

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of Leetonia Project

Personal Experience

O. H. 559

LELA MCKENZIE

Interviewed

by

Paul Merz

on

November 13, 1981

LELA MCKENZIE

Mrs. McKenzie was born near Salem, Ohio in 1912. She discusses in detail her early life on a dairy farm, traveling to Washington, D.C. and Florida as a youngster, attending Capital University in Columbus, and living and teaching in the Leetonia-Washingtonville area.

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INTERVIEWEE: LELA MCKENZIE

INTERVIEWER: Paul Merz

SUBJECT: Depression, Farming, World War II, Salem and
Columbus

DATE: November 13, 1981

ME: This is an interview with Mrs. McKenzie for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program regarding Leetonia and Washingtonville, by Paul Merz, at Mrs. McKenzie's home, 565 Main Street in Washingtonville on November 13, 1981 at approximately 3:00 in the afternoon.

What do you remember of your parents? Do you have brothers and sisters?

MC: Yes, I have three brothers.

ME: Let's go back that far and come forward.

MC: My parents came from the area of Alliance. My dad was born in New Franklin; it is a small town south of Alliance near Minerva. My mother was born in Knox Township. She was the daughter of Thomas and Esther Barbara Zimmerman-Cameron. My father was the son of William and Melissa Moore Hawkins. They met around Alliance. They were both a little bit older when they got married. They had four children in Ohio. My two brothers were born in the same house that I was. My youngest brother was born where the Salem Golf Club is now. My grandfathers both lived in our homes until they died. I never saw my grandmothers because they died young. My mother is the youngest of twelve children. My grandfather was the oldest of twelve children. There is a long distance between them.

My grandfather Cameron was a very interesting person to me. I always thought he looked like Santa Claus. He had a beard and kind of a round, jolly face. My Grandpa Hawkins was a kind of interesting man too, but he had a really good disposition.

My father, we were all a little bit afraid of him, because he had a heavy iron hand. It was alright in a way. My son said,

"Look at the result."

My brother, Harold, is a Nzarene minister. He lives in Birmingham, Alabama now. He is semi-retired. My second brother, the one next youngest to me, was a mechanic. He was very good at cars. He lived up in Kent all of his married life. He got cancer and died at the age of 50. My youngest brother is a farmer. He has a 100 acre farm out south of Columbiana. It is right in Columbiana really. It is the farm that you see on the Fairfield Avenue Extension. It is that road.

We lived at that farm over south of Salem which is the golf club now. My dad built up the land pretty well. He was pretty good at that. Then we sold it to the golf club. They were just starting the golf club in 1920.

My youngest brother was having problems. He was just a baby, hardly a year old. My parents took him to Cleveland to what is now the baby hospital at the University Hospital in Cleveland. He got better. They recommended that we go to Florida for a couple of years to help his health in the outside. That is what my parents did. They sold their farm and went to Florida.

My mother wasn't too satisfied with the school system south of Salem. She thought that there were a lot of kids in there that were kind of trashy. They were too. I mean she wasn't the kind of person that was prejudiced or anything, but they were, I don't think by today's standard, but they might be very trashy. Back then they stood out like sore thumbs. It was at the very fringes of Salem called Hillsdale. Anyway, my father looked around for a farm and bought one near this Fairfield Centralized School. It is called the middle school now. Anyhow, we were there for awhile and then they bought a different farm. It is the farm that my brother lives on now.

ME: I see.

MC: He is a very successful farmer. The farm is probably worth \$125,000 right now.

ME: They went from Salem to Florida, and then they came back to Columbiana?

MC: Yes, that is right.

ME: I know this is an improper question to a lady, but I guess your age at about 45?

MC: 69. You know darn well I am not 45.

ME: You were born about 1910?

MC: 1912.

ME: Let's talk about your grandparents, your grandfathers.

MC: Okay.

ME: What do you remember about either one? Cameron, let's go with him.

MC: He was of Scotch descent. He married my grandmother. They lived at the center of a square mile in Knox Township at the place which was the farm homestead of my Grandmother Cameron. She and Grandpa Cameron had twelve children as I said. I guess they must have all been born there. English wasn't spoken in the home until the oldest girl went to school. That would be my Aunt Mary. They spoke like a Pennsylvania Dutch or German. That is what the Zimmerman's, being from Switzerland originally, spoke. In fact, I am the seventh generation of people that were in America. We have the records in one line. There are other lines that weren't here quite that long.

Anyhow, Grandpa Cameron was a very successful farmer. Of course, he had the help of his wife. She lived to be 65. They made cheese. They had a certain number of cows. They did have a maple sugar grove. What I think was remarkable about Grandpa Cameron was this, in his middle life, to these twelve children, he divided some money up. They each got \$2,000. Could you imagine what they would be worth now?

ME: No.

MC: \$2,000 then.

ME: This would be like your parent. Your parent . . .

MC: My mother got that.

ME: Your mother would have been one of his twelve children.

MC: She put hers in a special place in the bank. That was always considered hers because she was a very hard worker.

ME: That would have been before 1900?

MC: Yes. It would have been around 1900. I think grandma died around 1900. It was somewhere in there.

My grandpa was born in 1833. That is an awfully long time ago. I thought that was really remarkable. It was such a wonderful thing. If a person was in the middle of their life and just getting started, that would be so nice.

ME: You really need it then.

MC: Yes, you really need it.

ME: He divided up \$24,000?

MC: Yes.

ME: How did he come to acquire \$24,000?

MC: I suppose that he sold off some land. When they would take a big wagonload of wheat to the mill if he would be selling it, he would bring it back in gold pieces. That is how . . . My mother had a few gold pieces to hand down to us. I don't know what everybody did with them. I suppose they handed them in when gold was up.

ME: Yes.

MC: That was expensive. Anyhow, it was really wonderful to think that they could do that.

They had a sugar grove. I told you this. Of course, you didn't get much cash. I don't know how on earth they could just do that. My mother was very good at saving and so on. Of course, a large share of it was doing without. They didn't buy extra things. Our home was a little bit sparse looking. You would come into it and there would be lots of food on the table. Other than that, there wouldn't be lots of comforts around, extra luxuries.

