

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Women's Herstory

Personal Experience

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PHOEBE TRANTIN

Interviewed

by

Patti Swartz

on

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S This is an interview with Phoebe Trantin for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Women's Herstory, by Patti Swartz, on January 27, 1988

If we start at the beginning, you were born in Lowellville in 1900. Could you tell me a little bit about your life when you were growing up there, and something about your parents? Were you born in the hospital or were you born at home?

T I was born at home

S I know my parents had a story about the doctor hitting his head on the chandelier when my brother was born. Was there anything like that when you were born?

T No, there was not anything. It was just a natural birth, nothing exciting happened.

S There were just the two of you, two girls, right?

T Yes, just the two girls.

S And your mother was Lois, and your father was Louis.

T Louis, yes. Lois and Louis.

S What was Lowellville like then? Was it a much smaller town than it is today, or was it bigger?

T It was a larger town than it is today, because things have disappeared from the town, you know what I mean, is to make it a big city. It was really a nice town. They had nice stores in it, and everything like that. Mama's brother was a station master over on the B & O Railroad for years.

S What did your father do?

T He was a carpenter.

S Did he work mainly for himself, or did he work for other people?

T Partly for himself, and then partly with another man. He was a carpenter all his life. Although he did work in the steel mill, I do not know the dates or what he did in the steel mill, but he did work in that. When the children were born, he had worked as a carpenter himself. Then he worked with Mr. Hamilton, who was a carpenter down there. They both worked together.

- S What about your mother? Did she work, or did she stay home?
- T No, Mom never worked She stayed home all the time
- S You lived in Lowellville until you were about how old? I know you graduated from South High School, so did you go there from Lowellville School, so did you got there from Lowellville, or had you already moved?
- T I did not finish high school in Lowellville I came up to South High because there were different subjects that I wanted to take, and they were in South High That is the reason I came up from the Lowellville School I graduated from there in 1932, I believe Now, what year was it that you graduated? It is on my diploma, hanging up there in the bedroom
- S After high school, did you go to work right away?
- T Yes, I went to work at Abrams in the alteration department there, I worked there for two or three years I went from there to Strauss and Hirshburg Company
- S Abrahms is a women's clothing store, right?
- T Yes
- S Was it women's and men's, or just women's?
- T Just women's And then I went over to Strauss's and I worked over there until I got the offer to work on the railroad I accepted that position and worked there for over ten and a half years It was near eleven or twelve years before I quit the railroad
- S When you were at Strauss', what position did you have?
- T I worked in the alteration department, and I worked on the sales floor, too.
- S In the women's alterations?
- T Yes
- S And that is what you had done at Abrahm's, too?
- T Yes
- S How long did you work in the alterations department? Or did you go back and

forth between sales?

T No, then they took me from there and put me out on the floor as salesgirl

S Was that in women's clothing, too?

T No, that was in the China and glassware department I worked there until I got the call to go to the railroad

S I am curious about what working in the department store was like then Was it different than it is now? Do you think there was better service for the customer? Were the stores different than they seem to be today?

T Yes, they are different than they were a that time At that time, when I worked there, I had to take care of the customer, see that the customer was well-taken care of and satisfied Now it is different, because you can go in a store and wait for an hour or more, until somebody comes to wait on you The service was much better when I was going there

S Did you have to dress in any special way?

T Dresses?

S Yes

T No We just wore a dark dress, something that was not too elaborate or too flashy You tried very hard to see that the customer was satisfied with the merchandise that they were buying

S That was a very important part of your job?

T Very important Very important

S Did you get to know your customers while you were there?

T Yes, I did. And they always came back to us later

S While you were at Strouss, did they require any training programs for you, or anything like that? You said that it was a course in courtesy and salesmanship?

T Yes, and all of that, and then we got a diploma for that. I wish I had that diploma now so you could see what it was

- S, And you worked I the china and glassware department?
- T China, glassware and the housewares, such as all your kitchen stuff, and all that
- S. And the lamp department.
- T Yes, and the lamp department I also worked for the White Sewing Machine Company in Strouss, too
- S What did you do for White Sewing Machine Company?
- T I demonstrated the machines, and sold the machines in Strouss I was head of the department
- S Which of those things did you like doing best? Which department did you like best?
- T Well, I was interested in sewing, you see, and I enjoyed sewing and the sewing machine department.
- S. That is something that you have always done, always maintained an interest in, is it not?
- T That is right, it is sewing Yes
- S And you liked that better than the china department, there?
- T Well, I liked them both about the same, because you know I like dinner were beautiful china ware.
- S Yes, I know
- T So, I liked both of those departments real well, better than anything that I ever had done
- S After you had completed the course that Strouss had you take, you said that they took you to a china show in Pittsburgh, and you did some buying for them?
- T. Yes
- S What kind of responsibilities did you have on that trip?
- T. I had to pick out what I thought the people would want to by At that time, it was

during the war, and they did not want accept the Chinese dinnerware and things  
It was up on the top floor I told the men who took me down, I said, "I would like  
to go up and see what they have " He said to go ahead That is when they  
loaded me up with--see that cookie jar over there?

S. Yes, I do

T That and a tea set, tea pot, and water pot, and the tray, and beautiful little dishes  
that they had He was very much taken that I was interested in their work, and  
he really loaded us down when I came downstairs The manager that took me  
down said, "Boy did you get a load?" I said, "Yes, I did I was courteous to the  
man, he appreciated it, and he gave me all these things here." My arms were  
full, both arms, I could hardly carry any more

S Now, this would have been Chinese, not Japanese, right? We were not trading  
with Japan at all

T Well, wait a minute Was it Japan we were having the trouble with?

S Yes, we were fighting with Japan

T Then it was Japan. It would be Japanese things instead of Chinese

S I was not sure because all the oriental countries, we were not very friendly with  
at the time, I do not think

T No, it was Japan; I remember correctly now Japan had all that stuff They had  
a beautiful display up there I liked their dinnerware I thought it surpassed  
some of ours because their glazing is wonderful there

S Their glazing is so lovely, yes.

T And it was a nice thick glaze on there that did not crack or scratch, like our  
dinnerware did in this country I was very partial to that compared to the  
Englishware I did not care too much about English china either The man that  
was making the mugs for the corporation of the King of England had their display  
there, too But their dinnerware, to my estimation, was not anything like the  
Japanese was.

S It would have been more like paste, rather than porcelain

T That is right, and it would scratch And when you would cut anything across it,

with your knife, you would score that. With the Japanese, you would not

S The Japanese glazes just do not seem to crack

T It was beautiful, just beautiful. The man that had a lot of their display on the dinnerware, the Japanese had brought their things over. George and I had been to Cleveland and the man was demonstrating up there after we left the store here in Youngstown. I went in to see what they had, they had a beautiful selection of dinnerware. I never saw anything like it.

S. That would have been the Notoki brothers, right?

T Yes, that is when I bought a net when I was down in Strouss. I wanted the high glaze on there, because we had broken a platter, a big meat platter that was setting up on a rack, and the vibration on the floor, people walking by and bumping the tables knocked one off and broke it, and we could see there the beautiful glaze that was on that Japanese dinnerware.

S. What about the quality of merchandise, compared to today? Do you think the quality of merchandise was better when you were working in Strouss-Hirshburgs?

T Yes. When I was married, I went up the yarn goods department -- I wanted a dozen towels of different designs -- I picked out the designs I wanted, and that linen was beautiful and I still have those. Also, the tablecloth that I got, and the napkins. That came from Ireland.

S Irish linen?

T The Irish linen, and it was beautiful, and it still is. I did not think that we could come up and compete with that because I thought that that was about the nicest piece of linen that I had ever seen.

S Yes, Ireland seems to be noted for their linens.

T Yes, I just love that tablecloth that I have. And their little stamp was down on the end of the tablecloth. Their clothing, I think, I would say that their dresses and things were better than what they are now.

S There is not so much inspecting of garments today.

T No, there is not. No, you could buy a dress and the buttons are not lined up with the buttonholes. And I do not think that the dresses are as pretty as what they

were at that time.

S What about the fabrics? The fabrics were more natural

T Yes, the fabrics were more natural There was not too much to select from at that time

S It was wool or cotton or linen

T That is right, and it was most of all imported

S What about the number of people working in a department I know one way a lot of stores cut their costs by cutting back on sales people Were there more people to cover the department at that time?

T Yes, in the china department, we had, I think, five of us in there It was a large china display, but we handled some of the best chinaware that you could find People would come in and would not have to stand around and wait to be waited on. That is what they did not like, to stand and wait for a clerk to come and wait on them

S Yes The service is much different then

T. That is right The display of the merchandise was much nicer than it is now

S You feel that it was displayed more artistically? To better advantage them, more time spent on the display? In your department, did people working in the department make the displays, or did they have someone come in to do the displays? How did that work?

T. As a rule, they had somebody come in and set up the display, to display your china and even your lamps, they wanted them displayed But you could change it could if you wanted to. If you felt as though you were going to make an improvement on it, you could We were permitted to do that

S Strouss was pretty much a carriage trade store at that time, was it not? What kinds of customers did you have coming into your departments?

T. We had some very nice people coming in You could tell by the merchandise that they would pick up and look at, that they really knew what they wanted, and would know the kind of merchandise that was being displayed now.

S Were you and George married while you worked at Strouss?



- T Yes, I was married when I worked at Strouss
- S And you built this house, then, during that time, too?
- T We built the house, and when I wanted to resign, they did not want me to resign Mr Anderson, who was a superintendent, just begged me not to quit But George wanted me to quit We came out here and bought this lot The woman had sold the house where we rented, so we had to get out We went from there down home, and stayed with Patty and George, my sister and her husband, and then decided that we had better build So we had to build, and build under the government regulations, we had to have a priority for pretty near everything that we built.
- S Yes, this was during the war.
- T During the war. So, we decided to build it and, with the help of my father, who was a carpenter, and George, who had been in the building business--he was an electrician and knew a lot about the electrical end of it--we built the house ourselves
- S That was a lot of work, was it not?
- T Yes, it was It was a lot of work, but it was very interesting and I enjoyed every minute of it.
- S Did you do all the brickwork and everything yourself?
- T No, we had to have a man come and do the brickwork because we had already bought some lumber, four square lumber, over near Sharon, beyond Sharon, and the government came in and took every stick of lumber that was there, bought it out. So the only thing we could do was as a friend of ours that was in the building business said, "Why don't you go to brick?" He said, "We have some brick here, it is good brick, and just sitting here I will sell you the brick to build it " Then we had to find a bricklayer So we got a man from out-of-town to come and build the house for us, and we did all the inside work ourselves. Between my father and George and I, we built the inside of the house
- S You did all the plastering, carpentry, and wiring and everything on the inside?
- T. We did all the carpentry, wiring, and everything on the inside We had a friend in the plumbing business We were only allowed a bathtub and a bowl, washbowl, and a toilet upstairs We could only have so many outlets in the house The government came in and inspected to see that we did not have any more outlets

than were necessary They were really a pain in the neck, it was terrible to build when you were only allowed to have so much We had our furnace bought at Sears & Roebuck, and when we went down to get the furnace, and on that day we went down, Uncle Sam came in and said, "I am taking it " We were without a furnace for a while, and they had to order another one from Pittsburgh. Whatever Uncle Sam wanted, they came in and took

S· So the government really had priority

T· Yes, the government had priority over that, and you had to have a sign out in front of your house, with a permit number on it, to show any government man that came by that you were building it under certain things that had to be done They would consider where you snap the light on with one outlet, and where you plug it in would be another, and you were only allowed so many of those all over the house

S Did they give you any reason for not permitting any more outlets?

T No, not really; they said only that it was unnecessary

S So it was to conserve materials, maybe?

T That is right, to conserve the materials The plan that we had had porches, one by the fireplace where you could go out on one side of the fireplace, and then our front porch, where you come in the front door They would not allow you to have two porches on your house. You were only allowed one porch

S So what you were able to build pretty much depended on what the government told you you could do?

T. That is right

S You had a problem getting your windows, too, did you not?

T Yes, we did The only thing we could get were the steel window because there were servicing windows at Guam, the hospital in Guam, and the government came in and took all the windows, the frames, out of the plant up here, and we had to wait our turn for whenever we could get some We had to get our basement windows, and all; some came from Georgia and some came from Chicago They were not glazed and we could not get any screen to screen the windows until after the war was over Some of the basement windows came from Georgia, they had to send down there to get them. Then, for the storm windows-- I had a terrible time with the windows -- I had to wait a couple of years

before we could get the storm windows, because all of that steel was sent down to Guam, to the hospital there. So, I had to glaze the windows all myself, because they were unglazed windows, all we got was just the frame

S And you did all this while you were still working?

T I did all of this while I was still working. I glazed them over in Hattie's basement, on the kitchen table over there I forget how many hundred pains of glass I had put in here, and I glazed them all myself, because we could not get them glazed. It was so cold -- we did all of that in the wintertime. The shingles on the house, we had to get outside of Pittsburgh. The girl that we ordered them from, here in Youngstown, had gone down and brought them up on a cold wintry day. There was a lot of snow; I did not think she'd be able to make it, but she made it. So, George and I even put the shingles on the roof of the house.

S Now, did you go up on the roof with George?

T I did. [Laughter] The front of the house kind of slopes up this way. I got up a stepladder and I crawled up, came up to the top, the ridge of the house, and then I turned around and I looked and thought, how am I ever going to get down there? Dr. Harmon, from next door, came over and said, "What are you doing on that roof?" I said, "I am helping George lay shingles." She said, "How are you going to get down, Phoebe?" I said, "I do not know. I am up here, and that is the \$64 question. I have to wait to see." Finally, he put a rope around my waist and lowered me down over the roof in the front of the house.

S. [Laughter] I do not know if I would have liked that better than trying to get on the ladder or not.

T I am telling you, that was really something. So, I slid down over the roof, and then I got down to the front of the house. I said, "You keep hanging onto me, George." He tied the rope on the ladder, that was on this side of the house, and he threw the rope over the roof and tied me onto that ladder to hold me until I could get my footing on the stepladder. I grabbed a hold of the spouting to get down on the ladder. When I got down on the first step of the ladder, then I knew I was alright. But I tell you, we really had to work to get this house built. But it was the only way we could do it, because you could not get anything to rent. Everything was taken up by government people and it was just impossible to find anything to do, really.

S Your family that you lived with while you were building the house and moved from Lowellville to Youngstown, on Glenwood Avenue, right?

T Yes

S Now, did your father build that house?

T No, it was already built

S And you moved there sometime in the twenties? You moved there before you were married, did you not?

T Yes, before I was married

S I think you told me one time, that that was the only house on the street at that time. It was kind of the middle of a field

T Glenwood Avenue only came out as far as Midlothian Boulevard, and from Midlothian Boulevard on was nothing but a great big field. All through there was all farmland

S And you were about four blocks down from there?

T We were about four or five blocks down from Midlothian Boulevard. And your street car came up as far as to go to the park, Idora Park, or up on Glenwood Avenue, to a certain distance, and then they turned around there and went back downtown if they did not have to go to the park. Then we had to walk from there, where the turnaround of the car was, to the house. I had to walk a lot of that during the time that I was going to South High. I had to walk down from there, down into town, and I could get tickets through the school to go down, but I would rather walk, it was not that far down. It was just a nice walk from there down, and then I had to get my bus down to Lowellville at a certain time when I got down town. It was rather inconvenient, but it was alright. You got your exercise, and I enjoyed the walking down into town. You got your exercise, and I enjoyed the walking down into town.

S What was South High School like when you went there?

T It was nice. South High was nice. It had a nice football team there, and basketball. And Rayen and South used to play ever Saturday at the stadium there at South High.

S Was there a big rivalry between the Rayen School and South?

T Yes, there was. I enjoyed going to South High, though. We had some very nice teachers, and they would help you. They were very nice to you and all, and they would help you in any way they could.

S What classes did you take while you were there?

T I took my sewing there I had the sewing, English, geography, and history.

S I understand there was a swimming pool there Did you have an swimming?

Y I did not take any swimming, no They had a pool there, but I did not take any swimming

S It was down in a second basement or something Somebody was trying to tell me something about the history of South High Somebody said it was a hospital at one time I thought it was built as a school

T I do not remember The Wicks are, the ones that really took care of that They are the ones that had built that

S It was the Wicks who built South High School?

T But it was a beautiful school, just a beautiful school, with all your conveniences and everything. That is where I had to get downtown at a certain time to get my car going down to Lowellville

S Now, did you have to pay tuition to go there?

T: Yes

S Do you remember about what the tuition was?

T No

S And you had to buy your books, of course

T. I had to buy my own books and I had to pay for tickets for the Southside Streetcar that runs from downtown to South High And I had to pay so much for those tickets

S Did your sister go to that high school, too?

Y No, Hattie graduated from Lowellville

S The courses there were sufficient for what she wanted to do?

T That is right, what she wanted But I always wanted sewing and millinery, and

that was done at South High, and that is why I wanted to go up there. So Dad said, "Well, if that is what you want, then you can go up."

S Now, would Hattie have had to pay for high school, too, since she went to Lowellville?

T No. That all went in. You went through all our grades and up through high school.

S But if you needed to have more than your high school offered, then you had to pay the tuition to go somewhere else.

T Yes, you had to go someplace else to get it. That is why they did not have the sewing and millinery down at Lowellville schools, and that is why I wanted to come up to South High, because I wanted that. I enjoyed sewing, and I enjoyed making hats. I was glad I did because I made a living on that when I was out of work for a while.

S So you worked for yourself for a while, sewing for people and making hats?

T Yes. It was about three years that I did that. And I enjoyed it. I am glad because all through my growing up, that has come in handy for me, the sewing and all.

S Did your parents encourage you to go to work? They must have encouraged you to go, because they sent you to South for the millinery.

T Well, I wanted to be a nurse, but my dad would not allow me to be a nurse, because I would have to stay nights up in the hospital, at the nurses school. He would not let me do that.

S Did he give you any reason for not letting you do that?

T No, but he just felt as though something might happen up there. He said that he did not want me to go. June had married Dr. Morrow, the bone doctor, and she wanted me to come up. She would call about every other night. She would say, "Come on, Phoebe. Aren't you coming up here?" So, I always wanted to be a nurse, but I never had the opportunity or the chance to follow any school for it, because he would not allow me to come up to town here. We did not have hospitals down in Lowellville where I could go to. So my best bet was just to pass that up and hope I would have another chance, maybe, to go someplace and take a course, but I never did. I regretted that because I did want to be a nurse so bad. It was such a call for nurses at the time and I just felt as though I

was standing out there doing nothing when I could be helping somebody out

S: But your father felt that it was for your own protection that you did not go?

T: Yes. My mother's mother was a part-time nurse that would go with the doctors if any babies were born, or if anybody was real sick, or anything like that. I think maybe that is why I got the urge to be a nurse.

S: From watching her?

T: Yes.

S: What about when you did go to work? Did you work for yourself first, or did you go to Abrams first, after high school?

T: Right after high school. I will tell you why: I went into Abrams, was in the alterations department. My cousin knew the woman that was head of the alterations at Abrams, and they wanted somebody. So, I went over to Abrams, and she took me under her wing then and showed me all about the alterations and things like that. Of course, it was easy for me because I knew enough about sewing. I continued to work there until there was an opening in the sewing machine department at Strouss. A friend of mine who worked in the millinery department wanted me to come over to Strouss and see about the job. So I went over, and I got the job right away. That is when I stayed at Strouss and worked in the sewing machine department, because I was still around sewing, doing sewing there, too, and demonstrating.

S: How did your parents feel about you going to work in the stores? Your father had not wanted you to stay overnight.

T: They did not care because I would get an early streetcar ride up in the morning. I would leave home alone about eight o'clock and stores opened about nine.

S: This was still from Lowellville?

T: Yes. Then I would get up there about eight-thirty. Then I would get into the store. We could get in early, and we could get our displays, if we wanted to change them around, or get everything ready to open up at nine o'clock so there would be no delay, because people were rushing in at nine o'clock to get what they wanted. So we were there, ready to take care of the customers. I enjoyed that part of it. When I worked down at the railroad, it was very interesting to know, when you would see a train coming in with merchandise on it. I worked in a department where we had all what they call a bonafide papers that were made

up in east Youngstown. You would get them down every morning, telling you that this certain train was coming in, and it was headed for Chicago, or it was headed maybe north of here, and you just did not know where it was going until you got this card, it will tell you what was loaded in the cars

For instance, one time we could give the policemen the seals--they were taken off and sent down to us. If the police would call and say that certain car came in on a certain train, headed for a certain place, and they want the seal on us, we could tell what it was. I remember one time, one of them came in and got a seal record -- I had given it to him -- and I said, "Why are you so anxious about seeing what was in that?" He said that it was full of men's white shirts and they had broken into that [store] down in the yard and stole a lot of the shirt. Then they would break this train up, just to make all of the coaches on it. And if one was going out to California, that would be put on a certain track, and all the cars that came in that were headed west for California, would be put on that one train. It was a fascinating thing, because you knew pretty near what was in every coach, where that train was going, when it had to leave here, and when it was due down in California.

To me, that was another interesting thing because you knew that something was going on in the world and you were going right with it. You know, if a train went by, that there is a train that comes in, or you see one, if you are riding along, on the railroad tracks, you would think, "I wonder where that train is going?" and "I wonder what all is in those cars." There was quite an article in one of the railroad magazines, one time, about two trains, two coaches told--like a human being--their history of when they were loaded, who they were loaded with, where they were going, what time they were due out, and where they had to stop to have the train broken up and everything. It was very fascinating. I worked for nine and a half years on the railroad, and I enjoyed every minute of it. I just thought that was the most wonderful thing, to be able to tell all of that. That is when I got the pass and I went to California and saw the Olympic Games in 1932.

S So you worked on the railroad before you worked at Strouss?

T No, it was when I left Strouss. From Strouss, I worked for the railroad.

S In 1932, you went to California to the Olympic Games?

T In 1932, in California, I saw the Olympic Games.

S, Was that in Los Angeles, then, too?

T. Yes, it was in Los Angeles. That was the most wonderful thing. Anybody that has a chance to go to the Olympic Games, I think, should go.



S Can you tell me a little bit about the games that you saw?

T Yes, I saw most all of them. We were there early in the morning. On the way going was another experience that I had that I was so happy about. But when we were going, we had to get the bus to go from our hotel down. They said, to the girl that went with me, Pearly Thomas, "Pearly, hurry up," I said, "we have got to go because we are going to be late getting in." We were running across the road and this car pulled up and headed us off. I landed up against the side of the car and looked up and there was Amelia Earhart. I said, "Oh, Amelia Earhart!" She laughed and said, "Yes." And she said, "Are you going to the games?" I said, "Yes, we are going." She said, "I am going, too." My cousin's, who married an undertaker's daughter there in Los Angeles, mother was going to give some kind of an award to her that day at the Olympic Games stadium. I said it was so thrilling.

Then, when we went up to Yosemite, we came down with a Prince of Austria, the contestants in Australia. I asked him, in a kidding way -- we were there, up at Yosemite with him, for a long time -- "There is something I would like to ask you." He said, "What?" They had the band with them, I remember they had white sailor hats with red stripes around them. I said, "I would like for you to do something for me." He said, "What do you want, Phoebe?" I said, "I would like for you to have your band get off the train and play us a tune when Pearl and I get off." He said, "Sure, I will do that." So when I called my cousin up to tell him that we were coming in on this train, for him to meet the train, I said, "I am going to have a band announce my arrival." And he laughed and said, "Oh, yes." And I said, "You wait and see." So, sure enough, the Prince of Austria had the band get off and play us a tune. Pearl and I got off of the train, and he about fainted when he saw us get off of the train. We talked there for a long time, they were so nice.

All of the contestants that played in the Olympics had their own doctor, their own masseur, and their own cooks. They were assigned to different houses. And the masseur was massaging one another when the train was going down to Los Angeles from Yosemite. But I never had such a wonderful time. Coming back home, two boys from Estonia, New York -- they were contestants -- had each gotten a gold medal. The porter went to sweep the coach and I saw this shiny thing there. I did not know what it was either, could not see, and I yelled at him and said, "Don't you dare sweep this coach out any more." He said, "What is the matter?" I said, "Well, I think there are a couple of medals laying here." So, I went over and picked them up and said, "Yes, here are two gold medals that somebody had won." I said, "Anyone on the coach here that had won gold medals?" And these two boys from Estonia raised up their hands. I said, "Do you have your medals?" They said, "Yes." And I said, "Would you check your garments and see?" They checked and did not have them, and here they were, the two medals that the porter might have swept out the door. These

boys were so glad and so happy, they said if we ever come to Estonia, to be sure to look them up and they would show us a good time. I said I never got that far. But it was really something to see the games, and to see when they brought the torch and lit the flame there. The ticket into the game and all, I have all of that.

S You have the book and the ticket you saved from the Olympics?

T Yes. It was really something to see. And to see our boys stand up there, win the gold medal, and hear the National Anthem being played and the flags waving was really a treat. I advise anybody that can possibly go, to go to see the Olympic Games.

S What was it like traveling across the country by train?

T It was the most wonderful thing; we had a ball. We left Youngstown and went into -- I could not get straight through Youngstown and we had to change trains - - Chicago and got on the Santa Fe. When we got in there, we got off of the train, walked around in the station, and finally found the ticket counter to get our ticket for the train out of Chicago. When we got on the train, we had a colored porter that was really wonderful. He was so tall that he could reach up and turn the lights out in the ceiling on the train. They came through, then, when they saw that we were riding on a pass. A little girl that go on with us was from Florida, and she had graduated, and the father gave her a trip out to California, to the Games, if she would graduate, and she did. So, we sort of took her under our wing. The President's young son was on the train. He pestered the life out of her; he thought she was pretty cute. He tried to make up with her, and she would not make up with him.

When they showed you how to make up your bed, he said, "Put a sheet up over your hanger on the window, and then when we go across the desert, the sand will not blow in on you." They gave us some good ideas. We kidded them all the way. The conductor came in -- it was his first run after twenty-some years, he had been laid off and it was his first run back -- and he said, "Well, I know you two are going to have a good time." I said, "Well, we hope to." When we got off of the train to go up to the Grand Canyon, he said, "Phoebe, will we see you again?" I said, "Yes, I hope so." He said, "Well, I am not going to say, 'Have a good time' because I know you will."

When we got to the canyon, we walked down, we were supposed to take a mule train down into the canyon, but we did not. We walked. And the muscles of your legs pull to one way, and it is so hard to walk back up. We had a terrible time. So, they were fixing a water-pipe that had burst there, and we asked a man if they would not take us up in, just a square box it was, like a crate with boards nailed to the bottom end of the four sides, and then a great big cable on

both ends of that, and they lifted you up with a hydraulic lift I said, "Would you take us up in there, because we cannot walk up " He said, "You had no business coming down here without a mule train." I said, "Well, I am afraid I would rather walk it," I said, "When are you going to take the lift to go up?" And he said, "Well, I am not supposed to, but I will "

In the mean time, the manager in the park told us not to walk down, to be sure and get on a mule train to get down So they were looking around, could not see us, and they became worried, because we may have been walking under some cliffs that had stuck out. They were trying to keep in touch to see where we were So we got up to the box, got in the box, and when they hooked us on with the cables, I thought, Oh, if we would ever drop, we would just be a little grease spot in this canyon " They had to change us three different times to get us up out of the canyon When they brought us up, everybody was just screaming, yelling, hooting, and carrying on

Mr Lindsey, who was head of everything there, at the canyon, came around and said, "Phoebe, how did you get a way to get up here?" And I said, "Well, I told the man that I would go back and tell Sheet & Tube that they had bum water pipes, because that is what was rusty and leaking And he said, "If you do that for me, we will bring you up out of the canyon " And I said, "Well, I promise you, I will do that, because I know where the Sheet & Tube is It is right in Youngstown, where I live ' That is how he came to bring us up here." He said, "You people sure had a lot of nerve " I said, "They told us not to look over the side because we would get sick if we did " I just looked up and just watched for the rim of the canyon to get closer and closer We finally got through that. He said, "What are you going to do tonight?" I said, "I do not know what to do tonight " He said, "The Prince of Austria is here with a bunch of the boys for the Olympics." And I said, "I would like to meet him." So that is how we got to meet the Prince of Austria, through him Then he is the one who played for us when we got off the train. We just had a picnic all the way through I said to the conductor of the railroad, "You will see us one of these days."

My cousin who had married one of the undertaker's daughters brought a corps down that it was shipping back north When we met him there at the station, I said, "See, I told you that we would see you again " He said, "What are you doing in here?" I said, "I just met a fellow on the way coming down, we got married He died and I am going to ship him back home " And he just roared when I told him that I introduced him to Harry, I said to Harry that you let on that I am shipping my husband back home He just could not get over it I said, "well, I told you that I would meet you back here " He said, "I am not going to say 'Have a good time '"

But you had to watch the people out in California If you stayed at the hotel, they would tell you that they would give you a trip, if you paid so much for ti, and take you around to movie star homes I asked one of the fellows who was going to take us, "Are you duplicating the trip?" He said, "No, we are not " So, I

had a hairnet envelope in my purse, and I took it out and at each house that he would say so-and-so lives in this house, and so-and-so lives in this house I would write it down on the paper there. So, when we went to get another trip, I told them that we had been out in the morning and seen a lot of these homes He said, "Well, we will not duplicate them "

When I got back to the hotel, I took the piece of paper up and showed it to the fellow. I said, "You told me that you were not going to duplicate the trip, and you did Now, how are you going to square that out?" I said, "What are you going to do? Are you going to give us our money back?" He said, "I cannot do that " I said, "Well, what do you intend to do?" He said, "What do you want?" I said, "I want a trip to Catalina Island " And I said, about the St. \_\_\_\_\_ Hotel, "I want a meal in that, over on the island, and we do not want anything duplicated " So, we got that, and went over to Catalina Islands You have to be on your toes when you go to California, they will really hook you for everything But we really had some time.

S So that was one of the fringe benefits for working for the railroad, the pass to be able to travel anywhere in the country?

T That is right I could go anywhere that I wanted to Of course, we had a yearly pass on the P & LE The Lake Erie in Lastern, where I worked, and the P & LE were combined We had a yearly pass to Pittsburgh or Cleveland Of course, to go west, I had to go through the main office and get one all the way to California That is how we got the one to California, through the main office But I was in Cleveland of Pittsburgh every weekend, one of the places I liked to shop there and get an idea of what their stores were like, and all of their merchandise I hated to have to give up the pass after ten-and-a-half years, I just enjoyed it so It is a pleasure to get on the train. My heart aches to think that the trains have disappeared What are these young children going to do? They do not know what it is to get on a train I am glad that man over in Hubbard -- have you ever been over there, in Hubbard, where the man a little train that used to be at Idora Park?

S No

T Your kids can get a ride on that, so go over sometime in the summer, when they have that hooked up It is a thrill to get on it and just ride along and see that, as fast as you are going, to see the fields and places going by as you go along on a train It is a wonderful thing The meals were delicious, you had nice meals on the train You meet a lot of nice people Of course, we had to get off the train, when I went to the Olympics The train from Chicago to California only stopped at the Harvey Houses. You stopped there These restaurants along the turnpike remind me of Harvey Houses It was a place to stop to eat, and it was the only

place along there that you could get off the train. You had to hurry, get into the station, tell the girl what you wanted to eat and all, and get it over with by the time your train was ready to leave again.

And, as I said, my heart aches when I see those empty tracks, and see them tearing up empty railroad tracks. And what are we going to do in time of war, is what worries me. If war would ever break out, what would we do? That was the transportation to get our soldiers back and forth, at the different camps and things. If that goes, we would have to depend upon trucks and buses and what-have-you. You could get on the train and you knew that the train was going to go right straight through. When I think of them tearing the tracks up, down here in Youngstown, I could cry because I feel so sorry for them.

S. How did you come to work for the railroad?

T. I had a friend that worked down there, and my cousin worked down there, Alice Hempf, from Struthers. They said, "Why don't you come, Phoebe, and work on the railroad?" I said, "Well you have to wait your turn to get in, because everybody wants on the railroads." It was really through them that I got a chance to get on the railroad, so grabbed it right away. I was put in, then, with keeping records in the record department, of all these records of the trains coming through. As they came through, it just seemed to me that it was wonderful. I loved it from the first day I started until the last day I quit. I would advise anybody, if the roads come back again, to get on the railroad and work on the railroad.

S. Did you work in the records department the whole time you were there?

T. Yes, we had great big, huge books and we had to write down train so-and-so, coming from where it is coming from, like Pittsburgh going to California, the number of cars that were on it, what was in it, the merchandise of the different cars, who owned that merchandise, who was shipping it, and all of that. When we opened up the books, we could just look and see train so-and-so, and it was all recorded underneath there. It had to be recorded in a certain way. But, to me, it was wonderful, there is nothing like the railroad. That is why when we went to California, George and I, we went down on the railroad.

S. You used to take the train to Florida, too, did you not?

T. Yes, we got it down in Pittsburgh, below Pittsburgh, and get it at this little place where it stopped. They would break up your train. If you were going to a certain part of Florida, you were put on these trains and taken through. And to me, that was wonderful. I hated to see that break up, too.

S. What was Amelia Earhart like? You said you met her?

T She was the sweetest thing I had my hands on the door, like this, and she patted my hands and said, "Yes, I am Amelia Earhart " And I said, "I am so glad to see you " She said, "Are you coming to the Games?" I said, "Yes " I said, "Well, I want to be there to see that "

S When did you stop working, Phoebe, and why did you stop working?

T To get married

S You got married and George did not want you to work at all?

T Yes

S Were you sorry to stop working?

T See, when I went from the railroad, I went into Strouss That is when the man did not want me to quit Strouss But George did not want me to work anymore, he wanted me to be home. I said, "I would rather be out working " He said, "No, I want you to be home " He said, "You do not have to work I do not want my wife working " So, he made me quit then

S Were you sorry to quit?

T Yes, I was I really was I like the public I like to meet the public.

S And there was not enough for you to do staying at home, and no contact with people?

T You made such nice friends You meet the nicest people I tell you, to me, it was wonderful to work out in the public and meet the different people, because it is different than the ordinary work of sitting in an office and being tied down to a chair all day long I could not stand that, I had to be up and move around. I could walk around through the store and go to other departments of the store to see what they had If they had any new lines coming in, in material or merchandise, I could go there to see them The lamp department was nice because you had shades in there, and then you had other parts of the lamp that you could fit up and make lamps for people, which they wanted and was very nice

Like that lamp that I have there on the table, it was Mama's vase, see George had that made for me I had the hole drilled in it and then he wired it for me I had taken it down to Strouss one day to get a shade for it. I had it sitting

down where the shades were, and then I took it over to where all the lamps were I set it down there until I got a shade I thought I would like, and some women came along, and I went over to get the lamp and the lamp was gone. I said to the girl that was working in that department and I said, "Look, my lamp is gone Somebody's picked up my lamp." And I just happened to see the women ready to go down the elevator I went over and I grabbed hold of her and I said, "Wait a minute, lady You have my lamp " She said, "No, I bought it back there " I said, "No, that lamp was not for sale " I said, "My husband made that out of a vase for me I brought it in here to get a shade for it " And she said, "Will you sell it to me?" I said, "No, ma'am, I will not " She said, "I will pay you anything that you want for it " She was from Salem Her husband was in some kind of a machine -- I do not know what it was that he did, something that he worked for had a lot of mechanics And she said, "That is just what I have been looking for, a lamp like that " I said, "Well, I am terribly sorry, but that is mine " So I took it away from here then, went back over to the girl, and I said, "Will you come over here with me, and this girl, here will verify that that was my lamp "

S You were lucky What about your mother? Did your mother encourage you to work when you were starting out?

T Yes, she thought it was all right She said, "Something you want to do?" And I said, "Yes, I can get the job at Abrams, sewing." I said, "Ma, it is doing some sewing work, it is repairing," and I said, "We know Mrs Moore," the women that is head of it " She is going to take me under her wing, and I want to do it " And she said, "Well, if that is what you want to do, do it " I said, "I do not want to go to school anymore because there is nothing down here in Lowellville, that I want to take up," and I said, "I do not want to go up to South anymore I found what I want to do millinery or sewing " She said, "If that is what you want to do, Phoebe, it is up to you " And I said, "Well, that is what I want to do " She said, "Well, you will have to get up early in the morning in order to get the streetcar to get uptown to work." I said, "I do not care, I can get up that early " Which I did and had no trouble with at all. I enjoyed every minute of that

S What about your father? Was he as happy that you were going to work?

T. He hated to see me leave home I said, "Dad, I have got to get out on my own some time or other. I have got just what I want to do, what I like to do, and I want to continue on doing that " I said, "You did not want me to be a nurse, I can come home every night from town." We would stay uptown, and the other girl and I -- she was from down below New Castle -- and would go to a show, or do something, or shop for clothing and things like that She and I chummed around quite a little big They finally consented that I could do what I wanted to do.

S What about your sister Hattie?

T They wanted her to go to Kent to school. She could have gone to college at Kent. She just did not want to go because she and George were going together at the time and she did not want to leave him. So she never went, but she could have gone ahead and taught if she wanted to. She liked teaching, she did teach in the school in Lowellville. They had a school across the river, on the south side of town, and she taught over there at different times when they needed a teacher. But I was not that keen on teaching.

S Your father would have let you go to college to be a teacher?

T Yes.

S But he would not let you go to be a nurse.

T To be a nurse, right

S You would have had to stay at a normal school

T. I would have to stay there. That was what I told him. I said, "I do not want to do that, because I want to do what I want to do, and that is the nursing." So, I just decided that I was going to stay at home and I was not going to go to college or anything. I said, "I want to take up and do what I want to do." And that was millinery and sewing. I enjoyed doing that and I made a living off of it too, when work was bad.

S So then you stopped work when you and George got married, which was during the second World War

T Yes. We moved in here on the anniversary of Pearl Harbor. He did not want me to work anymore, and I wanted to work. He said, "No, I do not want you to work. I want you to stay here." I said, "I would rather work. I do not want to be here."

S That was pretty much a general attitude at that time. When you got married, you stayed home and took care of the house?

T Yes

S. What other things did you have to do? Did George have his own business then?

T. Yes, he was in business with the Youngstown Alloyed Casting. He and his brother could not come to terms on things, and he finally, and they sued one



another and closed things up. Then he was out of work for a while, and then a friend of mine said, "Why don't you go down to Sheet & Tube and see if you can get a job down there?" So he went down and got a job down at Sheet & Tube. He had to work different hours; I did not care much for that, but I was not going to say anything. He continued to work, and then when he was operated on and had to quit. He was sent up to a school up near Cleveland. This woman and her husband from New York came and taught them up there. Different companies sent some of their best men up there to school, and George was picked to be sent up. She told me that she never saw a man that was as bright as he was. She said, "He knows how to do everything."

S He was very inventive, too, was he not?

T He would help different ones. Like, a fellow was sent in from Sealtest Ice cream, and one from the Kodak company in Rochester, New York, and George got to talking to them and gave them some very good pointers that when they went back to work they could take back. He has got three plaques, which I have hanging up in the bedroom, that he won, and his picture there, as you come down the stairs, with one of the men getting an award. When he was sick and was going to retire, I went down and told my son-in-law of Moffy, that I came down to get George's stuff that I want to take back home. He said, "Phoebe, will you do one thing for me?" I said, "What's that?" "He has always had such good ideas on things about the mill and I would like to have them." I said, "No, you were supposed to pay George for some of the projects that you had. He had to use his brain to think them up, and you have never paid him on some of these. I am going to take them home and burn them." And he said, "Oh my God, do not burn those projects of George's up." I said, "Yes, that is what I am going to do." I said, "I am taking them back to George."

And I told George what I was going to do. He said, "Oh well, give them the projects, Phoebe," and I said, "No, you have used your brain to think them up, and Sheet & Tube has never paid you what they should for them. Forget about them." I brought them home, and I had them here for a long, long time before I took them out and burned them. I would not let George turn them in. And Moffy's brother-in-law or son-in-law, or some relation of his, said, "Well, there is a very smart man. What he has done for the Sheet & Tube, and what he knows about steel, which he was working in when they had the foundry, and the mechanical end," he said. "He was really a whiz." I said, "I know he was."

It is too bad that he had to die, because that man had a whiz brain in him. He had three brothers, one was in the steel business -- well, they all were in the steel business -- one was a salesman, George was an electrician in the place when they brought that Wheeling furnace in town here, on Indianola. The fellow said, "It will have to angle more than that for these plugs that we are making for the mill." And he said, "It cannot be done, George." George said, "Do not tell me

that it cannot be done " After the man left, George tore the furnace down and rebuilt it. When he came back, he showed him what it was angling, and he said, "George, I did not think that ever could be done. You sure did something to that." So he really knew what he was doing in the electrical business, too, as well as in the steel business. But he was a very brilliant guy. It is too bad that death took him away.

S You spent a lot of winters going to Florida, in between?

T Yes, I upholstered my whole living room suite down in Florida -- a davenport and two chairs. I went downtown and I saw this place that sold this material that is supposed to be sun proof. So I said to George, "Let's go in and see what is here." We went in and I saw something that I could get a pretty pattern off of. I brought it home, scrubbed the kitchen floor, and I put that material all out on the kitchen floor laid it out. Then I took the pieces of that I had taken off of the chair and davenport and laid them on that until I could match the design on them so if I put them on the chairs that the three chairs would look alike, and then the three backs on the davenport would match the same way. So, I laid it all out, cut it out on paper, and finally cut the material out. I had my sewing machine at that time, which I won. I said to George, "I can sew that, and I can even cord it."

So, I went to the upholstery department down there, and they taught it up at school. But I went up and there was nothing there that they did not know that they were trying to teach. I did not go to school there. He said, "If you want to go to school up here to take some more of the upholstery, go ahead." I said, "No, I can do it better myself." So I bought the cord and brought it down, and sat one whole evening and covered the cord that I was going to use. Then the next day, when I cut it out, I had the backs and all the seats of the chairs matched, and the little strip down along side of the chair, from the seat down to the bottom of the seat, I matched all of that up. Then I sat down and started to cord all of that. I corded it and I covered the davenport, and got the pieces all together, the three backs of the davenport.

I went over to Fort Pierce one day to get some stuff from one of the upholsterers over there, and I saw some material I wanted. I bought it and brought it home. I said to the man, "You stop in." I told him what I had done and he could not believe it. When he walked in, he said, "You mean to tell me that you did that?" And I said, "Yes." They had a place where they covered furniture themselves, and he said, "Would you want to work for me?" George said, "No, she is not working for you." He said, "I want her to be here at home. She does not have to work." And I said, "Why, do you want me?" He said, "Heavens, yes! I never saw such a beautiful job in that chair." Both of those chairs were rockers, and very seldom do you see a little chair that you can go in and sit down on that is a little rocker. I wanted to bring one home so bad, but the woman who brought the trailer would not let me. She said no, she would not buy it unless I left the

two chairs there But I wanted to bring it back so bad

I was very happy and very proud of that, when I covered it. It is a lot of work, but I enjoyed sewing it because I had the machine there to sew, and I had all the time in the world that I wanted, and a big kitchen floor that I kept clean all the time incase I wanted to lay any of the material down there to figure it out or anything, I could do it. So, I enjoyed covering that living room set

S After you left Strouss, after you got married, what did you do, Phoebe, with your time? How did you spend your time?

T When I left Strouss?

S After you married George.

T Oh, after I got married Well, I came home here, and it was to build the house I would come out here and work with the carpenters The hall landing window up here, according to the plans, was a certain height up Well, I could not even wash the windows, it was so high So I said to George, "I want that window dropped down " He said, "Okay, I will see that it is dropped down " He said, "You tell Mike, when he comes in tonight, to drop that window down as low as you want it " I said that I could not clean that window, and he said, "No, it is up too high " So when Mike came in I told him that I wanted that window dropped And he said, "Phoebe, I cannot do it The plan is a certain height, and it will look terrible for the outside " I said, "Mike, are you going outside to stand in that driveway and look at that window up there in the landing?" I said, "You know anyone else who is? Drop that window down so it will not be so high for me to get a step ladder and get up there and clean it."

When I came out the next morning, they did not have it pulled down Dad brought me in, I looked up and I saw it, and I aid, "Look at that dumb window up there." He said, "What are you going to do?" I said, "I am going up there and I am going to rip the wall down " And I went upstairs and he said, "What are you going to do?" I said, "I am ripping the wall down here " He said, "No, do not do that " I said, "Do not tell me not to do that. It is my house " I said, "I am paying you for the way I want it Now," I said, "I am pulling it out " So I pulled it down, and I said, "I will clean the brick and the concrete blocks off for you, and get all of the plaster off of them You will not have that to do, but I do not want that up there "

So, I got the window dropped down to where I wanted it, and still it is not quite low enough but it is better than it was before When they got through laying the walls and everything down, I went over home, and I bent a copper wire for what the call a "U" thing to tie the two walls together -- you had to tie the concrete wall with the brick wall I had to bend all of those, bring them over the next morning and give them to Mike And the screws -- big, long bolts -- that

George brought me to bolt the plate around the upstairs, there, where your roof is down out of the wall, that has to be bolted down because a windstorm could come along and blow it away, see So, I was doing that and a man from the Catholic convent over outside of Lowellville came up and wanted a bricklayer to raise a smokestack on the convent over there He asked Mike if he could do it, and Mike said that he was with me now, but he said that when he got through, if they were not in a hurry, they would do it He said, "What is she doing?" Mike said, "Boy, you should see how this house is built She is putting bolts every so often around here, and bolting that plate down to tie the roof down on the building." And he said, "I never saw such a thing like that " Mike said, "Well, come on over here and I will show you some more things that you never saw either " So he took him around and showed him different things that I had suggested he should do, which he did, and he said, "Boy, I would hate to be around when this house has got to be knocked down " And I said, "You?" What do you think of me? I am leaving town. I am not going to be here when they tear that house down " He said, "I never saw that done before " And Mike said, "Well, there is a lot. This house is certainly well-built " So that part of it was taken care of, and I did not have to worry about that then

Then I was scrubbing the floor up when they got through laying the sub-floor upstairs, before they put the boards across it I started to scrub that, and he said, "What the devil is she doing?" And Mike said, "What are you doing, Phoebe?" I said, "I am scrubbing this floor. I do not want all of this cement around here " And he said, "I never saw any house, I do not think there is a house in Youngstown that ever had a floor scrubbed like that " I said, "Well, I want it clean so none of this dirt sifts through " He said, "Boy, oh boy, every time I come in here, there is something new going on " So I scrubbed it all up and when they laid the other boards on it, it was all clean They put paper down first, then laid the boards down. I said, "I do not want all of that sand and stuff sifting through when they lay the other flooring " So I know is a well-built house all the way through

- S What about after the house was built? That kept you busy for quite some time, but what about after that? Did you have activities that you were into, or did you entertain for George?
- T No, after we had the house built, it was to move in and get the furniture put around where it is supposed to be put. Then a friend of ours over near Hubbard, they were a young couple and they had three children, he did not know anything " So we did that for them. Then George helped him hang his doors and fix everything up in their house, and practically built their house for them, too I was over there a lot. I like to still work around with lumber and things I was over there helping him do different things That way, we took care of the family for them too, and saved them an awful lot of money. So we did one good

deed that way, that we could be a little bit proud of So George helped them finish their house so that they could move into it. That is why every Christmas time, we would go over and George would play Santa Claus with the kids. But I worked with them over there, did things

After we got their house built, we came back over and I started out over on the yard and helped George clean up the yard and get the ivy -- there was a lot of poison ivy in here -- taken out, and get some of the trees cut down. Of course, we cut down the big curly maple tree out here by the great door, and had wood all planed down and all fixed up to build up our places here where we needed any wood or anything That was the only way we could see it because the government would not let you take anything So, we had the stump out here, and I thought, "What are we going to do with this stump?" So I said to George one day, "Let's build a fire with this stump " He said, "Okay " I said, "You know, we could fry hamburgers out here Bring a big sheet of metal home that we could put over that." Our neighbor woman came over that night, her husband, their electric went off, and she was just sick because her husband had come home from work, and she said, "Here, I have got the meat and potatoes here, and I cannot do anything with them." I said, "Oh, yes you can Bring it over and we will cook it on the stump " So we cooked their supper on the stump that night, made coffee and everything

We just had a ball because what she could not get into or want to do, or something, I would help her out, and that way we both worked together That is the one that died, and I feel so sorry for her We had a lot of fun Then we would go sit on their back porch at night and tell stories, or tell different things about different things that had happened in our lives We spent a lot of good hours together They went and took her over to Hubbard and put her in a nursing home She wanted to come home so badly, and they would not bring her home

S You like being here with your own family

T. Oh, I tell you, my heart ached for her Then she finally gave up and died She said she did not want to live that way. I knew exactly how she was living, because I did the same thing I would have died if I had been up there another week I absolutely would have died What little bit you can do here -- if you do not want to clean, you do not have to clean, if you want to do this or that or the other thing But Rube came in and took all my curtains down all over the house and washed the curtains, and then he put the foil on the windows, cleaned my windows for me, put the storm windows up Then she went over the whole house and cleaned it up for me and, oh, to get back in your own home

S Since you were so active when you were younger and did so many different things, it is hard for you not to be able to do everything you want to do now?

T. That is it. There are things that I want to do myself, that I cannot do. It is just terrible, it is really terrible. What I would like to do -- and I am not able enough to do it myself -- is to help elderly people. You cannot get the young people to come and take care of the elderly people. They do not stop to think that maybe they will get down themselves someday. But that is what she does, is take care of the elderly people. I would like to do that myself, go and help different people out. That is why I did not want to go into a nursing home and Basil said, "I will never put you in a nursing home, Phoebe, as long as you live. You would never last." If I could just do something to help somebody enough to get around. But I cannot on account of this blood clot in my leg now. I have got to wait and see what that is going to do. But I would just love to go and help some of these elderly people, the poor devils that cannot get anything to do, cannot do it for themselves. So many that I know are stuffed up in nursing homes, and they do not get the care they should get.

S. You told me once, a long time ago, that your name was not really Phoebe when you were born.

T. No, they just did not know what to name me because papa's sisters wanted to name me.

S. What did your grandfather want you to be?

T. He wanted the name Katerina, and Mother said, "No." She had a cousin, over in Springfield by the name of Louelly Macklin. They took us over there -- she made the best homemade bread -- and I asked Dad if he would buy a loaf from her, and he did, an every time we went over we would buy it. They had a clock, which I have on my mantel now, that was in the family. It had a bird, a stork-like picture, frosted on the glass on it. I would get on a chair to stand and watch that bird to see if it moved. So we came home one day and Hattie and I were playing "store." She was calling me Katerina, or Katherine, and I said, "Do not call me that any more. My name, from now on, is going to be Dorothy Katherine." They had called me Phoebe in the meantime, and I said I did not want to be called Phoebe. Because this was Aunt Phoebe that had the clock, and I said, "I do not want the name of Phoebe." Then we got to playing store again. I said, "Well, then call me Phoebe Dorothy Katherine Trantin." If you want to put the Katherine in, you can stick it in." What I wanted was Phoebe Dorothy, then. From then on, that is what I have been getting, Phoebe Dorothy.

S. Phoebe Dorothy.

T. Yes.

S So you changed it yourself?

T Yes

S Is that your legal name now?

T Yes, that is my legal name They put it on down here at the courthouse for me, because the fellow said, "Maybe you will want to take a trip abroad You could not get aboard if you do not have your name right " I said, 'Well, I do not care what it is." He said, "If you want a passport, you could never get it unless you got Phoebe Dorothy "

S You belong to the D.A R Can you tell me a little bit about what the D A R is and what you have done in the D.A.R ?

T. I was regent of the D A R

S Has the D.A.R. been very active here in Youngstown?

T Yes, it has been here for a long, long time

S: It is the Daughters of the American Revolution, right?

T Yes, Daughters of the American Revolution

S How long has your family lived here in this area? When did your family first settle in this area of Ohio?

T When they first came here?

S Yes, do you know?

T It would be on my D A R papers

S You have to be able to trace yourself back to the Revolution?

T: Yes, to during the revolutionary war

S Who were you able to trace back to?

T I was regent in 1961 and 1962 See, George died in 1962, and you had to serve four years, and I could only serve two because I had to be at the hospital with him when he was sick.

S Then you went to D.A.R. chapter meetings in Florida when you were down there, too?

T Yes, I would go as a guest at some of the meetings

S And you were very active in the chapter here at one time?

T Yes, because I was regent from 1961 to 1962 I would have been out in 1964, but George died in 1962 Then I had to quit because I had to be at the hospital with him I can tell you who I went under [tape stops]

S Michael Musser?

T Yes, that was on my father's side Michael Musser is who I went in under. He had served in the war I enjoy it; it is a patriotic organization They do good, they have a couple of schools that they take care of It gets you out, they have good speakers There is a meeting coming up.

S Do you still go to the meetings?

T Yes, I still go

S How do you get to them? Does somebody take you?

T Yes, a friend of mine takes me I used to drive myself, but I cannot drive anymore

S No, I know that you have not been able to drive for awhile

T We sing the Star Spangled Banner, the Allegiance to the Flag, and all of that before each meeting

S. Then they have a speaker come in and speak at the meetings?

T. And then they have a speaker come in and speak at the meetings That helps a lot.

S. It is a nice activity for you to still be able to participate in

T Yes, it is

S How long have you been in the D.A.R. ?



- T Someone down at the library was related to Frances, and she got me in -- Eva -- so I have been in there for quite awhile
- S She did a lot of genealogies of the Mahoning Valley, did she not?
- T Yes, she is the one that looked our thing up for us, got all the dope for us That has to be sent to Washington and it has to be okayed It gets to Washington by the chapter in Washington
- S Do you still have the copy of the genealogy that Eva Scott did?
- T Yes
- S She traced your family back to--were they from Wales or were they from England?
- S England Some of them go back farther than that In France, when the Catholics and the Protestants were fighting in France, they left They went up into England, and then came from England. Some of them went into Germany, others to this country. I also belonged to the one that came from France
- S I know what you mean, but I cannot think of the name, either
- T I have the little cross that I got when I belonged to that But then it was just running too much money for me to belong to all of those things, and I could not go out I could not go to those at all, because most of their doings were held in Philadelphia That was their headquarters. Hattie continued, and I think just before she passed away that she had sent Anna and Joy that one from France, when they first came over from France, because the Protestants were fighting terribly at that time The Protestants just packed up and left, and came over to England They went from England into Germany A lot of them went into Germany. They are nice to belong to, though, those historical things But, as I say, it costs money and I just did not have to money to do it
- S Now, everything seems to cost money to do anything
- T It does, it does You have to be able to pay the dues I had to raise the dues on the D.A.R here the other time, and another twenty-some dollars that I had to pay this last year It is something, it really is [It] put an awful dent in my savings
- S Is there anything else that you can think of that you would like to talk about I have one question that I wanted to ask you Was it difficult for you when you were working when you were younger? I know you enjoyed working, but what

were the attitudes of people toward having you work, or toward your working? What about your friends and people you knew?

T Well, they did not say too much, or have too much of an attitude toward it because everybody was working at that time. See, it was during the anniversary of Pearl Harbor, up into that time from that time the war was on. They had to work. Like this woman next door, right here, had to work in the mill. She was working down in the mill here. I said to George one day, "You know, you ought to take me down to the mill." He said, "What for?" I said, "To get me a job down there." And he said, "You do not want it." A friend of mine in Boardman was working as a crane operator. They would get a job anywhere they could work, to make a nickel, because money was scarce at that time.

S. Yes, I know it was.

T You just had to grab a job wherever you could get it. But he would not allow me to do it. He said, "No, Phoebe, there are people that need it worse than we do. Let them go ahead and work in the mills." They did not have any resentment of anything or anyway about you working. They thought it was nice that you did it.

S What about earlier than that, when you were working for the railroad or when you were working for Abrahms. Did most of your friends work, or did most of them stay home?

T Most of my friends were working. They were most all working. They would get married and then go to work right away. So they did not stay at home too much, they were out working someplace or other. That is why it was hard to have anybody over because they were out working and had to get home and get to bed, and get some sleep and all. That is why I thought I was pretty lucky that I could fall into the railroad job as easily as I did. I sort of felt, too, way back in my mind here, I am taking a job away from somebody else that may need it worse than I do. But the girls were going out then and getting jobs right up with the men, they did not care.

S. Did they pay men more, or were the men paid the same as you were paid?

T No, they were paid more than what we were.

S How did you feel about that?

T Well, I figured that they are the breadwinners of the family, and they are the ones that should make the most money, more money than what I did. To me, it did not seem so bad because I had a place that I could always get a piece of bread.

and butter if I was hungry, and that was over at Hattie's, over at home. I never felt as though I had been underpaid in any of it, although I would have liked to have had been paid a little bit more

But at that time also, if you remember, the banks were closing I know that I had money in the Struthers Bank, and I did not know they were going to close My mama's cousin out here, the Grays, had a construction business So I was tipped off, a friend of mine tipped me off and said, "Phoebe, if you have got any money in the Struthers bank, get it out because the banks are going to close " And I thought, "Oh, they are just kidding " Then more and more people told about it There was a girl that died down here, Lillian Hade, bless her soul, who told me, too "Phoebe, get your money out of the bank, draw it out " I said, "I do not know what to do with it " She said, "Just keep it at home, but take it out because the backs are going to close " So I called up Mama's cousin and told her They were down in West Virginia doing a job, and I said, "Aunt Em, tell Uncle Frank to get his money, if he has got any in the bank up there, to get it out " She said, "Why?" I said, "Well, I was tipped off the banks are going to close, and I was tipped off to get mine out " She said, "I will tell Frank." So she told him when he called that night, and he said, "Somebody's just bringing up a story, because the banks will not close " I said, "Do not pay any attention to him Why do you not go down and take the money out of the bank Then when the banks are okay, you can put it in again." She did not do it She said, "Oh, I hate to do that " She would not do it and they lost pretty near everything they had. They just had the house left, and a big contracting business I had gone up to the bank and drew mine out I knew the fellow at the bank there, and he said, "Are you getting smart, too, Phoebe?" I said, "Yes " He said, "Well, I am glad you are doing it Take it out and wait until things ease out a little bit " So everybody lost everything in the bank It is like the stock market craze now. They lost the stuff in the banks, and they had to do something So they all went out to work. The men and women both had to work That is where it put a squeeze on the work, because then, when they all came out like that, there were not many jobs to be had You had to take whatever you could get

S. Yes

T It made it bad, but thank heavens I got through that. I did not have too much. I had a couple of hundred dollars in there, that is all I had, but at least I saved it Then when the banks got back doing business again, I put it back in the bank But of course, I lost that interest on it. That is why you take nay job you could get, everybody was out grabbing jobs

S. It was really a difficult time

T. It was It was terrible It was really terrible

S. Does it seem like we are going to go through the same thing now?

T I do not know I am a little afraid I do not know what to think

S What do you think about the stock market now?

T The way it is acting now, I am just a little bit leery, and I am going to have my money where I can sort of grab it in a hurry if I have to get it out, because I am just a little bit afraid of it. We do not know what the next President is going to be, or who he is going to be I am just a little bit afraid That is why it is so hard What little bit I have saved up, I had to spend it out for doctor bills. That is the part that hurt me The doctor would get a friend and he would say, "I have got a case here, maybe you could get something out of it " The first thing, you know, they are bringing their friends in to check you over I know they brought doctors in at Clingan's that I did not know anything about One doctor gave a terrific bill, a terrible bill So I do not know what I am going to do, or how I am going to get that paid

S. Does Medicare pay for any part of it

T Part of it, yes, but not all of it That is what we are doing to Medicare We are draining Medicare. That is the part that hurts me and worries me, is Medicare, what is going to happen to that?

S The amount that they pay keeps going down, and the amount you have to pay keeps going up. Do you have supplemental insurance that helps you cover that?

T Well, I have a percentage An insurance man came down through the park when we were down in Florida I was ironing this day, and he said, "Phoebe, do you have any insurance?" I said, "No, I do not have any insurance " George said, "Oh, you do not need any " And I said, "Maybe I do " He talked me into taking this policy out, so I took it out, and after he had gone, George said, "I do not think you need that insurance, Phoebe." I said, "Well, maybe I do, because I do not have any medical insurance, George " I said, "If I get sick, then what?" He said, "Well, cancel it" so I got in tough with the man when he came in again and I canceled it He said, "I think you are foolish, Phoebe, to cancel it " I said, "I know I am, but George does not want me to have it " George said, "Wait until we get home and w will see about this insurance, if it is any good or anything, and if it is, then we can take it again, or have them renew it "

So when we came home, he looked in the telephone book -- the minute he got out of the car, he ran to grab the telephone book -- to look that insurance up. He saw that insurance name there and he said, "Yes, there is one here in town " I said, "Call him and see what he says " He called him and it was Basil

Prater who had it. He came out that day, George told him what had happened and all, and he said, "It is a good policy, it is a good company." And I said, "Well, I am going to take it, George." Well, then he did not have any insurance. So I said to Basil, "Is there any way we can get him to sign a paper for an insurance policy? He does not have any insurance, he feels he has no use for them and he is not going to take it." Basil said, "Well, do not worry, we will think of something." So, he said, "Here, George, sign this paper here." George said, "What is that for?" And he said, "It is just a thing to tell them that I had come and talked to you and all, that I had answered your call." So George signed it, and thank heavens he did, because when he went into the hospital, we had that insurance.

S You would have really been in a lot of trouble without it

T Hattie never would have any insurance either. So one day, Basil was here and I said, "Basil, Hattie does not have any insurance. Have you got a good policy?" He said, "Well, Phoebe, that policy that you have is a very good policy." Why? "I will pay for her first year," I said. "If you write out the policy." So he wrote out the policy, and I paid for Hattie the first year, which helped her a lot. When Clean called up Basil, one day, and said, "Where is Hattie's life insurance policy?" He said, "She never had one." She said, "Well, she has insurance with your company." Basil said, "Well, Phoebe took that out and paid for her first year. That was a medical policy." So she said, "Well, I did not know it." And he said, "She does not have any life insurance that I know of." So, I said, "Basil, if Hattie does not take it, we should continue to pay for that policy." He said, "Whatever you want to do." I said, "If I have to, I will pay another year." But she said she would pay it that year, so then she paid it the year before she died. That is all the insurance she had. She had no life insurance at all, which she could have taken out and had some little protection. I did not say anything more, but after that, I felt that I should have insurance, regardless. So, then I told him, "Make me out another policy, I need insurance." But honest to heavens, that insurance will be eaten up, too. And they do not pay for a lot of things. You have to watch what they are going to pay for. So, I do not know. It is just terrible. I am afraid that we are draining on Medicare too much.

Like Mary Ellsworth talked to me, and said that she had to have her ears cleaned out. She went to the doctor, and said to the girl, "I want to pay the bill." The girl said, "No, we will send it to Medicare." Well, Medicare came back and told Mary how much that they had paid, and what bill they had sent in and said they had done was never done. She got mad. So, Basil called up Medicare in Columbus. Anything he wants to know, he will call them right there and ask them, and then they will tell him. Then Mary had to go to the doctor again and she said that she wanted to pay the bill. The girl said, "No." And she said, "Well, I am paying it. You are not sending it into Medicare. I am paying my bill." And

Mary said she did not want her to give her a bill at all, did not want her to pay it. See, she wanted to send it into Medicare because they can up the price and get a lot. It is just like Hattie having her toenails cut. The thing that went into Medicare was that she had surgery, just to cut her toenails. So they wrote back and wanted to know what the surgery was. Basil said there was no surgery, all they did was cut her toenails. So, if we keep on draining Medicare, there is nothing there in Washington for us to fall back on. And that is what is worrying me, what they are going to do with Medicare.

S I think it is a worry to everybody, what is going to happen to Medicare and Social Security funds and everything.

T Yes, our social Security will be gone and all. It is really something. They just do not give a hoot.

S It is a constant worry to everybody, I think.

T Yes.

S When you started out working, did you ever feel like there was any sexual discrimination against you because you were a woman, or anything of that sort?

T: No, there did not seem to be. I never had any fear of that in any way.

S Any kind of harassment of any sort?

T No.

S Nobody chased you around the desk?

T In the railroad offices it was girls all downstairs, and the bosses upstairs were men, who had their offices upstairs. Then next door to us, in the same building but partitioned off, was our dispatcher. He would call up -- there is a little slot in the side of the wall that he would pull open, and say, "Here come train number so-and-so. You will get your bona cards for that in the morning." The girls and us never had any arrangement or anything.

S And there was not anything when you were at Strouss, either?

T No.

S What did you enjoy doing the most? Which of the jobs you had?

T I do not know I was thinking about that the other day, and I thought the most interesting job I ever had was on the railroad As I said, the cars come in, and it was interesting to know where they came from, what was in them, and all of that Now, in Strouss, it was interesting because you got to meet a lot of people. You got to meet the public, and I enjoyed that And then I liked the sewing All three of them, I liked all three of them, and I do not know which one I would pick out

S You like something about each one?

T Yes, because with the railroad, I had the pass where I could go to Cleveland or Pittsburgh every weekend. I would go maybe an hour early in the morning, and see if there were any cards that came in, or anything that I had to post in the books before I would leave I would get everything ready and I would leave there and run up to Youngstown, to New York Central Station there. The bus or somebody would meet me -- maybe Hattie and George were coming through early, and they would take me up, or somebody would be going up north -- that could take us We would go up to the bus station, wait until a train came in, and we could get on a train right away and go. I do not know I enjoyed all three of them But I did like to be able to go to Pittsburgh and get that train right in I would wait in Pittsburgh until the last train came out. Then if the conductor was on the train and he knew I was going to be on and they had an extra compartment that nobody used, I could go in there, lie down and go to sleep, then they would come and knock on the door when it came through Lowellville Well, I had to get up then, when it came through Lowellville, and come out in the main part of the coach, because it would not be long between Lowellville and the New York Central where I would get off Dad would be there to meet me at night I certainly do love the trains

S A little bit of Wanderlust?

T. Yes

S Which of the jobs do you think that you liked the best?

T. Well, I do not know It is hard to say, I liked all three of them But I do, I still do love the railroads, and I still say that there is nothing nicer If I had anybody or any children, I would try to see if there was a job someplace for them to be on the railroads because it is a fascinating thing. It is educational, too Then when I worked for the Wexler Brothers, I enjoyed that because somebody would come in and want a dress in a hurry, or something, we would fix it up for them and he would give me the money and send me out on a bus to deliver it Because the store closed and there was no store delivery, and many times I have taken stuff up I took a dress up to his wife -- she lived in an apartment on Oak Hill Avenue

-- who would make me steak for lunch. She had cake and coffee, and we had the nicest visit. That way, you get to meet people, it is the contact with the public, that really makes life, I think.

S Did you ever meet the Abrahms themselves?

T Yes. The Abraham brothers came through. My sister had been introduced to them during their lodge work. They were from Davenport, Iowa, and had a big store out there. They wanted to know if there was anything that was happening in the store that they could improve. I said, "When one of the salesmen would go in the dressing room when the women were changing clothes. I put a stop to that in a hurry." I said, "I could not see that." They were so thankful for that, they said, "Phoebe, we want you to stay with us for as long as you want to."

S How would the women react when he would try to go into the dressing room?

T They were very, very perturbed about it. They would say, "Gee, I am afraid to go in there for fear he will come in." And I said, "Well, I will stand here at the door and wave him off. He will not get in there as long as you are in there, I will guarantee you that." I would stand there, and he would come out and say, "What are you standing here for?" I would say, "Because there is somebody in the dressing room, you are not going to get in there." It is a wonder he did not fire me, I thought maybe he would, but I guess the Abraham brothers must have told him not to dare fire me, because they told me that I could stay as long as I wanted to stay. The women appreciate me doing that for them. There is not anything more embarrassing than going into a dressing room and having a man pop in when you are half undressed.

I stayed with them as long as I wanted to, and when they had this job on this railroad, I grabbed that right away. So that was the end of that. But to segregate one of the three, whichever one I would want out of the three, I could not tell you which one. But I still say that my heart is with the railroad people.

S You have had an interesting life, very interesting.

T It was wonderful, just wonderful. I had a lot of fun traveling from Youngstown to Pittsburgh. I would meet a lot of people -- what they call dead heads would be some of the women like me, riding on the pass. They would call us dead heads. The conductor would say, "We are going to stop down here at Beaver Falls and get a bunch of dead heads on." So we would meet with those women and talk about the railroad because they were interested, their husbands were working for the railroad. There was never a dull moment, you never needed anything for conversation because it was right there in front of you. You could converse all you wanted to about the railroad. Of course, I liked my sewing, I made part of



my living with the sewing So I do not know which. I think I had a full life in my three jobs that I really enjoyed: the railroad, the sewing, and working in Strouss, being among the china I really did love the china and the household goods that were in there. I really enjoyed that Also, meeting the people was another thing to me, meeting the public People were nice to you, you met a lot of friends that you never knew that you had until you get out working like that, being among the people

S I would like to thank you very much for talking to me.

End of Interview