

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Life on the East Side of Youngstown in the 1930s-1960s

Personal Experience

O.H. 1273

MARION C. STEADMAN

Interviewed

by

Ronald W. Stoops

on

July 16, 1989

MARION STEADMAN

Marion was born on August 2, 1911, in Youngstown, Ohio. She was one of five children of John and Mary. Marion's mother was the former Mary A. Coyne. Miss Steadman spent most of her life living on Bruce Street at the family home.

Miss Steadman taught second grade at Immaculate Conception for 53 years, from 1929-1982. She does not feel that much has changed in education during that time. She taught the same subjects and material with many of the same strategies at the end of her career as she did at the beginning.

Miss Steadman remembered the difficult times during the 1930s and pointed out that she went long periods of time without getting paid. She said that this did not bother her, and she enjoyed those 53 years very much.

Marion went to Immaculate Conception, Ursuline High School and St. John College in Cleveland.

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The East Side of Youngstown during the 1930s-1960s

INTERVIEWEE: MARION C. STEADMAN

INTERVIEWER: Ronald W. Stoops

SUBJECT: Immaculate Conception from 1929-1982, family background, schooling, the Depression, teaching at Immaculate Conception

DATE: July 16, 1989

RS: This is an interview with Marion Steadman for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on Life on the East Side of Youngstown during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, by Ronald Stoops Jr., at 80 N. Raccoon Road #56, Austintown, Ohio, on July 16, 1989.

RS: Miss Steadman, would you like to begin by telling me a little bit about your family and about your background growing up?

MS: As small children, we lived on the corner of Arch and Lansing Avenue until I was 12 years old, when my father died. Then, we moved to Bruce Street, my mother, my brother, and my three sisters. We lived there for 62 years. I was the last of the family there. Others were either married or [had] died. Then, I sold the house and moved to an apartment in Austintown.

RS: How about your father, what did he do for a living?

MS: My father worked for the railroad but he was on his way to work one night in 1923 and he was held up, shot in the back, and died the next morning.

RS: Well, I'll be darn. So, you were raised by your mom?

MS: Yes. I don't know how she did it.

RS: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

MS: I have one brother and three sisters. My brother is dead and my three sisters are living. My mother also raised her brothers children after he died. At one time we had 13 in our house. I don't know how she did it through the Depression.

RS: Thirteen people? How did you earn a living with your father not around any longer?

MS: There again, we were kids, and my mother took care of everything. And I don't know how she did it. I really don't know how she managed through all of those years. In those days there was no such thing as aid for dependent children or anything like that.

RS: Social Security was not around yet?

MS: No.

RS: Do you remember your older sisters or your brother having to do jobs and chip in, in terms of helping financially?

MS: My older sister left high school after one year because she went to work to help. I did as soon as I could and so did my brother. The younger ones didn't do so much. They went to school and eventually got married. It was a hard life during the Depression, because the Depression came along during the early 1930s. That was a hard time for a lot of people. A lot of people had little work, and some people had no work and no pay.

RS: Can you tell me what it was like growing up on Bruce Street? Are there any memories that you have, good or bad?

MS: It was a good life. We had good neighbors. We used to spend a lot of time walking out to Lincoln Park for tennis and swimming, and ice skating, or stopping to see Counsel Rock, which was a monument. . . .

RS: Can you explain that monument? I am not familiar with it.

MS: It is a huge rock, and it is just at the entrance to Lincoln Park. It has a split in it which is supposed to have been caused by lightning when the Indian Chiefs were meeting there. It has been there for as long as I can remember. I don't remember how many years, but it has been real long. I think that it is on Lincoln Park Drive, the entrance.

RS: Anything else about growing up there or childhood experiences?

MS: We used to play tennis out on the street a lot. In those days there wasn't that much traffic. A lot of the good neighbors are still there, but the neighborhood has changed.

RS: Would you consider the East Side a close community?

MS: Yes, and I am an East-Sider at heart. I go over there every Sunday to church. I still belong there.

RS: And that is at Immaculate Conception?

MS: Right. And if you have ever noticed coming over the Oak Street Bridge, our church is on one side and our school is on the other. It has been referred to many times as the "Gateway to the East Side."

RS: Is that right?

MS: Even when they put the freeway, in I-680, it ends right at our church and school, so it is still the "Gateway to the East Side."

RS: You mentioned Lincoln Park. What kind of things do they have there? Do they have tennis courts?