ME: Self-denial?

MC: Yes, that is true.

They did have a piano and each one of us kids got a music education. My oldest brother had lessons on the violin. I had lessons on the piano. My brother next to me had lessons on the cornet. It was sort of like a trumpet.

I might say something about my Grandpa Hawkins. He came to us when he wasn't all that well off mentally in a way. He had had reverses in his life. The Hawkins' were a little bit well fixed. His father, that would be my great-grandfather, kind of overspent to where he had to have my grandfather sign the notes for some of his purchases. Grandpa Hawkins did, but the other brothers wouldn't do it. Anyhow, he got stuck with some of the debt and it made him more or less a pauper. He had very little to go on. He stayed with my uncle who was a dentist in Salem for awhile. He was too hard to take care of. As a dentist, my Uncle George was a very large, husky man. He did take care of Grandpa. When he messed himself and things like that, why, you just couldn't go to the office. You couldn't get that out of your hands.

ME: Yes.

MC: He just couldn't do that. He had been trading off and

coming to our place part of the time. He lived there a couple years continuously. He would do unusual things like put apple butter in the sugar bowl and things like that. Of course, we kids were flying around trying to keep him from that and things like that. To get attention, we would tie his shoes. We knew he could tie them. One time my brother had a broken arm or something. He couldn't tie Grandpa's shoes anymore. Sure enough, he could tie them. It was just an old man's way of trying to get attention.

He died when he was about 82. My Grandpa Cameron died earlier, but he was 83. I used to think Grandpa Cameron was very swell. I would have liked Grandpa Hawkins if he hadn't had all of these unusual quality problems, yes. It worked out though. It was a great blessing to us kids to think that my parents would take care of them; and we took care of our parents.

ME: I see.

MC: My father and mother lived in an apartment in our home down here for the last ten years of their lives.

ME: In Washingtonville?

MC: They did pretty well considering they went through the Depression. It was a matter of being careful and depriving yourself of lots of things. I think they thought we spent money like water, my husband and me. He was Irish, of course. He was generous and liked to spend money. He was pretty good at earning it too.

ME: That is the other side of the coin.

MC: Yes, it is.

ME: How old were you when you went to Florida?

MC: As a little child?

ME: Yes.

MC: I was in fifth grade and sixth grade.

ME: What part of Florida? What do you remember about Florida?

MC: We lived between Orlando and Winter Park. We went down. We didn't know exactly where we were going to locate when we got down there.

ME: What year?

MC: 1921. It would have to be 1921 and 1922.

ME: Did you drive down?

MC: No, we went on the train. My parents took all four of us on the train. We didn't scoot around and cause anybody any problems. You didn't do that with my dad.

It was an interesting trip. On the way down we met the man who had a big feed mill out in Ashland, Ohio. He gave us a problem. I remember that. He said, "See if you can figure this out. If $1/3$ of 6 were three, what would $1/4$ of 20 be?" In other words, if three were two, how would it relate to five? Somehow we knew my mother could do it. She was bright. She taught school when she was young. She didn't teach very long, but she did. She was good in math. That is how we figured out that problem.

When we got to Florida, we ran into somebody that was from Alliance that we sort of knew. My parents looked into the school situation. They wanted us to go to Winter Park. There was a bus, a kid wagon, that took you.

ME: Yes.

MC: There was no room. The Floridians would be there already and then the tourists would come in. There was no room, no room. Then they found out that we bought a lot and started to build. Then they found this room really fast. My mother thought that was interesting. We had Miss Shell for a teacher for fifth grade and Mrs. Grange for teaching sixth grade. They were very good teachers. This school was an elementary school, but it was stamped by people from New York State. They really had good ideals. In this town was Rollins College. From time to time you would see different students playing tennis and all of that. There were quite a few Cubans, I thought that was interesting.

ME: Even then?

MC: Yes. They were over here for an education. They were pretty high-class Cubans.

ME: Did your parents sell everything when they went to Florida?

MC: They sold the farm, yes.

ME: Furniture and all?

MC: No. They stored that. We rented the house out on the Georgetown Road. That made a place for us to store those things. We didn't make a sale or anything because my father could only farm. He didn't have other talents like carpentry, and all of the other things that many people do. He couldn't even drive a car. He tried to learn, but that wasn't a very good idea. My brother Harold was in the car at the time. I guess he was accelerating it a little bit too fast. He wanted to stop and said, "Whoa! Whoa!" We thought that was so funny. It happened anyway. He didn't try it then afterwards. I don't

know. It would have been a very handy thing. I had my three brothers and they all wanted to drive pretty fast.

We kept milk cows. It was a dairy farm. My mother would make butter and cheese and different things like that. They sold cream part of the time. When we were living on this farm south of Salem where the golf club is now . . .

ME: This is before you went to Florida?

MC: Yes. That was before we went to Florida. We kids took the cream up to the Andalusia Dairy in the little wagon. We had a farm wagon that was pretty big. We just walked up with it. You couldn't take it up in any conveyor. The road was closed and they were paving it. It hadn't been paved up until then. That was Route 45. We had a pond there at that place and a watering trough. People would stop for their water for radiators for the new Fords or the horses. It was an interesting . . . It was kind of pretty. My father built a new barn and that is the clubhouse now.

ME: Really?

MC: Yes, that is right.

ME: What year was Route 45 paved? What year would you guess?

MC: All the way?

ME: Yes, along there where you lived.

MC: I think it would be 1920.

ME: About 1920?

MC: Yes. They got a good price for their farm.

ME: From the Salem Golf Club?

MC: Yes. It was 100 acres. There were chestnut trees out in the pasture. It was really nice. They liked it because it was rolling land.

ME: Good drainage?

MC: Yes, really good. There was really good land. My father could get second crop clover off of it.

ME: I see.

MC: He sort of built that.

ME: What did you think when you were in fifth grade and you were told that you were moving to Florida?

