, camp has been in operation year round. The camp director does nothing but

camping year-round.

But anyhow, 1956 was Bob Thompson. He was from the Sharpsville area; I believe a Youngstown State University graduate. I'm not sure. Then in 1957, Bob Mowery, who was appointed youth director, was then the camp director. In 1958, I think, Joe Check, who was our athletic club director, went back to camp until about 1961 or 1962. I'm not really sure on all of these dates now. But then Halbey Brown became camp director. He, at that time, was youth director here at the Y. Halbey was camp director until about 1967 when he went to the Cross Valley Association in New York State. Since then, Dale Lighter has been camp director.

My last year at camp was 1963. Now as a camper, back in the late 1940's, Ed Enterline was the camp director when I was just a camper. Ed's still in Youngstown with Campus Equipment on the west side.

- C: Did you see any drastic changes that you can think of between the time you were a camper and your last years as village director? Could you elaborate on some of the things that were big changes for Camp Fitch?
- D: Yes, probably in my period of time at camp the biggest change was going into the boys and girls camping in what we called simultaneous camping, because we had two distinct programs--two different camps and so on. The girls' camp was Camp Chickagaumee; the boys' camp was Camp Ot-Yo-Kwa.
- C: Talk about Camp Fitch and the biggest change that there was that you can remember as far as the difference between the camp or how it changed in the period of fifteen or twenty years. . .
- D: Well, bringing the girls into our camping was probably the biggest change in the years that I was at camp. At one time, and I don't really know the date but I think it was before my camper days even at Camp Fitch, the Youngstown YWCA had a camp not too far down the road from Camp Fitch. Of course, they drew a lot of the girls from the Youngstown area.

But with Camp Fitch being all boys, of course, we had the nude swimming in Lake Erie and so on. There wasn't much in that whole area as far as civilization. It was just some farms surrounding us. Now, there's quite a bit of summer cottages running right up to our western property line and that sort of thing.

But in 1956, the Y was fit to expand the program to include the girls. We started to clear the east part of our grounds taking out all the woods and so on and developing an area for boys camping. So in the summer of 1957, the boys' camp, Camp Ot-Yo-Kwa, was started in this new area and Camp Chickagaumee for girls started programming in the old tenting area.

The camp, by the way, has been from the beginning all tent camping, no cabins. There are a number of buildings at camp: recreational buildings, dining hall, health center, and this sort of thing. Those buildings are now all winterized. We handle groups year round. We're into outdoor education for schools, weekend camping for church groups, and Indian guides and any other groups that want to go up. So with the camp totally winterized, that was probably the biggest change since we went to girls camping in 1957. This happened in the late 1960's, not during my period of time at camp. Those two incidences anyhow are probably the biggest I knew during my ten years here at the Y.

- C: A couple of quick questions continuing about Camp Fitch and that is: When you were a youth going to Camp Fitch, about how many people, if you have any idea, would be up there at one period or one time? So, you know, through a period of a summer, I want to make a comparison of what it was in 1948 or 1949 or whenever it would have been in comparison to right now.
- D: I really don't know in 1948. I was only like about ten years old then. As a youngster of ten years of age, camp just seemed to be huge, you know. I mean Lake Erie was huge; the buildings were huge and tents were big. But then in the 1950's when I started working as a dish crew member, probably the camp capacity at that time for campers, I would estimate, would be about 140 or 150 campers a period. At that time, we had eight, two week periods during the summer.

One thing I just happened to remember, before we built the camp, we did get involved--or built the girls' camp--in some girls camping at the beginning of the summer. Camp, I believe, was extended to about ten weeks. The first four weeks of the summer girls came into the camp with a complete girls staff and everything, except for about six or eight of us fellows who. . . . Myself, by that time, became one of the specialists. Oh, in a couple of summers I was archery and riflery director and that sort of thing. Then we had six weeks of boys camping for the rest of the summer.

But the capacity of camp still hadn't changed at that time. It would still be around 140, 150, give or take a few. But then in 1957 when we expanded the boys and girls at the same time, our capacity is now about 225. Again I don't know the exact figures, but it was about 225 campers. Then, we have a staff of, oh, anywhere from probably sixty-five to seventy-five people.

C: Going along with what you said earlier about camp and things being so much bigger, it always seemed to me, when I was going to camp, that there must have been 700 people up there. When you say 225, I'm amazed right now because it seemed like 400 or 500 people at least. When you would go up at that time, would you go up for, as they do now, two week periods? Is that what a period would consist of up there?

D: Yes, at that time camp was all two week periods. Then, oh, maybe about ten years ago it went to a one, one week period because we found, especially in the younger age group, the nine and ten year olds would experience that individual being away from home for the first time, especially for two weeks, and it was pretty hard to take. So we initiated a one week camping period at the beginning of the summer and then followed that up with all two week periods.

Now, for the last four or five years, it's been all one week camping. We have eight, one week periods now, although a number of them do go up for two weeks, because the program isn't the same every period. It varies week after week. So, youngsters could go up for two, three, or four week periods and would still get the swimming instructions, boating, canoeing, archery, riflery, horseback riding and this sort of thing. But the other special programs will change from period to period. They might have an Olympic week and be involved in that sort of thing with the races, both water and land races. The tents would pick a different country and they would costume for that country; it is really an all out Olympics. Then another camping period might be involved with sort of Indian lore or nature lore or this sort of thing. The emphasis during that particular week would be along that line.

C: Did you have any problems when they went from just boys to boys and girls? Were there any problems that resulted at camp?

D: Yes, most of them boy-girl problems. Of course, the kids, the campers themselves, you know the nine and ten year olds,

they thought it was a problem, you know, "Yuck, girls." Even though the programs back at that time were completely separated, other than maybe, of course, the three meals in the day and the play swims that would conclude the day's activity, but usually archery and riflery, there were certain periods when girls could be there and boys could be there. But you know, you always have those little kids wanting to know why the girls had to be there and so on and so forth!

Then there were some staff problems, too. The staff was sixteen years of age and over and that's when they weren't going around saying, "Yuck, girls." So as a village director and my last few years as boys' camp director, I had those type of staff problems where, you know, I had to keep stressing to the staff that their job was more important to the set of campers that they had charge of for those two weeks than the girl over in the other flat, you know.

- C: I remember it well. Getting into your next phase of YMCA work then, after you graduated you said you went as a branch executive to the McDonald Y. Could you elaborate and tell us what the McDonald Y was about, if you would, and also, some of the facilities and physical things about the building and any remembrances that you have?
- D: As I understand it, the town of McDonald was pretty much built by U.S. Steel Corporation. 1930's or 1940's, I really don't know when. They put up a community building for their employees. At one period in time, they gave this rec building to the YMCA in Youngstown to operate as a YMCA. The YMCA used the basement, the second and third floor of this building and then the first floor was rented out to a post office and an insurance agency and a few other establishments.

The U.S. Steel Corporation still worked hand in hand with the YMCA. In the early years that the Y had the building, they helped with some of the maintenance and some of the other cost of operating the building, not operating the program, but operating the building. Then, U.S. Steel pulled out and it was up to the Y to operate it completely.

The facilities were several clubrooms and an office, a large game room with the Ping-Pong tables, the pocket billiard tables and so on and so forth, the type of activities that the kids liked to play, and it had two bowling lanes there. The basement had a nice, little weight room and an archery range and a meeting room. The third floor was a large hall. You used to do some roller-skating and shuffle-



board and some other games there.

We were fortunate in McDonald to have a school system that had a tremendous physical plant and a gym and swimming pool, which you don't find much around in this area as far as swimming pools are concerned in schools. The Y and the school. . . The Y, I felt, had a good working relationship with the school. We could use the gym and the pool and we did so and offered programs for boys and girls, men and women, both in the gym and in the pool and had a number of swimming instruction programs for the people of the community and so on.

In the summertime there wasn't much of a program. Although before I went to McDonald, there were some little leagues that were operated by the Y. But in the summertime, the village had quite an extensive rec program for the people of the village, and they used the pool and the gym, I guess, for some of their programs.

But it got to a point to where expenses were surpassing the income and had, oh, probably seven or eight very lean years. Each year they ran a considerable deficit. The building was closed for about six or eight months. When the community out there approached the Y to reopen it, that's when I went out in September or August; September of 1963 I think it was. September of 1963 is when I went out. We reopened the Y and closed it down on December 31, 1964. So, it was opened for about fifteen or sixteen months. Again, financially we just couldn't operate it. So it was closed and the village purchased it a few months later. It is now operated as a community center.

C: Do you happen to know who the branch executives were out there before you?

D: The one right before me. . . I'm not sure. Ray Kutan was there, but I can't recall whether he was the one who was there right before me. They had a couple of part-time fellows running it for awhile, too. One was Bodnar. I can't remember his name. The other one was Ryan, maybe. I can't remember. One was Bodnar, anyhow, but I can't remember the other. It seems to me it was Ryan--his last names was Ryan.

Then, Tom Collier, who you happen to know, was there from I think about 1954 up to and about 1960. I'm not sure, but I think 1954 was when he came to the Youngstown area and started out there. I don't remember when he left the McDonald Y and came down to the Central Y in Youngstown.

- C: Was there anybody there before my father?
- D: I don't know. Probably so, but you know I was like about fourteen back in 1954, fifteen or sixteen I guess. I have no idea, no idea at all.
- C: Was that the only branch that the Youngstown YMCA has ever had? They had the West Federal branch and the McDonald branch.
- D: Right, we had the West Federal branch and McDonald branch and then camp was considered a branch also.
- C: How about the . . . Well, a couple of areas about the Y and that is: When you would go and use the facilities at McDonald High School, did the Y have to pay for those or was that just given to them?
- D: Yes, it was pretty much given to the Y to operate. We were really quite appreciative of it. I had to, of course, staff the program. I mean, we just had the facilities. But even with that, you know, expenses just in employees. . . I was the only full-time employee there. I had a part-time secretary. I had a couple of part-time swimming instructors. I usually ran the gym program and Bob Zajack and Dale May would run some of the aquatic programs. Then, of course, when I was at the school running these physical programs, I had a part-time person who would cover the building activities for those who would come to the Y for pool, play games, use the weight room, or whatever.
- So with those few part-time employees and myself, plus the expenses and the upkeep of the building. . . There were many major repairs that were needed to the building, because the building was quite old. We just saw fit to close it, because of, as I mentioned, financial reasons.
- C: When you were out there, what would a membership to that branch cost in 1961, 1962? Can you remember?
- D: I think when I went out there the membership for a youth member was \$5 a year. We presented new budgets in January of 1964, and our board out there raised the rates, I believe, to about \$7.50 and everybody went bananas.
- C: That was for a whole year?
- D: Right, \$7.50 for a year, right. Of course, that would enable them to use the facilities, come in. They had to pay to bowl. I forget what it was, only like about 15¢ at that time; maybe it was 10¢, but about 15¢ a game. I used to have to try to find some kid who would go back there and set pins. We had the semiautomatic setters, I

think they were called. You had to pick up the pins and drop them into the cradle and then drop the cradle down. Everybody wanted to bowl and nobody wanted to pick up pins. Half the time I was back there myself.

But that \$7.50 included everything. The individual could come down and go weight lifting everyday, get about an hour and a half of swimming instructions every week, plus a couple hours of recreational swim and gym class a week. They used to show movies and didn't charge for that and had the little archery range down in the basement and there was no charge for that. But they were used to the \$3, \$4, \$5 type youth membership. We met a lot of resistance when we increased the fees. You know, we had to do it.

C: How about the number of members that you had out there? Do you have any idea of what that would be? And the other thing would be, were most of the members youth people? Did you have any adults that were members?

D: Yes, the majority were youth members. Probably about half of the youth members were from outside of the McDonald area. I mean, we drew from Mineral Ridge, from that part of Niles that is close to McDonald and from Girard. How many, Jeff, I don't really know at this time how many we had. I would have to say maybe 200 youth members.

Adult membership was considerably smaller. We did have some family swims. We did have men's volleyball and an exercise program. So, I would say in total out there, we probably had about 300 members all together.

C: Did you work very closely with Central branch in any way?

D: Yes, in the sense of spending, from 1951 through 1963 here at Central branch. They still have a lot of programs. That's working together, but my experience here and the programs that I had started here, I tried to get started out there. And using a lot of their ideas here, using a lot of ideas from here as far as how to operate the building, I tried to incorporate it out there.

But really we're two, completely different types of facilities. I mean, we did have that little gym and little pool but yet it wasn't ours. We were there just a few hours a week. I just couldn't go in there and operate special programs any time I wanted because the board of education, of course, was having programs.

C: Were most of the programs up there on the weekends on Saturdays or was there also something during the week?

- D: We had gym and swim programs on Saturday mornings for the kids and then about two evenings a week for the gym and the swim. The school used it the rest of the time for their swim team, for some lifesaving classes. We ran, I think, a couple of lifesaving classes there a year or two if I'm not mistaken.
- C: You left there in 1962 then, is that when, and came to the Central branch?
- D: No, I left. . . We closed it up again there December 31, 1964. So, that's when I came back down. January 1, 1965 is when I started back down here again.
- C: And you moved into youth director?
- D: No, I moved in as program director, basically adult program director. I worked with programs like speed reading, guitar lessons, golf lessons, driver training courses. I would organize those programs, find instructors and that sort of thing. Then, I started the Indian guide program in Youngstown at that time, which really was not new to YMCA's, because by that time it had been in the YMCA for about thirty-five years.

The Indian guide was a father-son program for boys six, seven, and eight years of age and their dads organizing tribes into the neighborhoods. The basic idea of the Indian guide was to multiply the number of things that the father and son could do together. It required dad's participation in order for the boy to participate in a tribal meeting or a long house event or a tribe event or whatever. So, it made dad take time out to spend some time with his kid, not taking him to a meeting and picking him up again in an hour or an hour and a half later. It had to be the father-son involvement. I started that here in Youngstown.

- C: When did you start that?
- D: In 1965, in the spring of 1965. We started just with one tribe in the spring and then promoted in schools in the fall. We went from that one tribe to about seven tribes. Now today we have about thirty-five tribes. We have the Indian guide, which is father-son and we have Indian princess, which is father-daughter with pretty much the same idea there.
- C: How many people are in that program totally right now, the thirty-five tribes?
- D: Well, each tribe probably averages about seven fathers and

seven children, maybe eight children, because usually every tribe there's one dad that has two kids of that age. Many tribes have much more than seven. We have tribes that are probably eleven or twelve fathers. But, that gets to be quite large because this is a home setting. We recommend anywhere from about six to nine fathers and youngsters in a tribe.

C: What do they do?

D: Do you mean at a meeting or totally?

C: Both.

D: Well, okay, at a meeting we try to make it last about one hour. We recommend it start at 7:00, ends at 8:00 and meets twice a month. The meeting will open with a prayer to the great spirit or a pledge of allegiance to the flag or reciting the slogan or Indian guide, which is "Pals Forever," and in Indian princess it's "Friends Always," and then the repeating of the slogan, which is to. . . Oh, I forget it. It's been awhile since I have worked with it.

But then they get into a wampum report. Of course, this is the dues. Each boy or girl, depending on the type of child it is, has to earn her or his wampum between meetings. This is doing something around the home that is out of their regular routine. In other words, if the routine is to help clear off the table, take the garbage out, make their bed, they can't earn their wampum from that because that's their normal duty or chore around the house. But it might be helping dad wash the car, helping dad rake the leaves or sweeping the walk, helping a neighbor do something. Hopefully it's helping dad do something because here again, we want to foster that companionship between the father-child.

So anyhow, at that meeting the youngster stands up and tells how he or she earned the wampum and receives one or two beats on the tom-tom: two beats if they did a good job, one beat if their chief felt that the youngster could do a better job for the next meeting. Of course, the chief gets a little sign from dad, you know, scratching his head with one or two fingers to indicate the number of beats. Anyhow, the chief says, "The scouts were out and observed you raking," or whatever the case may be.

Then they have a nature report or scouting report--that is actually the correct terminology. This is where we encourage the youngsters to be aware of their surroundings and to share what they have seen with the other kids there. It

could be watching the squirrel in the back yard digging into the ground. Here is the important role of the chief of that tribe: "Why was the squirrel digging in the ground." "He was probably storing nuts or looking for some food in the ground." So this becomes not only an informative thing for that youngster, but it is a thing of sharing with the other kids that are in the tribe.

Then they might have a little story or a little craft or a vote and maybe even a game, depending on how the time is going. The craft, we don't expect to complete at the meeting. The craft basically is: What is it? What's it suppose to do or be? Then you close it up again and move on, because here again, the idea is after you get home and before the next meeting, father and son or father and daughter will sit down and complete that craft together. Again, you've got that father-son relationship, not just that one hour every two weeks, but something else that pulls them together.

Then they finish the meeting off with a little, quick refreshment of just cookies and milk, that's all, or cupcakes, no feast or anything like that. Then they close in the tribal prayer, Omaha Tribal Prayer, and they're gone. Hopefully, all of this has taken place within an hour. So here again, it's important to keep the number of people involved in the tribe down to about seven or eight, not ten or twelve, because the more wampum reports, the more scouting reports you have, the longer, of course, it's going to be.

- C: In other facets, of course, the YMCA has always promoted the fellowship of the physical activities, just generally, I guess, spirit, mind, and body. Have you found that the YMCA has continued to go that way, do you think, in terms of the youth program, as you've seen it, changing in physical things about the Y?
- D: When I came into the Y, the triangle of spirit, mind, and body. . . You would see things such as I did at that time. . . It was pretty much body.
- C: Physical, yes.
- D: I mean, you saw the gym, you saw the pool, so you related it to the physical education plan. And, of course, the youngsters when they came down to the Y, that's what they saw. They see a swimming pool; they see a gym, a weight room and this sort of thing. They don't come down to have their minds molded or to have some spiritual growth. But in a sense, they get it because of the Christian atmosphere and learning to be with others, to play with others

and this sort of thing. So if you sit back and analyze it, yes, every member is getting the spirit, the mind, and the body in the total programming, no matter what it is at the Y.

The Y over the years too has been changing. It's not all physical education anymore. It's Indian guides or as we call it in the Y, the parent-child programs. This is nationally; this is probably, in the last couple of years, the largest growing program of the Y.

Many YMCA's are springing up branches of Y's. They're springing up in our family branches. That's the only way you can join, is as a family. There are programs for the individuals too, but there are many, many programs for the family in total, not just a family swim either. It's more than that.

The Indian guides and Indian princesses and there's another one now called the Indian maidens, which is a mother-daughter program. There's a fourth one now called the Trailblazers, which is for the older boy after he's gone through the Indian guide bit and is about nine or ten who can move on now into this Trailblazer program. A lot of Y's changed their terminology and called it Y Knights and Adventurers and Y Adventurers and this sort of thing, but the basic format, which is put out nationally is Trailblazers.

Of course, many YMCA's are getting into the social issue: the drugs, the alcoholic programs, runaway programs, juvenile justice type of programs. Here at the Y we probably, in Youngstown, are just touching base on some of those and trying to do educational work with our different Hi Y and Tri Hi Y clubs and this sort of thing, more of a prevent type of programming than the cure type of programming.

C: Do you perceive that becoming very much more stronger in the future as far as the learning process about the things that you just mentioned, for instance, drugs or alcohol or things like that? Do you think the YMCA here in Youngstown will ever be very actively involved in that?

D: If we stay on the same trail that we're on now, I would say no. The involvement is very little right now. I would have to say that we feel that involvement in a YMCA program, respecting your body and working out at the Y and getting involved in other Y programs, will hopefully prevent somebody from going into the drugs or the alcohol or whatever. I would have to say this is probably our answer, at least right now. Things change, of course, but I think with our

boards and our staff that we have at the present time that this is the way it is.

- C: Has anything changed as far as--talking youth now. . . When I came to the Y and I was growing up here, on a Saturday it was always packed with a lot of kids and things like that. And at that time, this is going back, 1958, 1957, 1959, you didn't have the expansion to the outer communities of such things as Indian guides and things like this. Has that in any way hurt the youth program or is that something you're looking for or is that really not affected at all? Every Saturday you still get the mass of kids down here and continue to. . .
- D: I would like to see a bigger mass of kids every Saturday down here. Attendancewise we're probably maybe the same every Saturday. But it's much more of a challenge right now to get more youngsters down here because there's more going on out in the community today than the days you were talking about, little league baseball or midget or peewee football. Schools have had pressure over the years to open up gymnasiums for some physical activity for the kids in the community.

There's a million and one things kids can get involved in now, Saturday morning bowling leagues; all of this is available to a youngster. So we have to keep trying harder and harder to attract youngsters here now. We have a facility here in Youngstown that is second to none, as far as I'm concerned. When you have two swimming pools, three gymnasiums, a large youth game room and lobby and locker room facilities that we have, there's no program out in the area that can offer what we have. So we're still unique.

But we have to constantly be out promoting. They just don't flock in here. I wish they did; it would make my job a lot easier. But my job as Central branch director and membership director. . . I'm also a public relations director. I've got to be out there shaking hands and getting the people in, the youngsters as well as the adults.

So on a Saturday morning a youngster can come down here and get swimming lessons from the very beginner right through what we call porpoise, about as advanced in swimming as you can get. There's about seven or eight different progressions that you can go through. You can get an organized gym program, a recreational swim, karate lessons, gymnastics lessons; you can play the games in the lobby. A couple times a month you can see some films; they might be sports films or full length, feature films.



The fellowship, of course, with the other kids. . . The suburban youngster being right in there with that inner city youngster, learning what he's all about, and that inner city youngster is learning what that suburban youngster is all about. He can be here from about 8:30 in the morning until about 2:30 in the afternoon and get this entire program, as well as during the week after school with again: swimming, lessons, gymnastics, karate, organized gym programs, basketball leagues, all of that right here at the Y.

He pays just one fee of \$36 a year; that's only \$3 a month and he gets all of that. There is no additional fee for any of regularly scheduled programs. There are some programs that we call fun trips. We might go to a ball game. For instance, just a few weeks ago we went to a Pirate's ball game. He pays for the chartered bus and for the ticket and that's all. So really for \$36 a year, it can help to mold his character and give him some skills that he can use later in life, in swimming or whatever his interest may be. It's a very inexpensive investment.

C: Do you see the Y changing in any direction over the next couple of years?

D: Well, I'm quite sure it will. We're getting some new leadership in at the first of the year here at the Y. There's going to be some retirements and some replacements and so on. Of course, when leadership changes, there's bound to be some changes in philosophy of programming and so on and so forth.

Probably a couple of areas which we just started to touch on and that is trying to make the Y available to as many people as possible, especially when we're talking now on our youth numbers or people out in the community who could join our youth program.

With the freeways under construction heading south and so on, it's going to be a little easier to get downtown. But we purchased a bus. We're starting to bus kids in after school. Some of the biggest problems, of course, is transportation, as far as our youngsters are concerned. One car families and this sort of thing, the youngster just can not get into the Y. So, we're starting to bus in after school from different areas. On Saturdays we pick out a particular area of the community where we bring the kids in to expose them to the YMCA and the programs that the Y has to offer.

As far as branching out, I don't know. The decision was

made six or seven years ago to expand this facility here in town, which is right in the center of the total population. Liberty Township, Boardman Township, Canfield, Austintown, Poland, Struthers, Campbell, they're all about the same distance from the Y. When we were going through the study, Austintown wanted a Y, Boardman wanted a Y, Poland wanted a Y, even the little town of Greenford. A group of citizens came down to talk to us about starting a Y program in Greenford. They had a building there that they thought we could renovate and so on and so forth.

Well anyhow, every community wanted a Y and that's virtually impossible. But we've got to get as many people down here and we've got to go out into those communities and run some programs, not just Indian guides and not just Hi Y and Tri Hi Y clubs in the area high schools for the students. But I think we're going to have to take some of our programs out to the community, whether it's a women's slimnastics class or men's volleyball class, and find a gym someplace where we could rent or whatever.

I think this is coming along. We service about 13,000 members, which is a pretty good number of members for this association. Yet, there are still how many more thousands of people out in the community that we could serve, too.

- C: How many total people could you serve? Do you see an end to that? If you hit 25,000, do you think that would occupy every person, staff member at the Y and every facility that the Y had to the end?
- D: I suppose it depends on where your interest lies. If you were a handball and racquetball player, we can't get one more member into this Y because those courts are just jammed every hour that they're open, just about every hour. Now if you're a volleyball player, we could always use some new people. If you're a basketball player, we don't need anybody else because every night that you come down here, all five courts are going during basketball season especially.

But we need more members. We need them financially for one thing. We have to constantly be out trying to secure new members because of rising costs. If we couldn't grow in membership, then we would have to be increasing membership rates constantly. We look at membership rates once a year and adjust if we feel it needs to be adjusted. Sometimes I wonder if we should look at them monthly because every bill we get in, whether it's a utility bill or from one of our suppliers, their rates are being adjusted monthly. They pass it right on to us. We have to be constantly be out

after membership and other funding sources to help take that.

But some areas. . . Our athletic program is probably about the only area that has a maximum. It's set up to handle 900 members. There are about 825 right now. So, that would be the only area that we would have a problem as far as total members is concerned.

C: Well, thanks a lot for taking time to relay some of your experiences over the years at the YMCA.

D: Glad I could be of help to you.

END OF INTERVIEW