MS: Yes.

RS: They had a swimming pool?

MS: At that time . . . I don't think that they have any swimming anymore. I am sure that they don't.

RS: Right.

MS: They may still have the tennis courts, but I don't know.

RS: At one point didn't they build a second pool at Lincoln Park?

MS: Yes, they did.

RS: Why did they build the second one? Can you tell me a little bit about it?

MS: I don't remember why. I just remember that they did.

RS: I was wondering if when they had two pools, say in the 1940s and the 1950s when segregation was still the law, if one pool was for blacks and one for whites?

MS: I don't think so. I think that we were altogether. I think that they closed the one when they built the other one, as I remember. It was quite the place at one time. They built a house, a meeting house for different groups, like the garden club.

RS: You mentioned that you had good neighbors. Can you give me any particular incidences where they really were helpful?

MS: Not necessarily, just good neighbors that were friendly. Not the kind that intrude, just good neighbors.

RS: I have heard from a couple of people that have mentioned that whenever somebody on the East Side had a problem there were other people that thought that the problem was theirs, too, and were always willing to lend a hand. Did you find it that way?

MS: Well, that was evident during the Depression because when so many people were out of work, the Federated Garden Clubs of Youngstown had an organization that gave seeds. My mother was in charge of that, and we would help her. It was a huge, huge job, but we gave seeds and tools to anybody who needed it so that they grow their own food, since they couldn't buy it. It lasted a long time and it was a lot of work. I remember when it was finished my brother wrote at the bottom of the sheet, "Finished, thank God." A man was going to pick it up, and the man wrote, "Amen, brother. Amen."

RS: Did most people have their own garden at that point?

MS: Yes, they did. They had to because they didn't have money to buy things. Also at that time, I don't remember what group it was but they made baby clothes and other clothing for people who couldn't afford to buy them. So, all of these good women in the neighborhood were down at Lincoln School. That is where they had the meetings and did their sewing.

RS: You went to Immaculate Elementary School.

MS: That's right.

RS: What years would that be and was Immaculate a new school at that time?

MS: No. I graduated in 1925 and we had the big fire there in June, 1928. It wasn't a new school. It was rebuilt, remodeled, and reopened.

RS: In 1930 it was rebuilt.

MS: I think that it was 1930.

RS: You went to Ursuline High School?

MS: Yes, that is right.

RS: Did many people from the East Side go to Ursuline?

MS: Yes, quite a few. Quite a few from my class went to Ursuline. But when I went there, it was a girl's school.

RS: Ursuline was an all girl's school?

MS: When I was a senior, the boys came in as freshman.

RS: What year would that have been?

MS: It was when the boys came in, 1929.

RS: Can you tell me a little bit about Ursuline while it was an all girl's school?

MS: I liked it better. We were a very close group. The classes weren't very large, which brought us a little closer together. I enjoyed Ursuline. We had a good education. The sisters were interested in everybody. They helped everybody to do what they could do best.

RS: Did you have mostly sisters?

MS: Yes, at that time we did have sisters and priests, priests for religion.

RS: Very few lay people? There were some but very few?

MS: Just the gym teacher and the sewing teacher.

RS: Just a couple of specialists and nobody else?

MS: Yes.

RS: You said that you liked it better. Why did you like it better? Did girls act differently when boys came around?

MS: Well, I didn't have that experience because I was leaving when the boys came in as freshmen. It was just a nice group, that's all. We had good friends there.

RS: What did you do after high school and how did you end up becoming a teacher? What do you suppose influenced you?

MS: Well, I had intended to be in nursing. In fact, I had my application in at St. Elizabeth's, but there was a

teacher shortage. They took five girls from our graduating class. We started out with a crash program and then we continued with the summer and Saturday classes both in the public and parochial schools.

RS: So, they took five of you and what did they do?

MS: We had a crash course to start us out and then. . . .

RS: It began right in the summer after Ursuline High School.

MS: Yes.

RS: How long did the course last?

MS: Well, we continued until we completed our education.

RS: At that time was it four years?

MS: Yes. Then of course about the same time in the 1940s, World War II broke out. So, we went from the Depression into World War II. My brother went to the service. Thank God he came back.

RS: What college did you go to? What was your training? You say that you got a crash course. Did this crash course take place at St. John's College?

MS: Yes.

RS: Can you tell me a little bit about the training and what training was like to become a teacher at that point?