- MC: It didn't seem to bother me too much. We got on the train in Salem. We just got on the coach. We weren't on the sleeper. I forget how many days it takes to go on a train. It just escapes me. I know we were wearing winter clothes up here. I think we went in November. When we got down there it was roasting hot. The people down there liked to watch the people coming in from the north. It was big entertainment to see them come down in the overcoats and things.
- ME: You just mentioned coach. Did that mean that you didn't have any sleeping facilities? You had to stay in the seat the whole time?
- MC: Yes, that is right.
- ME: How about eating? How did you eat on the train?
- MC: My mother packed food.
- ME: But you were on for a couple of days?
- MC: I think so. I know we were on awhile overnight. One time we went directly down through Cincinnati. Sometimes you would change trains. Anyhow, it was nice going that way. It was sort of direct. One time we went east and went through Pittsburgh. We got a different train. That was another nice station. Then we went to Washington, D.C. We got off and toured the Capitol. They were, my folks, not real provincial. They believed in travel and learning and school. Education was important. It really was.
- ME: What year were you in the Capitol in Washington?
- MC: That would have been around 1922.
- ME: When you went down to Florida with your brother for his illness, how long were you there?
- MC: Just the two different winters. We would come up here.
- ME: Oh, I see. You went down only for the winters. That was why you made so many different trips to Florida.
- MC: Yes, that is right.
- They hadn't decided yet just exactly what they would do. They did build a very nice house. It was what you call a California style bungalow. My father, in his late 70's, made a trip to Florida on the bus. He went and visited this very home and he picked it out. Can you imagine that?
- ME: Wow!

MC: He was all by himself. Yes, sir, he did it. He asked the lady of the house. He told the lady that he was the man who built it and he wondered if he could see it. She was accommodating enough to let him. I don't know how she let a stranger in that way. I don't know if I would have. I don't know. He was sort of believable. He died when he was 90. He always had a mustache and it was black. I can't hardly believe that and his hair was hardly white. My mother's hair turned white.

It was really an interesting thing. Our second year, we seemed to enjoy it a little bit more than the first. We had already had this nice house to live in. The first year we lived in a 16' by 16' tent. It was boarded up about 4'. It was great, big, you know. My Aunt Mary also went down that first year. She paid her own way, but she took so much. She took everything. She didn't take her canary, but she pretty near did. It was something else. She meant all right. I suppose she would watch us kids for them if they had to go somewhere.

ME: Did you rent the tent?

MC: No, we had bought the land and we bought the tent.

ME: You bought the tent to put it on your land?

MC: Yes. My father had some man build this 16' by 16'. It had really nice flooring up aways. You had to be up off of the ground in Florida.

ME: The dampness?

MC: Yes. It was partly on account of the insects too.

ME: The next year you built the house to go to the house?

MC: Yes.

ME: You had the house built?

MC: Yes, he had it built by carpenters.

ME: You had a home there outside of Salem and you also had a home there?

MC: Yes.

ME: It must have been a good time for farming?

MC: Well . . .

ME: That would have been into this century, right?

MC: Yes. It wasn't the Depression yet, although Florida soon had a Depression before they did up here. It preceeded the Depression up here.

After they bought over there, the Depression hit. You didn't know it very much in a way in our family. You just got less for everything. We didn't have a lot of luxuries anyway. When I went to college, I worked for my room and board in a lawyer's home. Everybody else was hard hit. There was a girl in our freshman class who was a daughter of a millionaire; they were even hit. People committed suicide that were friends of this lawyer. He was secretary to Governor Cox. He was Attorney Hayes.

ME: The man that you worked for?

MC: Yes. That is no easy thing to do--to go to college and study hard. It was at Capital University in Columbus. You were neither fish nor fowl. You were not really a servant and yet you sort of were. Of course, it depended on the disposition of the hostess on how you got along. I got along very well my first year. I went to the same place the second year. In the meantime, she had taken to being an alcoholic. There was no reason for it that I can remember.

ME: That she was drinking?

MC: Yes. She would hide her gin or wine in my clothes closet. She knew that I wasn't going to drink.

ME: What year was that?

MC: That was 1930 and 1931.

ME: That would have almost been in the depths of the Depression.

MC: Yes. It was the very beginning of it. I went down there in September of 1929. It happened in October of 1929.

She was hard to get along with then. You would have your boyfriends up or something like that. One time he gave me one of those friendship rings. Boy, did she ever lecture me. She said, "I don't think that your mother would want you to come down here and go to college and work hard and then get engaged to somebody." That wasn't exactly it. It was sort of like being pinned or something.

ME: Yes.

MC: It is a small, Lutheran college. I was there on a scholarship. That helped. It was a nice place. I just loved it. I enjoyed it more than I did my high school days.

ME: College?

MC: Yes.

ME: Let's go back to one of your trips to Florida. You had mentioned being in the Capitol. That would have been 1922. What do you

remember about the Capitol in 1922?

MC: All of the marble buildings. We got to go to Mount Vernon. I was so impressed. It was so lovely. There were all of the velvet draperies. There were little houses in the back for the black servants and slaves. There were winding stairways. They had big pillars in front and a great big lot that went down the Potomac. That was beautiful. I was just really impressed with that. I don't think that we went into the State Building. We visited the White House. We visited where they made the money. I can remember that.

ME: That would stick with you.

MC: That was interesting.

ME: You mentioned too that your father had built up the land.

MC: Yes.

ME: I am a city boy. That is interesting.

MC: You see, he knew how to rotate the crops. He wasn't a real good farmer with animals. If a cow would come fresh, or it would be more likely a pig, he might neglect to take it to the farmer that had the boar. He wasn't really prompt with them. You have to be. Everything counts, you know.

ME: Yes.

MC: It is a sort of cycle. Another thing that we had was horses. I thought that he was hard on the horses. I thought that he just didn't understand animals. It didn't seem to me that he did. He knew how to build up this land. He would put manure on it and the right kind of fertilizer. He would rotate corn, oats, wheat, and hay. That is the sequence. That way you don't wear out your ground like people who just have one crop after the other, especially like corn or tobacco and cotton.

ME: That would have been between 1910 and 1920?

MC: Yes. They did pretty well because they didn't have to pay a super price for that farm. I think they paid \$9,000 or something like that.

ME: For 100 acres?

MC: Yes. They sold it for \$16,000. Of course, he had built that very, very nice barn. If they still use that for a clubhouse, you know that it is well-built. In the foundation, he had the men bring in those big, granite rocks. The walls are thick, the foundation walls. It was well-built, It was very nice and they needed a barn.

ME: They bought it for \$9,000, built a barn and sold it for \$16,000?

MC: Yes.

ME: How long did he hold it?

MC: About four or five years.

ME: They didn't have inflation like we have today?

MC: No. That was a good price. The Golf Club had three other farms that they were considering. This is the one that they liked the most. I suppose it was the accessibility from Route 45 and all of that. There was a pond that was an attractive thing too. It was fed by springs. The kids would come when it was frozen over in the winter and go skating on it.

ME: What do you remember about being a farm girl? This would have been around 1920, around that area?

MC: I can remember having to split kindling for the fire. That was an eternal job. I used to dream about this doll that I was going to get. She would be about 36" high and maybe walking.

ME: Yes.

MC: Of course, she would be a sleeping doll. One day I would want her to be a blonde with a blonde wig. The next day I would want her to have blue eyes and black hair. It was something that sort of kept me going. I know that splitting kindling took forever.

I can remember my mother cleaning the milk separator, cream separator, you know.

ME: Yes.

MC: You have to take it apart every time. They cemented a nice cooling area in the back porch for the milk to stay cool.

ME: That would have been below ground. How was that taken? Did you take it to the market yourself?

MC: We kids took the cream, yes. We had to. I don't know what they did when we were . . . I suppose that they hitched up the horse and wagon. They probably had a spring wagon to take it in.

ME: They took it into Salem?

MC: Yes.

ME: To?

MC: Andalusia Dairy.

ME: Right to the dairy?

MC: Yes.

ME: Then they processed it?

MC: Yes. You had to cool it off. The springs were right near the house. Almost every farm had a spring.

I remember walking through Salem. We walked through beautiful Lincoln Avenue. You would enter from the end of Salem across the railroad and went up that way. Then you went on to Main Street. It was a nice experience. We didn't mind doing it. Of course, we probably went in our bare feet. It probably hurt. You liked to go in your bare feet. We had a big thing about taking shoes and stockings off about May or June.

ME: It always seemed to me that dairy farming meant a lot of work. Did you have to be involved with the milking?

MC: My mother said that if I didn't learn to milk that I wouldn't have to. She milked. She did most of the milking. She was just a natural. My father wasn't lazy a bit, but he wasn't around cows. He didn't have the patience. Cows are kind of contrary a little bit.

ME: That fact with your father's way with animals, he just wasn't interested?

MC: I think he wasn't going to be putting himself out anything or something like that. I just never did figure that out. I know my mother was good at milking and my older brother learned when he was about nine. He milked. My brother, Harold, milked also. They had to milk before they went to school. Lots of times we missed the bus.

I saw one of my brother's report cards not too long ago. Somehow it was around here. They were late every once in awhile to school because of missing the bus. They would be working out in the barn.

ME: You still have one of your brother's old report cards?

MC: I had one, yes. I don't know where it is now. I know I have mine. That was kind of interesting. We went to the one room school that my mother . . . We were getting a good enough basic education. She just didn't like the families. You walked to school.

ME: The environment?

MC: Yes. She wasn't kidding. This is interesting and it should give you an impression of my father. Some of these kids thought they would be real smart-alec, you know. They picked up . . . My father was coming home from Salem in this spring wagon with a load of something from the mill. My brother Harold was on the wagon seat too. These kids were sort of riffraff in a way. They picked up a clinker and threw it at the horses. My dad got them stopped and he caught up with these kids. He paddled them. He gave them a real thrashing for doing that. Of course, the mother was one of those modern mothers. She had him down to court.

ME: Really?

MC: Yes.

ME: This would have been in the 1920's?

MC: Hardly 1920. It might have been 1919 or somewhere in there.

ME: Okay.

MC: The judge decided. He had to hear both sides. I am sure he was on my dad's side, but he had to fine him because he shouldn't have touched another person's kid. He had to pay \$10. This woman was really mad. I can still see the look on her. She had really dark eyes. I remember her. She said, "Is that all you are going to charge him? Look at the big farm that he has." You can hear ignorant people saying things like that.

ME: Yes.

MC: My dad said, "Yes, but how did I get it?" I mean, he answered her that way. She was pretty disappointed. I think she thought that she would get a couple hundred. They needed it (the spanking), these kids. The father was kind of a weakling. He wouldn't come on the scene and the kids were smart-alecky.

I often wondered if my brother suffered any from that incident. I don't think he did. I think I would have known it and they would have told me. That would give you an idea about what he was like.

ME: You mentioned the riffraff. Did they have anything in common? Were they immigrants by any chance?

MC: No, I don't think so.

ME: They were like low-class people?

MC: They were just people who didn't have very high ideals. They just didn't. That is all. Did you ever read the book, Taps for Private Tussie?

ME: No.

MC: It came after World War II. Andy Griffith played in it.
It was made into a play.

ME: No.

MC: It was just typical of those people who don't care what their kids are doing as long as they don't bother them. There are an awful lot of parents like that. They weren't usual people in those days.

At one time, after we had been to Florida, we were living at this rented place out at North Georgetown. We hadn't gotten ready to move over to our new farm. We would have to walk from this Chestnut Grove School, which is south of the Grandview Cemetery in Salem, if you know where it is.

ME: No, I don't.

MC: It is between Franklin Road and Route 45.

ME: Okay.

MC: There used to be a road that went through there. There isn't anymore. They shut it up. Anyhow, we walked from school through town out on the west end of Salem and out on the Georgetown Road after school. Can you imagine kids walking that now? It was nice weather though. It was springtime. That is how we had to do. If it was bad weather, we had an arrangement with people by the name of Shelton; we could stay there overnight.

ME: There was no transportation?

MC: No.

ME: Other than your feet?

MC: Yes. Well, my folks had horses.

ME: As far as you going to school?

MC: No.

ME: You either walked . . .

MC: Yes.

ME: That was the only way?

MC: Everybody.

ME: How did they work it out with Shelton's so that you were able

to stay there?

MC: They asked them. They were pretty accommodating people when you think about it. I am sure it wasn't probably suitable at first to stay every time because we had to eat our supper and our breakfast there too, you see. Helen Shelton and Heloise were their two daughters. Harold and I were the ones going to school, my older brother Harold. Vernon didn't start until we went to Florida.

ME: I see.

MC: He was just a little first-grader.

There was a shortcut that we could have taken, but we didn't know the way, so we just went through the main street of Salem.

ME: That was in the day before the telephone?

MC: No, we had no telephone.

ME: In other words, if you went to Shelton's place to stay, they would have called your parents and told them?

MC: ^Oh, yes.

ME: I wondered how your parents would know that you were in trouble.

MC: My parents kept very good account of us, especially me.

ME: I see, being the girl?

MC: Yes, being the girl. They knew where we were all of the time. They had more savvy, you might say, about raising kids than many people with book learning, you know.

ME: Yes. A lot of common sense?

MC: Yes, a lot of common sense. They had a lot of concern about their kids. They knew where we were all of the time. When I was young and dating, I had a cousin who was kind of a free spirit. She was allowed to do a lot of things. My parents would watch me. I could just see it. I could tell. They watched everything. I think a person can be a good person without reading and thinking a lot of things. You just have to remember.

ME: Did you mind that, the idea of them watching you so much, when your cousin got away with it?

MC: Yes.

ME: You did?

MC: Yes.

ME: When did you realize that they were doing you a favor?

MC: Probably I knew it in my heart all along. I didn't want to admit it. I didn't like the idea of just everybody getting the once-over and being so censored. I was just so sure that I didn't get very many dates for that reason. I didn't like that.

ME: In other words, when a guy came to call, they were there to find out who he was? How old were you when you started dating?

MC: I could go on a double date since my brother was older. I don't know how much he resented me pestering around. He was very nice to me. All of my brothers were. I think I must have been fifteen. I know I dated a kid who was home from college. I think it was kind of a convenience thing as far as he was concerned. I think he wanted somebody to write to him when he went back to school.

ME: Did you?

MC: Yes. I was crazy enough to do that. It is true. You kind of resent it a little bit.

ME: That would have been about 1928 or 1919? In 1927 you were fifteen?

MC: Yes.

ME: What did you do for a date in those days?

MC: If a whole carload of you went somewhere, we would sing.

ME: You would sing?

MC: We could have part harmony. Gee, we just loved to do that. Maybe you would go and play miniature golf. You could go to a movie. Most of the movies were okay. None of them were X-rated or anything. It was like "State Fair", "Seventh Heaven". I didn't get to go very often. That took money and we just didn't have a lot of ready money.

We kids would raise truck farm things like lima beans and string beans, and some other things that would bring in money. We would get that money. We would pick strawberries. We got the money for strawberries. I think we got 1½¢ per quart. It was something like that.

ME: A cent and a half for a quart?

MC: Part of the time we would get 2¢. We would save that money. At one time we bought a tennis net. We had a big, long, level backyard between the barn and the house. We had a tennis net

and four tennis rackets. They weren't real expensive ones, of course, but we played tennis. It was fun.

ME: Two cents a quart for strawberries? What did it cost you to get into the show? Do you remember? Was it a nickel then?

MC: I don't know. One time my father said that it was a nickel when he was young. They went down, he was in Pittsburgh . . . He didn't get married until he was 36 and my mother was 29.

ME: I see.

MC: Anyhow, he ran a grocery store down in Pittsburgh with his brother. Most of his life he was a farmer. I don't know how good he was at being a businessman. He could meet people well. He enjoyed meeting people. He liked to go to sales, auctions. He liked that.

ME: I was trying to get an idea of what 2¢ would buy you. Evidently it was worth the 2¢ to pick the quart.

MC: Yes.

ME: You did it.

MC: Yes.

ME: Two cents must have gone a fairly long way?

MC: You got several quarts in a day. I don't know. There were people who could pick 100 quarts per day, but not me. I ate too many I think.

ME: You went to Capital University?

MC: Yes, for two years. I graduated in a two-year course..

ME: I see. That was about 1932 that you graduated?

MC: Yes.

ME: At Capital? You worked for a man who was a lawyer?

MC: Yes.

ME: Was that typical of college students then?

MC: Yes, about one third of that class was doing that.

ME: Your mother was concerned about you dating when you were down there?

MC: Yes,

ME: How did she feel about you working in the home of that lawyer?

MC: These people had to pass quite a rigid examination by the Capital authorities at this Lutheran school.

ME: I see.

MC: The Hayes' were really upright people. They were Roman Catholic, but that part really didn't make any difference. They were really nice people. The only thing was that she got to drinking. They were really upright. I think they kind of watched me now that I think back on it. I think they were a little bit on the chaperoning idea. Of course, I had dates in those days. I mean I had plenty of them. I remember that they didn't like it when we stood out in front of the house for awhile before I came in.

ME: You mean when your date brought you back?

MC: Yes. They didn't think that was so wonderful. I wish you could have seen them down there at Capital hanging on each other, you know, like at the student union.

ME: You sort of did domestic work?

MC: Yes, I did. There were a lot of things that I didn't have to do, but I would just go over the house on Saturdays with the vacuum and the duster. Each night I had to wash the kitchen floor. I thought that was a little bit superfluous, but I didn't have to do the laundry. They had a lady come in and do that. I had to take care of my own laundry and my room. I also had to baby-sit their twelve year old daughter. She was a little bit spoiled.

ME: Did you live right there with them?

MC: Yes.

ME: I see.

MC: I had a bedroom, a room of my own. There were really nice to me. I was a little bit green. I don't think I was the world's best student. I mean, I got along well in my classes, but when you are just fresh from a farm with that type of sheltered life and some sparse life, you don't know about a lot of things that maybe little more sophisticated kids knew. I think I got along as well as any of the other girls, almost. Some of them had a little more lenient hostesses. They would give them more. One lady gave this girl an old Franklin car, for her very own; she put it in her name.

ME: She actually had an automobile?

MC: Yes. Then there was another who was in the music department and she had a really nice home to live in. Some of them

thought my hostess was a little bit gruff. It was just her way. She was really nice.

As I almost said, if I hadn't been going during the Depression, I think I would have stood out a little bit as a poor person. Everybody was in the same boat at that time. The Depression made very little difference between rich and poor.

ME: It kind of leveled everybody.

MC: You were all the same.

ME: Let's stay right with the Depression. You finished Capital in 1932?

MC: Yes.

ME: You then came back to live in Columbiana?

MC: Yes.

ME: Did you get a job?

MC: I got a job at Fairfield. I was employed to teach second grade.

ME: Is that the old Fairfield building over there?

MC: Yes, that is the middle school. It is right at the crossroads.

ME: How long were you there?

MC: Two years.

ME: Until 1934?

MC: I guess I really graduated in 1931 from Capital. I was there until 1933. I got married then.

ME: In 1933?

MC: It was the end of 1932.

ME: Was this before you started to teach at Fairfield?

MC: No, it was in the second year.

ME: Did you have to quit?

MC: I would have, but I didn't tell them that I was married. I got married on the 19th of November. We got married in Maryland.

ME: The state of Maryland?

MC: Yes, the state of Maryland. Then we announced it in the Spring. Of course, I had to quit once school was out! They didn't allow people . . .

ME: To be married and teach?

MC: Yes. Two people in the family couldn't have a job.

ME: You're kidding. Was it because of the shortage of work?

MC: Yes, the shortage of work.

ME: During the Depression? Okay, why the state of Maryland? That fascinates me. Was it just to keep it a secret?

MC: Yes. They had liberal marriage laws too. You could just go there and get married. We went over there on a Saturday and we barely got in before the courthouse at noon, but we did. It was in Hagerstown.

ME: I have been there.

MC: Have you?

ME: Yes. Where did you live when you were married?

MC: I lived at home and then I would go to his mother's on the weekends. He lived with his mother in Beloit. He had been living in Florida. Then we went to Florida to live for part of the first year of our marriage. In the second year of our marriage, I think Carl came.

ME: That is your oldest son?

MC: Yes. I married November 19, 1932 and Carl was born in September of 1934. It just wasn't too good down there. They had a little bit of work. Some of the basic pay was around \$14 per week. That went quite a ways. You could get a nice, big sackful of groceries for \$5.

ME: What did your husband do by trade?

MC: He was a mechanic right then. He could turn his hand to a lot of different things. He really was a machinist at Bliss for twenty-five years later on when he came up here.

We had a nice home down there. That is, we rented it. It was a garage apartment that belonged to the Gandy family of Gandy Bridge. It was between St. Petersburg and this island down there. They were wealthy people. They had a brick home in front. They had four children. They were really nice people.

We came up here and then we were at Middletown^w for a little while. He met a man when we were selling peaches and other farm produce for

his brother-in-law at a little farm market. He met this man whose son was superintendent of Bliss. I guess he saw what a good worker my husband was. He was a tremendous worker. He asked him if he had ever worked in a shop before. He told him that long ago he used to work for the Buckeye Company, but he really didn't prefer shop work. He had told him that he was looking for anything right at that time. He said, "How about reporting for the night shift at 3:00?" Was Mac ever thrilled. He traveled from Middletown to Salem until we moved to Salem.

ME: Is Middletown where Rural Supply is?

MC: Yes.

ME: I only live about one mile from there.

MC: Is that right?

ME: Yes.

MC: Do you know where Route 7 is?

ME: Yes.

MC: Do you know where Middletown Road is?

ME: Yes.

MC: There is a little three-room house up there. It doesn't look like much now, but it had a farm market there at that time. It was rather a going thing. It was okay. His brother-in-law was a rather well-to-do real estate man. I think we paid \$5 a month for rent for the house.

ME: In that house?

MC: Yes.

ME: What year did you move to Salem?

MC: That would be 1937. Richard was born in July of 1937. In the meantime, this brother-in-law had three acres out here on the other side of Washingtonville and a little home after you turn the corner. It has been built up quite a little bit since then. I think Cline owns it now. It is Maple or Marple or something like that.

ME: Right out west of here?

MC: Yes. Anyhow, we bought that three acres. We were there a couple of years. There was this other house and fifteen acres for sale a little bit later. We bought that. There weren't any of those little houses and all of that crap with that tavern

or anything there. It was just land and an orchard. We had that for awhile. Mack was working too hard. That was all there was to it. He was working twelve hours at Bliss. Then he would come home and do all of his truck farming. We had a cow and one of everything, you know, cows, pigs, rabbits, and chickens. The kids weren't really big enough to take hold of too much, but they did help and I did too. Then we decided that we would look around for something else. The kids didn't want to move out of the school district. They didn't want to at all. We weren't much for doing what the kids wanted to do. We thought they had a point. We looked at several farms. We looked at the one that the Painter's bought later.

ME: Was it consolidated then? Was Leetonia and Washingtonville consolidated by this time?

MC: Yes.

ME: Alright.

MC: We weren't in on that consolidation. We were just in on the flack that it caused. People were just so uptight about it.

ME: When Washingtonville and Leetonia were consolidated?

MC: Yes. They felt it for years after for some reason. They kept thinking that Washingtonville should have kept their school. The kids didn't care; the next generation didn't care.

ME: It was the adults you think?

MC: Yes, it was the adults.

ME: The kids couldn't care less?

MC: Yes. The kids liked it.

ME: What year was the consolidation?

MC: I couldn't tell you for sure.

ME: Was it sometime around the war?

MC: Oh, it was before then.

ME: Before the war?

MC: Yes. I mean World War II.

ME: Yes.

MC: It was before then. I think it was the late 1930's because the high school was built around 1935.

ME: I think it was around 1936.

MC: Yes. It must have been about then. I hear people say, "I was the first one to graduate in that combined class." I never pay attention to the time.

ME: You said you were looking for a house?

MC: Yes.

ME: I interrupted you. You said you looked at Painter's.

MC: Yes. We looked at one on Somer Street in Leetonia. We really wanted something with a little bit of land. This lady who owned this double house down here came down to see us. We knew her, Mrs. Winifred Baker. She was a colorful, but she had her own taste. She isn't living now. Anyhow, she had been a teacher in the area. She said that she would like to sell us the house with the provision that she could live in the other side apartment. It had four rooms on one side and six rooms on the other. It just had one bathroom. Up until then it was a septic tankerage. We could hardly make up our minds. We finally thought that we would. The price . . . Do you want a price?

ME: I wouldn't want to guess a price. This was 1937?

MC: No, this was later. This was 1945.

ME: 1945 . . . I guess \$5,000.

MC: This was \$3,500.

ME: \$3,500 for a double house?

MC: Yes, a double house. This was with the idea what she could live on the other side as long as she lived, but she would pay \$15 a month for rent.

ME: \$15?

MC: Yes. Of course, she would pay her share of the utilities also. It had hot water heat fired by a coal furnace. There were two different coal furnaces. Our side really didn't have that, but her's did. Later we put in a new furnace that would service the whole house.

It was interesting. There were a lot of things about to happen in the town. They didn't have street lights then. They didn't have a water system. They didn't have a sewer system nor sidewalks.

ME: What did you do for water? Did you have a well in the back?

MC: We had a well.

ME: Was it a well that you pumped the handle?

MC: Yes.

ME: Some of them were brick inside. I saw one that was uncovered. Do you remember them digging those things at all?

MC: I don't know. This was really nice. It was 300 feet deep.

ME: The well was 300 feet deep?

MC: It was good water. It was a triteful sulfur because of all of the coal mines around. When they had the town water, it was sulfer too. It wasn't very good. It was water and it was pressured. Our insurance rate went down.

ME: Because you had city water?

MC: Yes.

ME: So, you were here before there were water sewers, street lights, or sidewalks?

MC: Yes. There were sidewalks that the WPA had built in the lower end of town. They didn't continue that. I mean, it seemed as though the founding fathers, the council, or somebody was not very interested in making it a pleasant place to live, not really. I mean, the homes didn't look as nice as they do now on the outside. There were good housekeepers. On the outside, they seemed to me that they weren't too interested.

ME: This was during the war, during the 1940's?

MC: Yes, during the 1940's. Our kids always liked Leetonia schools. They did well in school. They liked school. I don't think Richard did really wonderful in high school. He didn't make decent grades. If he liked the subject he would. Carl did well in school.

ME: Were there saloons in Washingtonville at that time during the 1940's or were they already gone?

MC: No. It has a history of one saloon right after the other.

ME: That was when Columbiana County was dry and the saloons were all on the north side of Main Street.

MC: That is right.

ME: You don't remember that?

MC: No. I wasn't living here and I wasn't living outside of town either. That was all changed. I have seen pictures,

snapshots, of them bringing the war material through here for World War I. The road was mud.

ME: Dirt.

MC: Just dirt.

ME: The war supplies were probably made in Salem. I would guess that the material was made in Salem. They were shipping it east?

MC: Yes. Men and horse were pulling in deep mud. I don't know . . .

ME: How they even did it?

MC: Yes, how they did it. A lot of these people, of course, were in the war from around here. My husband was in for a little while. He didn't get across because the flu broke out. He was a little bit older than I was.

ME: The flu broke out about 1918? That was the killer.

MC: Yes.

ME: Jack Woods mentioned that.

MC: Yes. That was really bad. We had it in our home. My brother Galen was up in the Children's Hospital as a little baby. That was one reason he was there for a year. They didn't want to bring him down into the flu area. Up there in a hospital you are more or less protected.

ME: Do you remember the flu in the rural areas then?

MC: Yes. I remember it because we had it. I can remember having this fever. I would dream these wild dreams. I thought my Aunt Mary came up from Damascus to help us. Everybody had it. The neighbor lady, Lena Green, came down. I remember her having the big wash boiler on the kitchen stove and having the blankets in it, boiling them because of the flu. I can remember these awful dreams and speaking out. I thought my Aunt Mary was down on the floor on all fours getting after me. I really like my Aunt Mary. It was such a . . . I would dream that I was on a sled going down the hill and just about hit the tree. About that time, I was waking myself up.

ME: This was from the fever?

MC: Yes.

ME: You were hallucinating?

MC: Yes.

ME: Do you remember it being worse than the flu that we get now?

MC: Well, so many wonderful people died who weren't at the age to die.

ME: Do you think it was the lack of medicine or do you think it was a worse strain of flu?

MC: It was a combination of both. It must have been. They recognized that it was.

ME: That is funny because Jack Woods mentioned the same thing.

MC: As I said, it took a lot of young people, just not old people who were ready to die anyway.

ME: Strong people, viable people?

MC: Yes.

ME: What do you remember about Leetonia during the 1940's? What kind of a town was it?

MC: I don't know. It just seemed to me that I wasn't in it an awful lot. I do remember Mrs. Conrad. She was the mother of Dr. Conrad. She said that they ought to have a separate building for the library. Do you know where the parking place is between the People's Bank and . . . Somehow that was supposed to be a building site for the library. I remember that.

ME: Yes.

MC: There is another beauty parlor there on Main Street. I can remember an A & P being there.

ME: That is where Ripley's used to be.

What kind of people lived there?

MC: Not like now.

ME: Was it a pretty rough town?

MC: No, I didn't get in on the rough part. I didn't see anything rough about it. It was pretty settled down by the time that I saw it. I guess they have had some fights. I don't know what all went on. One lady said that she thought the Mafia had a base in there.

ME: You started teaching in Leetonia in 1948?

MC: Yes,

ME: You went until 1976?

- MC: Yes. I taught at the high school building I should have known a little bit about it. This other teacher who taught first and second grades had the rooms right above where the cafeteria is now.
- ME: In the high school?
- MC: Yes,
- ME: You were an elementary teacher?
- MC: The parents didn't want the children of the north side to have to walk across the railroad tracks. That was their idea. The fifth and sixth grades were all on the south side.
- ME: That was when the old South Side School was there?
- MC: Yes,
- ME: When did they tear that down?
- MC: It was probably about 1958 or 1959. They erected that other until there. We moved in January of 1959 or 1960. I forget. Everybody took his books.
- ME: Each student?
- MC: Each student and piled on the bus. Leland McMurrin was the principal then. Then they brought the bus up. We unloaded and went into the building and sat down in our seats.
- ME: Was that your move to South Side?
- MC: No, that was your move to Orchard Hill.
- ME: Orchard Hill. I see.
- MC: It was to one of the units.
- ME: South Side School and Orchard Hill were built at the same time?
- MC: Yes, that unit.
- ME: Okay.
- MC: Maybe they got the south side unit done first. I don't know. It was going on at the same time. Also the cafeteria and the all-purpose room in Washingtonville was . . .
- ME: Built?
- MC: A lot of people kind of scoffed about that. Others said, "Oh, well, they just did that so they could get the people to vote for the taxes."

ME: It makes sense.

MC: Yes. They are using it, so what is the difference?

ME: That is true.

The streetcar line came through here, didn't it?

MC: Down at the other end of Washingtonville, yes. It was a real bonus to the people. They used that a lot.

ME: Here in Washingtonville?

MC: Yes.

ME: It came, from what I understand, off of the Erie track and came right up here by the American Legion and up behind here somehow.

MC: Yes.

ME: In other words, it sort of ran parallel to Main Street?

MC: Yes.

ME: How about when it got to Mellville Hill? Where did it go from there?

MC: It just went on . . . I know it went into Salem on the south side, but I can't think of how it was because I didn't use it very much then. I didn't use it hardly any. That stopped. Then we had busses for awhile, especially during the war. They ran that with the idea that there would be a time when they could pick the men up at the shops.

ME: I see.

MC: It started over in Columbiana. The main place was Leetonia and from Leetonia they would come up through Washingtonville and Salem.

ME: My dad got a draft deferment because he was a bus driver. He was that critical. That is hard to believe is 1981, isn't it?

MC: Yes, but that was so important. It is wonderful to have it.

ME: People just have gasoline for their automobiles and tires during the war.

MC: That is right. That rationing business was something else too. I mean, you had a card and you got it punched for so many pounds of sugar and so many gallons of gas.

ME: You were raising a family during that?

MC: Yes. It was just the two sons. That is not a big family.

ME: No.

MC: But they were reporting to us.

ME: You lived through rationing?

MC: Yes.

ME: Was that just the early part of the war or all through the war?

MC: All through. And then tires and batteries were also rationed.

ME: Gasoline?

MC: Yes.

ME: Were people pretty honest about rationing, do you think?

MC: I think it was fairly successful although there was an awful lot of deviation. A lot of people seemed to be getting what they shouldn't have been.

ME: What is new in that?

MC: Yes, I know. That is true. I remember what Richard weighed at that time. He could hardly believe it. He was five years old. You had to put the kids' weight down. He was 45 pounds.

ME: At five years old?

MC: Yes. He wasn't a heavy kid. He wasn't heavy. Then he started lifting weights. He liked to lift weights. That was his big thing. He built up his physique more or less. He enjoyed that. When we built the garage down at the end of the lot at the other place we made it a 2½ car garage size. There was a space heater in it. They put the water sewer thing down there. I don't mean that we had a flush toilet. It was large enough so he and his friends could lift weights. Before that, there was this big barn and he would go down there and lift weights. The boys were really different and got along well. They both had paper routes and music lessons.

ME: Your two sons?

MC: Yes. They liked each other, Carl and Richard.

ME: Talking about space heaters, when the utilities came into town, were they welcomed by people, the sewer and water lines? Were people happy about that?

MC: Some of them held onto their own . . .

ME: Septic tanks?

MC: Yes. It wasn't so much the septic tanks. They were pretty glad to have them, the sewers. The water source was it. They didn't have meters for a long time. That was a mess. When they finally got them, people were paying \$60 a month water bill. They would complain to me and I almost said, "Goody" right in their face because the rest of us were subsidizing their water. Some people would turn the water on and go away for days and let it run in the lawn.

ME: It makes no sense not to have meters.

MC: No, that is the truth.

ME: That is not fair.

MC: That is right. It isn't fair. I know we paid for a double house. We paid double. There were only three people when my father was gone. There were only three people living. I am glad that those days are all straightened out. They aren't so resentful anymore. They realized that, yes, they have used this. It showed on the meter. They don't just let their kids waste it. That was what was being done before.

ME: Why didn't they have meters to begin with, do you know?

MC: I don't know. I mean, this town is so funny that way. I mean, I don't know. It is . . . Nobody wants to run for the council. Those who do, maybe there was somebody who was using a lot of water and was on council.

ME: It was nice that they were opposed to it?

MC: Yes, so they would be opposed to it.

ME: Do you think their apathy is typical of small towns?

MC: No. I think they get far more done in small towns. Damascus, for example, isn't incorporated. I don't think this is a typical town. I really don't. It has its own peculiar ways. Of course, there is one thing in its favor--that its people are really friendly.

ME: You find the people are really friendly?

MC: Yes, they are really nice, really kind.

ME: Yes.

MC: I guess you can't complain too much. I just think . . .

One reason we built here was that we liked this neighborhood. There are really nice people. The kids, in general, have been nice.

ME: Well, thank you very much.

MC: You are welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW