

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

YSU History Project

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O.H. 2166

Sherry Seachrist

Interviewed

by

Kathy Richter

on

March 11, 2004

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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INTERVIEWEE: SHERRY SEACHRIST

INTERVIEWER: Kathy Richter

SUBJECT: Time at YSU

DATE: March 11, 2004

R: This is an interview with Sherry Seachrist for the Youngstown State University Oral History, YSU History Project by Kathy Richter at Mrs. Seachrist's home on Riffle Road near Rogers, Ohio on March 11, 2004 at 7:20 PM.

R: Sherry, where were you born?

S: Salem Community Hospital in Columbiana County.

R: What date?

S: March 22, 1950.

R: Where did you grow up?

S: In Elkton. I lived outside of Columbiana until I was five, and then my family moved to Elkton and I was raised there until I got married and moved down here to Rogers.

R: What were your parent's names?

S: My dad's name was Myron McCamon. My mother's name was Dorothy McCamon.

R: How do you spell McCamon?

S: McCamon.

R: What were their educational backgrounds?

S: My dad did not graduate from high school and my mother was a registered nurse.

R: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

S: One brother, and one sister.

R: Are they older or younger?

S: Both are younger. I'm the oldest.

R: Did they go onto college after high school?

S: Both of them.

R: Where did they go?

S: My brother went to Mount Union. My sister went to Kent, basically. She'd gone to several small colleges like Lakeland and Cleveland, but she finished at Kent.

R: Where did you go to elementary school?

S: I went to Elkton Elementary School.

R: And high school?

S: Beaver Local.

R: Beaver Local?

S: Yes.

R: When you were in elementary school, do you remember any exceptional teachers that you really liked?

S: Yes. I had the same teacher in 3rd grade and 4th grade because she moved from one grade level to another, and I had her for both years. Her name was Nellie Noel and I live in her house right now.

R: Oh, that's interesting.

S: She was a very nice older lady.

R: And any teachers that you remember not liking?

S: No, because I liked school. There were no teachers that I would say that I didn't like in my whole 12 years of school experience.

R: Well, when you got to high school, what teachers stand out in your mind?

S: The toughest ones, because I remember them the most because I learned the most.

R: What classes did you excel in in high school?

S: Anything that had to do with writing, because I like to write, any language, arts type class.

R: Growing up, what was the area, or the neighborhood around your house like?

S: Completely rural. My dad was a farmer. I lived in farm country.

R: And you had to take the bus to school?

S: Yes.

R: Was it a long bus ride?

S: It was a long bus ride and it was a long walk to the bus stop.

R: You said you had a long bus ride to school?

S: Yes, and a long walk to get to the bus. Our driveway was a quarter of a mile.

R: So in the wintertime, did you have to walk out, or were your parents kind enough to give you a drive?

S: No, we walked out all the time.

R: All the time. What is your ethnic background?

S: Scotch, Irish, and Welsh.

R: When you were in high school, did your parents influence your future educational plans at all? Did they encourage you to go to college, or was that your idea?

S: Well, I think it was just starting to be an idea that caught on more. People didn't go to college, as a rule, a whole lot. But it was starting to come to that time where most people were starting to go to college. But I'm sure, probably only a third of my graduating class, that would be just a guess, had plans for college. But as for my parents, we really didn't

have the money, but they knew I wanted to do that, and so they helped me find a way to go to school.

R: How did you pay for school?

S: Well, we had friends that lived in Struthers, and so I lived with them during the week and then went home on the weekends. My parents paid them a small amount for room and board for me to live there. Then I took the bus, I walked to the end of their street in Struthers, and took the bus, and went downtown and got off at Federal Street and walked up to the university. We paid for it just one quarter at a time. I never borrowed any money or anything like that to do it, but I worked during the summers and then paid what I could pay and they paid what they could pay.

R: Did you ever apply for any scholarships?

S: No, that was just not something our guidance counselor did, and when tuition was \$150, that just wasn't something that you did very much back then.

R: What did you do in the summer? What kind of work did you do to save for college?

S: I worked for D.W. Dickey and Son and that's because my uncle owned it and I did all sorts of things. I worked in their office in a secretarial position part of the time, but since I was his niece, I also got put outside to weigh coal trucks and just any place that he had a position. That's what I did.

R: That's interesting.

S: I dispatched their concrete trucks for a while and that was a lot of fun, because men did not like to take orders from a teenage girl. But that's what I did, anything that he wanted me to do for those summers.

R: So what kind of hours did you put in on that type of work?

S: Well, it was six days a week, because you worked Saturday morning too, but I didn't work more than eight hours a day basically.

R: When you worked in the summer, did you have a car at your disposal?

S: I didn't own it. I had a car that my parents owned that I used.

R: When you lived in Struthers, do you remember where you lived in Struthers, what street it was?

S: On Runge Boulevard. We walked from there over to Lake Hamilton to get the bus everyday.

R: When you were in high school, did you participate in any organizations or any sports?

S: Not sports, but lots of organizations.

R: Do you remember which ones?

S: I was in the band for one thing, most of the time. I think I stopped that somewhere along the middle of my junior year. I was in Pep Club and Future Teachers and Latin Club, and whatever things like that. It's hard to remember after this many years. There weren't sports for girls then.

R: That's true.

S: There weren't sports for girls.

R: So when you graduated from high school and you attended YSU, why did you pick YSU?

S: I picked YSU because of the money. It was very feasible to go there and because of the location. Like I said, we had friends that lived close enough that I could stay with them, because there was no way that I could have ever gone and stayed in a dorm and afforded to do that.

R: When you attended YSU, it had already changed officially to Youngstown State University hadn't it?

S: Yes.

R: What was your major?

S: Elementary Education.

R: Did you pick that major as soon as you entered school or did you take some classes first to decide what you wanted to do?

S: I chose it first but it really didn't matter a whole lot because there were about two years of general things you had to take anyways and you weren't wasting any time.

R: When you were at YSU, a majority of the students at that time were commuter students.

S: Yes.

R: Were there a lot of students that also went on the bus with you?

S: No.

R: When you got on the bus were there a lot?

S: No. I'm sure there were other ones who bussed in, but a lot of people had cars.

R: And the parking situation since you didn't drive?

S: It was dreadful.

R: It was dreadful?

S: I did drive my senior year, because my senior year I stayed at home and I did my student teaching and so I stayed at home and parked, again, almost down on Federal Street and walked up over the hill. If I remember right, you could reserve your space for like a week at a time, and so you would buy something like a pass so you could be there, but it was just a privately owned small lot. There was nothing else, except street parking.

R: When you registered at YSU, do you remember the registration process? How you actually physically registered?

S: Well, it was with paper and pencil. I think the first couple of years it was at Jones Hall, if I remember right. You always had to go see your advisor first because you had a catalogue that you entered with and that is what stayed with you until you graduated. You would go see your advisor and they would tell you basically what to take each quarter. At that time, it was quarters. Then when you went to this registration process, you saw what classes were available and they just marked them off as they were taken so you really wanted to get there and get in this class that you wanted because you wanted to coordinate your times and get your hours. Your advisor didn't want you taking more than 18 hours unless you had special permission and there were certain things that had pre-requisites and certain things that would only be scheduled at certain times, so it was kind of a game to get what you wanted and get it filled in. Then I think that later on, by the end of the time that I was there, that we went to Kilcawley to register, and again, it was the paper process, and it took a long time of standing in line and really, you had to know what you were doing on your own pretty well to register because there was not any computer help and you had to figure it out yourself, when you could work in your times, and how you were going to work it out, but you had your overall guidelines still from your counselor, or your advisor.

R: In registration, do you remember sitting in a room, either Jones or Kilcawley, and having to look at a big black board with all the class course codes on them and writing down the ones you wanted?

S: Yes.

R: And then if you got in line, and by the time you got up to the person you had to talk to...

S: It may be closed, yes.

R: It may be closed and you had to go back around and do the whole thing all over again?

S: Revamp it, yes.

R: Place yourself in front of Jones Hall, when you were say a freshman, and take a walking tour around the campus and tell me what buildings you remember were there.

S: Well, I remember that the education building was way up on Elm Street, the School of Education. We went down to Rayen too, which was down south of Jones Hall for education classes. I think the gym was even in the School of Education, because that's where I think I remember taking my physical education classes. But then I took tennis one time and you had to drive out to Volney Rodgers. There weren't all that many buildings when you were in education that you went to to take your classes. Now for science, there was another building that you would go to for science classes and another one for your math classes. But it was a lot of big open areas, because there was a lot of walking in between. As I remember, there was at least 10 to 15 minutes between classes, because that's what it took, especially if you were going down to Rayen and up to Elm Street, it was a long walk.

R: Maag Library wasn't there then.

S: There was a library.

R: There was Tod Hall I think.

S: That could be. It's hard to remember names, but there was not the new library. I've been to it and it was not there.

R: Do you remember where the rock was?

S: Yes. It was by Jones Hall. No, it was by Kilcawley. There was a rock by Jones Hall with a placard on it.

R: Yes there is.

S: But "the rock" was by Kilcawley. Kilcawley was there and that was one of the only places for men to live.

R: When you were on campus all day, where did you eat lunch, or did you take lunch with you?

S: No, I usually ate there. Sometimes I would walk downtown to the basement of McKelvey's because I liked their malts, and sometimes there was a Burger King on down the street from the bookstore that you could get like a sandwich and a drink for less than a

dollar, and when you were eating there everyday, you had to consider that. I suppose I did take food with me sometimes, but as a rule, I think I ate there, because I wasn't there all day, everyday, so it was just a process of when you wanted to eat there.

R: Where was the bookstore located when you were there?

S: On the same street as Jones Hall, kind of catty-corner from it down the street, what is the name of that street?

R: Lincoln Avenue.

S: Lincoln Avenue. It was small. There was another one up behind the school of education somewhere, but it was kind of tacky, and I remember that I really didn't like to go there. I felt safer in the one down by Jones Hall.

R: Describe your typical day on campus.

S: Well, I would get up in Struthers and get everything organized to catch the bus and get on the bus and ride for however long it took to get downtown. Then when I got downtown, get off at East Federal Street and then start up the hill, and I tried always to schedule my classes as close together as I could so that when I was finished, I could go back home rather than putting in any time in between. If I did have time in between then I would just go to the library because there wasn't much else to do then, which was probably a good thing. But you kept moving. You would have a class and have like a 10 or 15 minute break to walk to the next class and that's what you did. And then maybe you would have a day that you didn't go at all if you were lucky enough to get things like Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and then you wouldn't go. But I never went on the weekend. I always went home on the weekend.

R: And you didn't take any night classes?

S: No. I never took a night class.

R: When you did your student teaching, you didn't have to take any classes while you were doing your student teaching?

S: No, but you did have to go on campus as I remember. Your advisor would come to you part of the time, but I think there were a couple of times in a quarter that you would have to go on campus to a class, which had to do with your student teaching. But no, you didn't take any other classes then.

R: Did you participate in any clubs or activities on campus?

S: No, because I was a commuter. I didn't even know many people on campus truthfully. I got to know some people that were in education, that maybe lived up around there, but

there was no one else from my high school that went except a couple of guys which came and went. So, no, I was not in any organizations.

R: Do you remember The Jambar, the student newspaper?

S: Yes, I remember seeing it.

R: While you were there, what were the most important issues the students were talking about? The war?

S: The war in Vietnam, of course.

R: Tuition, cost of books, do you remember anything like that?

S: No, I can't say that I do, because I didn't read it that much. You either had to buy one, or you would find one laying around that someone had bought and read and left somewhere. I don't remember too much. I think if I remember, a lot of it was from the fraternities and sororities too. There was a lot of Greek news in the paper and things like that did not interest me.

R: Do you remember if the university had a yearbook?

S: Yes, because my picture was in it when I was a senior.

R: Did you buy one?

S: Yes.

R: Do you still have it?

S: Oh, yes. Don't ask me to put my fingers on it. I do have one.

R: Do you still have your diploma?

S: Yes, and I do know where it is. At the time I don't think they issued those nice little ones that you can carry in your wallet like they do now. YSU doesn't have that?

R: No.

S: A lot of the high schools do, and I have one from my Master's from that college, but I would like to have one from YSU.

R: No, because I did not get one last summer when I graduated. I just got the big diploma.

S: My son has one from Mount Union. They are a nice thing to have.

R: Do you remember any outstanding instructors when you were at YSU that were memorable?

S: Of course, but now can I tell you their names 32 years later? No.

R: Do you know what courses?

S: Yes. Western Civilization, because I didn't like it at all, but I had a fabulous teacher who really made it interesting, an older gentleman and I wish I could remember his name, but I do not. He just opened my eyes to so many things that I had never thought about before and he was really interesting and really, it was a good class. It wasn't my interest to begin with, and I didn't do well as far as grades went, but I did really enjoy it.

R: What classes didn't you enjoy?

S: There's a name that I remember with that, but I won't tell you that one. Methods classes, some of the methods classes we had to take in education because those people didn't know reality. We were observing and student teaching and they did not know what was going on.

R: When you were attending YSU, were you impressed at all with student diversity? Did you notice international students, minority students?

S: Yes, and it was a big shock to me, who had gone 12 years to a school with no minorities at all, and no international people or anything like that, so it was quite an education for me.

R: Were there more male students in the classes than women students?

S: Well, not in education. Now in your general classes, that might be true, but in your education classes, a lot of them were women I would say.

R: So when you were going through the Beaver Local School System, it was just pretty much a country school?

S: Yes, everybody was just like me.

R: When you got your diploma when you graduated, did you get a job right away?

S: Yes.

R: Where did you work?

S: At Beaver Local where I had graduated from.

R: What did you teach?

S: Well, the first year that I worked, I taught remedial reading, because at that time, that's what they were using pretty much for an entry-level position. It was something that they were never sure if they were going to have the program until right before school started, if they got money, Title One money to fund it. So, that I didn't know. In fact, I didn't start until nine days after school started. That I didn't know that I had the job, but I did get a job the very year I graduated.

R: Do you remember what your starting salary was?

S: \$6,400 I think, something like that.

R: How many years did you teach?

S: The first time I taught four years until my children were born.

R: When did you get married?

S: In 1974.

R: And then you did not teach while you were raising your children?

S: No.

R: And then when did you go back to teaching?

S: I was home for 13 years with my children and then I substituted for seven until I went back full time. I didn't start substituting until both of them were in middle school.

R: And what class do you teach now?

S: I teach 3rd grade.

R: Have you gone on for any postgraduate work?

S: Yes, I have a master's.

R: Where did you get that?

S: Through Marygrove College. It's a distance-learning program from Detroit, Michigan.

R: Were you told by the school district that you had to get your Master's degree, or did you decide you just needed it?

S: No, I decided that I needed it. I wanted it for my own security because I think that before I retire, I'm probably going to need to have it. Also since I'm now the

breadwinner, I need to make as much as I can make while I'm going, so my master's helps with that.

R: How many children do you have?

S: Two.

R: What are their names?

S: Mason and Kurt.

R: Has Mason attended college?

S: Yes. Mason is a teacher now and also has a Master's degree.

R: Did both of them graduate from Beaver Local?

S: Yes.

R: What's Kurt doing now?

S: Kurt works for the Village of Columbiana.

R: Anything else that you would like to add?

S: I think YSU gave me a quality education and I think it was a very good deal for the money. Since I sometimes go back, we take our 3rd graders on a field trip to the planetarium usually every year, and I'm just so impressed with how it's grown and how modern it is. It's so impressive compared to when I used to go there.

R: You said you'd been in the new library, Maag Library. Do you go in there to use it at all?

S: I basically was just in there to look around. No, I do not use it. I don't have a card.

R: Of the students that you have taught, in elementary school, do you know if many of them have gone on to college and gone on to YSU?

S: Yes, a lot of Rogers kids do go to YSU because they can commute from home. My cousin's daughters are going there right now and they were valedictorians of their class.