MS: Well, it is the same thing that they do now.

RS: Much the same?

MS: Yes. We had teachers from St. John's at Ursuline High School for classes on Saturday's. In the summertime we went up there.

RS: What kind of a degree did you end up with or were you strictly elementary. . . .

MS: Elementary Education.

RS: Did you begin at Immaculate Conception right after your completion at St. John's College?

MS: No, after the crash course.

RS: That would have been in 1929?

MS: Yes, and I stayed there all of my 53 years.

RS: You taught at Immaculate Conception from 1929-1982, when you retired.

MS: Yes.

RS: What was it like at Immaculate Conception? What was the building like, the halls, and the classes in the 1930s?

MS: It was always a beautiful building. Everybody that came into it commented on the wide hallways. It was spacious.

RS: Did it have two or three floors?

MS: Well, a basement and two floors.

RS: Where did you teach?

MS: On the first floor. After the fire, it was changed a bit. There was an addition put on the back where the kindergarten is now.

RS: Did they restore it much the way it was after the fire?

MS: Yes. They changed it somewhat. There used to be a room and a coat room, they eliminated that and just put lockers in the classroom, which made the room bigger.

RS: How big of a school was it in the 1930s? [What was the] number of students?

MS: I would say around 350. It is down now.

RS: That was grades one through eight?

MS: Yes, and now it is kindergarten through eight.

RS: Did they have many lay people at that time or did they have a lot of sisters?

MS: Mostly sisters. I think we started out with three lay teachers.

RS: You and two others?

MS: Yes.

RS: Were those other two women or men?

MS: Women. Now, it is mostly lay teachers and not sisters.

RS: What order?

MS: The Ursuline Sisters.

RS: So, you taught on the first floor for the whole 53 years?

MS: Yes.

RS: In the same room?

MS: Well, mostly. I did a little moving around a couple of times, but I went back to the same spot for one reason or another, because at times, there were two classes of each grade. We did a little changing around for convenience.

RS: Most of the time there was just one class in each grade?

MS: Yes, there were a couple of years that we had two.

RS: What grade did you teach?

MS: Second grade.

RS: The entire time?

MS: Yes. I had the First Communion class. That was my big job for each year.

RS: Can you tell me a little bit about that or the training for that?

MS: Well, it was just regular religion classes. They looked forward to it. That is what they came to the second grade for.

RS: To make their First Communion?

MS: Yes.

RS: Okay, how about how things changed? Can you tell me anything about any changes that may have taken place suddenly? I know maybe something that might be more obvious from the time you started until now. How about from the 1930s to the 1940s to the 1950s? Any changes noticed in that particular time?

MS: Not really. We had good discipline in our school, and we had the parents backing us up. We got along well. When I retired I missed the people, not the work. It is different now because we have different races in there now and different nationalities. It used to be mostly Irish and Italian, but then we had a lot of people from Spanish speaking families.

RS: About when did that trend start? Was it fairly recent?

MS: It has been a good 15 years ago. We have a lot of black children in there now. I am still connected with the school. I go over when there is anything going on.

RS: So, in the 1930s and 1940s there were mostly Irish and Italian. Did you have to be Catholic to go?

MS: We took a few people, but most of them were Catholic and they belonged to the parish. Nowadays, it is different; anybody can go.

RS: You're right.

MS: Anybody can come, but they pay tuition.

RS: I would guess at Immaculate when you finished that there was a substantial percentage that were not Catholic?

MS: Right. A good half at least.

RS: About half now?

MS: Yes. We had a lot of black children. Nice families. Their parents wanted the best for them, and they were willing to pay the tuition.

RS: But back then through the 1950s and 1960s, they were predominately if not exclusively Catholic?

MS: Yes, but now they aren't.

RS: Did you feel like the education at Immaculate was special?

MS: I did.

RS: Why did you think that it was special?

MS: Well, the teachers were interested in the children, they were willing to give them extra time. Anybody who needed attention got it.

RS: What was tuition back then when you first started?

MS: I don't know what tuition was. That was handled completely through the office. We had nothing to do with it.

RS: How about your pay? Do you remember what your starting salary would have been?

MS: It was real low. During the Depression, the three of us, the three lay teachers, worked without salary, because there wasn't any money in the parish.

RS: You mean you worked and didn't get paid the entire year?

MS: Yes, it was at least one year. We got it eventually.

RS: You got it eventually, but you didn't get paid that year?

MS: No, we just went to work. There was nothing else to do anyway.

RS: But, that is how tough things were?

MS: Yes.

RS: Did you ever consider--during that time where you weren't getting paid or any other time--taking another job?

MS: No, I was willing to stay. There weren't any other jobs anyway.

RS: What might a typical day at Immaculate be? Again, I am trying to take you back to when you first started, shortly after you first started. Take me through a day.

MS: Well, we always started with prayer.

RS: About what time did school start? Was preschool going on?

MS: Well, it changed through the years, but it was between 8:30 and 8:45 usually for the opening of school. Then we would begin our classes, always with a religion class, until recess at 10:00, and then continue until noon for lunch. Then we would go from 1:00 to 3:00, and we had the lighter subjects.

RS: Such as?

MS: Handwriting, science, things that the kids could somewhat work at somewhere else.

RS: In the morning you would have things like?

MS: Math, reading, English.

RS: Spelling?

MS: Spelling was in the afternoon.

RS: Did it stay pretty much like that from the time you started?

MS: Yes, there wasn't much of a change.

RS: So, you don't really think of much of a change in terms of training the teachers we have now?

MS: No.

RS: Did you have to do a student teaching program?

MS: Yes, student teaching. Then we had student teachers come in while I was teaching.

RS: I was wondering if--of course, you worked with mostly sisters, so maybe you didn't experience this--I was wondering if training was different for some of the older teachers at that time that came through the normal school training or maybe didn't have the four year college degrees?

MS: No, I don't think so. St. John's College was formerly called Sister's College, and that is where most of the sisters had gone.

RS: So, school ended around 3 o'clock?

MS: Yes. We didn't have buses in the early days. But then, the parishioners began to move and school buses were important. We didn't have buses for awhile, but city buses transported students.

RS: What would the children do at recess?

MS: Well, if it was good weather they played out doors. [They were] always supervised. We never had to worry about taking care of them. It was always the same when it was good weather because they couldn't wait to get outside. If it was rainy or if it was cold, we would take them down to the auditorium for such things.

RS: If I ask some of your former students, how do you think they might describe you?

MS: It depends on the children. Some would be critical and some would be complimentary. I meet them everywhere, in supermarkets. I don't know them and they have to tell me who they are. I knew them as little kids, and now they have beards and mustaches.

RS: And children of their own.

MS: Yes. Some of them have grandchildren.

RS: How would they describe you?

MS: Oh, I don't know.

RS: Do you think that you were a tough teacher?

MS: I was, yes. I made them learn, but they did learn.

RS: Were you strict?

MS: I was strict.

RS: What might you do to a boy or a girl or someone who might be misbehaving? How did you discipline them?

MS: I separated them. We had the reading group chairs and that was just a good place to sit up there by yourself.

RS: If that didn't work?

MS: It usually did because, as I said, we were a well disciplined school. When the parents brought the new children, we discussed discipline.

RS: Did they expect that?

MS: Yes, and they cooperated with us. It was a good school. It still is a good school. It has changed but it's still a good school. During that time the young people had the Keyro and that was very famous on the East Side.

RS: The Keyro Club?

MS: Yes.

RS: What did that club do?

MS: It was social.

RS: This is just at Immaculate?

MS: Yes.

RS: What kind of things would they do?

MS: Oh, they had regular meetings, and they would put on plays and dances and things like that.

RS: Was it just for Immaculate students or was it just the upper grades?

MS: It wasn't children. It was for those out of the school. This was high school.

RS: Oh, these would be Alumni?

MS: Yes. But, it was part of the East Side for many years.

RS: Do you remember when it started?

MS: No.

RS: Early in your teaching career?

MS: Well, I would say in the 1930s.

RS: In the 1930s sometime? During the Depression?

MS: Yes, and at that same time the East Side Civic's had their baseball team. Do you remember the East Side Civic's.

RS: I certainly do remember the East Side Civic's.

MS: I was never a baseball fan, but I know that they won more than one championship.

RS: Yes, they did. They won quite a few. They are a tradition. You were going to choose nursing, but then you decided to go into education because of the shortage. What kinds of careers were open to women in the late 1920s or early 1930s? Were there limits or social kinds of pressures put on women to pursue certain careers?

MS: Well, I really didn't experience it so I don't know, but some of my friends went to work at the telephone company. A lot of them went into department stores, the ones that didn't go on to school. So, I really don't know too much about that.

RS: You didn't remember what your starting salary was?

MS: No. Well, I would rather not say. It was low.

RS: For history purposes and for the benefit of the generations to come?

MS: I would really not like to mention salaries.

RS: I can't get it out of you, huh?

MS: No.

RS: Were the boys and girls pretty evenly divided at Immaculate? The students?

MS: Yes.

RS: Did they enjoy the same kinds of activities or were there different restrictions or limits in terms of recess?

MS: The same thing. Most of the boys would play by themselves, and the girls would play by themselves.

RS: Jump rope or hopscotch?

MS: Yes, they played jacks, too. Usually there would be some balls and mitts, too.

RS: How about failing students, did you ever in 53 years? I am sure that there must have been some that you had to hold back.

MS: Yes, not many. Never more than two. Usually the ones that were held back did very well the next year. They were maybe immature or just needed a little extra boost, but we always discussed it with the parents, and the children knew. Of course, you could tell from their report cards what they were doing. We had no difficulties about failing children.

RS: Was it easier or more difficult to hold them back when you started as compared to when you retired?

MS: No, I don't see that there was that much change because we had cooperative parents, and that is the whole thing.

RS: Okay. How about the size of your classrooms?

MS: Well, the number of students. They were very large at times. I often had 50.

RS: Fifty?

MS: Yes, in the beginning, but that gradually was regulated.

RS: How did you manage to deal with 50 second graders?

MS: At that time it didn't seem like a chore. Everybody had large classes. Now a days the teachers would faint and say that they couldn't do it, but we did it.

RS: Do you think that it was a big advantage or a big improvement to limit the size of the classes?

MS: Well, the children could have more individual attention, but I really don't think that they suffered from having that many in the class. They helped one another.

RS: Did your teaching strategies change much?

MS: Not really. We worked in groups, like the reading groups. We had three. So, we took the slow ones, the medium ones, and the bright ones and worked at their level.

RS: You did that even from the beginning?

MS: Yes.

RS: Okay, how about as a teacher, you taught in the Youngstown Diocese and there are codes of ethics and moral obligations and responsibilities. Were there certain limits on what a lay teacher could do or were they more stringent when you started?

MS: Well, we worked right along with the nuns.

RS: How about in terms of your social life and after school life, did you feel that it was monitored closely?

MS: No. I didn't have any restrictions. We lived our own lives. We came to school, did our job, and went back home.

RS: For example, would it be okay to go up the street to the Royal Oaks Tavern after school?

MS: We never did that, not because we were told not to, we just never did it. I still don't go to beer gardens.

RS: Do you suppose that if you did, the principal and nuns might have something to say?

MS: Well, in those early days women didn't do that. So, maybe the parents might have objected. I don't know.

RS: How about courting or dating with guys or men?

MS: No restrictions.

RS: How about in terms of dress?

MS: No, we never had a dress code either.

RS: Do you remember when the first male lay teacher came to Immaculate?

MS: Oh, it wasn't for many, many years. It was, I think, in the 1970s. Then I can only recall one.

RS: So, you can only recall one male teacher at Immaculate during all of those years?

MS: Yes.

RS: Why do you suppose that was?

MS: I just think that men didn't consider it at that time a profession.

RS: It was mostly left for women?

MS: Yes.

RS: How about the kids, how would you describe the kids?

MS: I loved the kids. The kids were nice. They came from good homes and they were well trained. They were just good kids.

RS: Easy to get along with?

MS: Yes. We didn't have any major problems.

RS: Was Nick Johnson affiliated with Immaculate?

MS: No.

RS: He helped out at. . . .

MS: St. Columba. I have heard all about him but I have never met him. He was a great man.

RS: Right. Any particular incident or events that stand out in your mind during those 50 years of teaching? Some great experiences?

MS: On my 40th anniversary they had a big celebration for me. That was an experience. They had the auditorium filled. Some of my former students who were City Officials came back. We had a good time.

RS: I will bet that that was special.

MS: Yes.

RS: Was there ever a point during those years that you really thought that you had enough?

MS: No, I didn't consider leaving. It was just my life.

RS: How many hours do you suppose that you put in a week during the school year? What time would you get to school in the morning?

MS: Well, we were always expected to be there by 45 minutes to one hour before class, and we would always stay at least a half hour afterwards. Sometimes we would have

parent-teacher conferences, and there was always plenty of work to do and papers to correct and such things.

RS: Did you do most of that at home?

MS: Yes, I did. I took a couple of hours of work home with me.

RS: Every night, huh?

MS: Yes, and for many years I walked home up that hill.

RS: You walked? When did you start driving?

MS: I don't really remember when I started to drive.

RS: Do you think that the East Side is different from other neighborhoods or sides of the town?

MS: Well, I don't feel that way about it. I have heard other people say, "Oh, I wouldn't go over to the East Side." Well, I go over every week and sometimes more often. It is still home to me.

RS: I was thinking more about when you were teaching there early in your teaching career. [Then,] did you feel that it was a special place?

MS: Oh, yes it was. The East Side was a special place.

RS: Why do you supposed that the East Side was so special?

MS: Well, it was home. My friends were there. I had no bad experiences.

RS: Did they have a cafeteria at Immaculate?

MS: They didn't in the early days, but they do now.

RS: So, the children would go home for lunch?

MS: Yes, or else they would bring their lunch, brown bag it.

RS: How about you, did you go home for lunch?

MS: No, I stayed there. A few times I went home, but that was too much. I stayed there. We would either brown bag it or we had it where the teachers had lunch there. Now, the teachers and the nuns all eat together, but in those days they didn't.

RS: You ate separately?

MS: Yes.

RS: How about any other quirks or differences working with sisters? Did you get along well?

MS: Oh, yes. They would always listen and help out if we ever needed it.

RS: Do you feel as if they treated you as equal?

MS: Oh, yes. See, the nuns were there before the lay teachers came, so the nuns had their dining room. When we came we were extra, so they provided a little room where we could have our lunch. Then gradually we became one group.

RS: Now you said that you never had to do much disciplining other than separating the students and that. I hear a lot of stories about the rulers and smacking knuckles and that sort of thing. Did much of that go on?

MS: No. I would probably think that that would break bones.

RS: Possibly. So, you never witnessed any of that?

MS: Nothing unusual.

RS: How about paddling?

MS: Not really paddling, maybe a swat on the seat.

RS: Not too much, huh?

MS: No.

RS: So as far as you know, all of those stories about the tough nuns and getting hit over the knuckles and paddling. . . .

MS: I think a lot of those were made up stories. Some kids seem to think that they are not supposed to like school, and that is too bad. Some of them start out that way, "Just wait till you get to school and you will be made to behave." Even some parents say, "Well, why don't the parents do it?"

RS: Right. How about the way they dressed? Did they have uniforms then?

MS: Not then. Uniforms didn't come for quite a few years. But the uniforms were quite a big help. They save money and there isn't that fuss about, "What am I going to wear today?" They get up and they know what they are going to wear. So, the teachers liked the uniforms and the parents liked the uniforms. Sometimes the kids

don't. Special days, like when they were going to get their pictures taken, they could come all dressed up but all of us were glad to see the uniforms back the next day.

RS: It helps not to differentiate between the have and have nots.

MS: Yes, that is right. It makes a big difference.

RS: Before the uniforms, what did the students wear? Did girls wear dresses?

MS: Yes. The girls in those days didn't wear slacks; they wore dresses.

RS: Did you ever wear slacks to school?

MS: In my later years I did.

RS: Up until how long?

MS: I think that it must have been the late 1970s or thereabouts when the teachers were wearing slacks.

RS: But you wore dresses up until then?

MS: Yes.

RS: How about for entertainment, what did people do for entertainment? Adults first.

MS: Dances or go to a show.

RS: Where would they go dancing or where would the shows be?

MS: Well, movies.

RS: Downtown?

MS: Yes. In fact in the early days, they used to walk over the Oak Street Bridge to go downtown. In the Depression they were lucky if they had something to go to the show with. Just usually it was parish dances or something like that with dances.

RS: We mentioned the Depression, but how about the war? How did the war change things at your school? You had been there awhile when the war started. How did that change?

MS: Well, I don't recall the differences there as in the Depression. I mean, the Depression was dead for some of

the kids. But the war, anything that affected the school as much as the cannons. . . .

RS: How about the atmosphere or the environment? Do you think that the kids realized that they had brothers or fathers there?

MS: Well, not the little kids, not at that grade level. But in the upper grades, they have more discretions.

RS: How about the general mood, did you remember or say prayers?

MS: Oh, we always prayed for our men, for a safe return for those who were in the service.

RS: Everyday?

MS: Oh, yes.

RS: Anything else special? Did the kids bring money or try and save to buy bonds or do anything special maybe that they might be helping for the war cause?

MS: No, we didn't do that because it was too close to the Depression. We didn't ask the kids for anything. The Depression made it hard, too, until World War II.

RS: So, rationing or going without meat or wheat on certain days and meatless days, the kids didn't get involved in those kinds of programs?

MS: No.

RS: How about war songs or patriot songs and things?

MS: We always started the day with them. We saluted the flag and sang, but we did that even when it wasn't war time.

RS: Right. Did you know anybody personally whose economic situation was drastically changed by the Depression and lost their job?

MS: Oh, lots of people, neighbors and friends, and relatives. Lots of people did.

RS: Where were they working at the time? Any specific [place]?

MS: No.

RS: The mills, railroads, or stores?

MS: No, I can't remember very well. I just know that there were people that weren't working and needed help.

RS: It seems that everyone on the East Side knows everybody else. And every time that you meet one--even if you didn't know where they were from--they say, "Oh, I am from the East Side." They remember the names. Why is there this pride? Why do you think that they are so quick to tell you that they are from the East Side?

MS: Because it was their roots. They started out there and it was home.

RS: I don't notice it that much like, "I am from the South Side."

MS: Well, I think that the East Side is the older part of town, and then the people came here from other countries. They settled there. Their roots are there and they still feel that it is home.

RS: So, people that did come to the Youngstown area, a lot of the immigrants did end up on the East Side?

MS: I think that they did, yes.

RS: Rather than the North or South Side?

MS: Oh, yes. Those were developed later. And we can tell by the churches established.

RS: Immaculate is one of the oldest Catholic Churches in town?

MS: Yes.

RS: Is it the second next to St. Columba?

MS: I think that it is.

RS: I asked this before about when was Immaculate's parish founded, in the late 1800s?

MS: I have it right here. Pull that book out. That was our 100th anniversary.

RS: 1882-1982 was the 100th anniversary. Do you remember some of the principals or superiors that you worked for at the school?

MS: All our principals were kind, helpful professional leaders. Sr. Norbert was a really good friend of ours.

RS: What capacity did she serve?

MS: She was the principal. There, in the picture we are coming across the street. (They look at the picture) That is when Immaculate celebrated for our anniversary.

RS: Okay, that is you in the middle and you are leading a procession. Is that from the school to the church?

MS: Yes, that is the First Communion class.

RS: That is the First Communion class that you were in charge of in the early 1950s. The boys were in uniforms?

MS: Well, that was for First Communion. They didn't wear uniforms then.

RS: I see.

MS: But they had a dress regulation for a special day. The girls always wore white dresses with veils.

RS: Immaculate, that is a beautiful church. One of my favorites. How about the students, did they have cliques? I am sure that they had neighborhood groups. Did they have what you would call cliques?

MS: Not in the second grade.

RS: Did ethnic background have much to do with who their friends were and associated with?

MS: No.

RS: They mixed?

MS: They mixed very well. Then when new people would move in during the year, we would always make them feel that they were included. Maybe somebody would take care of this child when they would go out and show them where the lavatory is and show them where the playground is. I had a little boy once who came from Canada and spoke only French.

RS: Is that right?

MS: But we didn't do anything special. We didn't speak French to him. The children would help him. We would take a bunch of flashcards with the words on them and he would see the picture and the word and the children would help him pronounce the words during their spare time. Like for instance, when I would be taking the different reading groups, then they would have time to work with him. Eventually he was speaking English. He did very well. He didn't fail.

RS: Is that right. He passed second grade?

MS: Yes.

RS: Miss Steadman, is there anything else that you would like to add about life on the East Side or anything that you would like to mention, or your teaching experience?

MS: Tomorrow I will think of something. It was a great place to live. It is different now because like every place, it changes. It is still home to me.

RS: You don't think that things have changed much? The strategies and things that you used to do when you began teaching still work today?

MS: Oh yes, I think so.

RS: The subjects taught and the length of the day have remained pretty consistent?

MS: Science has picked up.

RS: How about spelling? Are the words that they use and learn in second grade harder than they used to be in second grade?

MS: No, they are about the same. Every year we would have a spelling bee and find our champ. I do think that spelling is important.

RS: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

MS: As I said, tomorrow I will think of something.

RS: Okay, thank you very much Miss Steadman. It was enjoyable.

MS: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW