

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of East Palestine Project

Educational System 1934-1962

O. H. 158

THEODORE R. HERSH

Interviewed

by

Stephan G. Casi

on

April 24, 1979

THEODORE R. HERSH

Theodore R. Hersh was born in Continental, Ohio. By the age of fifteen he had graduated from high school in that same city. Because of a shortage of teachers, Mr. Hersh got his first teaching job at sixteen in the Kiefferville Monroe Township Elementary School during the teens. Three years later, Mr. Hersh became a principal in Continental, Ohio. After his stay in Continental, he moved on to Sylvania, Ohio, where he served as Principal and Superintendent for ten years. Mr. Hersh's next and final position was as Superintendent of East Palestine Schools from 1934 to 1962, when he then retired from the field of education.

Mr. Hersh attended Ohio Northern University and graduated in 1921 with a B.S. in Chemical Engineering. In 1926 he received his M.S. in Education from the University of Michigan, and finally attended Harvard University in 1938 and completed his doctoral requirements with the exception of foreign language.

The honors that Mr. Hersh has received include high school honors with four years of Latin and two years of German, Teacher Personnel Award at the University of Michigan; the last award pertains to Mr. Hersh's role in the leadership in constructing the present East Palestine High School in 1936.

Mr. Hersh currently resides at 372 West North Avenue in East Palestine with the former Mattie King whom he married in the 1920's. He is a member of the Presbyterian Church of East Palestine. Besides his involvement with Kiwanis, he is also active with the Masonic Lodge and American Legion. Mr. Hersh's interest include horticulture, sports, art glass, and bird conservation.

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INTERVIEWEE: THEODORE R. HERSH
INTERVIEWER: Stephan G. Casi
SUBJECT: Educational System 1934-1962
DATE: April 25, 1979

C: This is an interview with Mr. Theodore Hersh for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program by Stephan G. Casi at 372 West North Avenue on April 25, 1979 at 3:30 p.m.

Mr. Hersh, where were you born?

H: I was born in the western part of Ohio, Continental, Ohio, and then I attended the graded school there in the elementary school system and was double promoted once so that, after that double promotion--that's really taking two years of elementary in one year--and then I went to a one-room rural school. We had an excellent teacher there and she double promoted me again, so that I really only spent six years in elementary school and then went to high school.

At that time, there was a state examination that made you eligible to be admitted to the high school called the Boxwell Examination and that originated out of the Department of Education at Columbus. I passed that and went into high school at quite a young age, having really skipped two years you might say. Then after that, I went to high school and then took one year of County Normal School after graduating from high school. And yet, I finished all of that before I was quite sixteen years of age.

At that time, there was a scarcity of teachers and they employed me in a one room rural school.

C: What year was that Mr. Hersh?

- H: I'm not sure of the calendar year, but they employed me there at Kieterville and I had three years of elementary teaching experience right after finishing County Normal School, one year beyond High School graduation. They only required one year of County Normal to teach elementary at that time.
- C: So, you were actually teaching at sixteen years old?
- H: Yes, sixteen years of age. I had three years in the elementary school there. Fifty-three in the first school, and I remember distinctly that my first-grade pupils numbered eight of that 53.
- C: You had 53 in one classroom?
- H: Yes.
- C: It was a one-room school?
- H: A one-room school, yes. Then of course, after outlining all of that work for the different grades, you really were busy because it was grade one, two, three, four, and on up to include eight grades in that one-room rural school where I taught for three years.
- C: Would you say it was difficult to teach that many at one time?
- H: It is difficult because you have to organize so much material. But we used, often times, pretty specific texts as a basis of reading and arithmetic and so forth, fundamentals of education, with teacher's manuals; and made very good progress.
- And then of course, World War I came along and I went into service then and got two years of service, military service there, immediately following that, and then went back and finished my college at Ohio Northern to get my Bachelor's Degree in Chemical Engineering, but there were no engineering jobs when I graduated. You just couldn't get a job in chemistry and that, but I always liked chemistry and so, I had a major in chemistry and a major in math.
- C: So, that was after World War I?
- H: Right.
- C: That's when you got your degree?

- H: That would be in, well, I started back in 1918, that would be.
- C: Just to go back to the one-room classroom for a minute, did the children help one another quite a bit?
- H: Not a great deal. It was pretty much helping the student through the textbook and the guidance of the teacher. In other words, there was so little time for each grade that you had to outline things pretty carefully for the pupil and then check up at your class recitation to see whether they were making adequate progress in that grade level that you had. But I think the students picked up a great deal from the upper grades as a lower grade student, but as far as it being inter-student, it was not a situation like that. It was pretty much textbook, teacher, and guidance in the grade level in which they were located.
- C: So, after you got your degree, then what did you do following the degree?
- H: Following the degree, I took a high school teaching job in the middle school, then more commonly called junior high.
- C: Where was this Mr. Hersh?
- H: This was at Continental. In that experience, I kind of established myself as pretty much a person that thought that a student should learn something of respect for the law and order along with the education; otherwise they might use it to disadvantage rather than to the benefit of society.

From there, after two years of high school experience, I went as principal to Sylvania, Ohio; if you know where that is. Then from principal of Sylvania, and teacher of chemistry--at the time the principal also taught a class or two--to Superintendent of Sylvania and then superintendent here. [East Palestine]

In the education area, I went on then and got my Master's Degree from the University of Michigan and then went to Harvard and completed all of my Degree except their language requirement. I figured it was hardly worth it to me to get a Degree, that is, take a year off and meet that Harvard language requirement. So, I just completed what formal education I had at Harvard then.

- C: Just to go back for a minute, what did you take--a year

- off to get your Master's and then . . . ?
- H: No, I took that in the summer, because when I was in Sylvania, I was only 45 minutes from the University of Michigan and they required you to take, I think it was four summers and you could take one year for extension during the year on Saturday classes; Friday night or Saturday classes.
- C: When you did your doctoral work, were you a Superintendent in East Palestine or were you still in Sylvania?
- H: I was here in East Palestine at that time.
- C: And what did you have to do, take a leave of absence or how did it work?
- H: No, they admitted me at Harvard so that I could take that work in the summer time. Then I would maybe take four summer terms there for that part of it, and they were education courses.
- C: Did you have a family? Were you married now, at this time?
- H: Yes. We were married when I was in Sylvania and so, there was just the wife and I when we came here. And we had a little bad luck with a daughter and then we had a son after we were here for several years.
- C: When you arrived in East Palestine, that was 1934?
- H: August, my contract started August 1, 1934.
- C: How would you describe the school system when you came here as far as the size of the school system and how many teachers and maybe a little bit of the curriculum they had when you came?
- H: Well, at that time, East Palestine always kept in the small city classification and with that limitation, with not very many pupils from our surrounding area, our attendance was perhaps fifteen hundred, something like that in the school. Unity and Negly Districts were added to the City under my administration.
- C: No busses at this time?
- H: No busses at all. Everybody walked to school and that was one of the things--the Board of Education would

take in any of the outlying territory at that time because they would have had to have gone into school bussing, transportation; they just wanted to stay away from it, because that expense fell upon the Board of Education. At that time, we didn't have state help like at the present time, where the state shares a portion of the transportation expense.

Then, after they began to share the expense of transportation, the Negley area was always very friendly toward us and they didn't want to go into the Beaver Local District, and so finally, they voted to join with us. And then Unity District next voted 100% to go with us rather than go to a County School System.

When the Department of Education required them to affiliate with some school that had the full twelve years rather than--at that time, Unity had only to the eighth grade up there at the Center. At that time, they chose to go here, so that way we have in our school district, extending to the north up to the Firestone Farm just outside of Columbiana. And of course, the Negley District is adjoining the Beaver Local to the south that way.

C: How many buildings were you responsible for when you came?

H: When I came in 1934, we had a Wood Street Building that was built. I don't remember the exact age, but I dug out some old papers of that time to get a little history and the headlines on the papers in this county when they opened that Wood Street Building, was that it was the best educational building in Columbiana County.

Of course, coming here in 1934, it was rather hard for me to realize the Building was then rated that high. The school building had made quite a number of improvements, a great deal of progress after that, and then it was discarded and torn down.

But basically, the East Palestine District was noted for its college preparatory work here. It was basically for the professional person, the doctor, the lawyer, the preacher and that type of person, not catering to vocational education. And we were beginning to need that because there was a need for more vocational education. So, we tried to move in that direction because when I came here they had a two-room portable building

that housed the vocational department, which was started with one teacher and then there were two teachers and so forth.

And the other thing, we never had a paid instrumental music teacher before that. In fact, the Department of Education and the State didn't consider instrumental music as an area of educational participation and your state auditor's office always ruled that you couldn't take tax money to pay for that sort of thing that wasn't legally recognized in Ohio.

- C: How many principals did you have that were under you and was there one principal for each building?
- H: One principal for each building at that time. Requirements for principals was not very strict at that time, and it was more the competence in administrative ability with not even a Bachelor's Degree required. Just as an example, Miss Iva Stewart, she only had two years and Miss Mable Van Fossan only had two years of training beyond high school work at that time, and yet, they were elementary principals.
- C: So, you had two women who were principals?
- H: Right.
- C: When you think today, women are having a very difficult time getting into administration, yet when you came here in 1934, there already were two women?
- H: Right.
- C: Maybe I can ask you about the teachers? Off hand, if you could think how many teachers you had? At the time you came, were talking about the 1930's here, did most of the teachers then, and I'm sure maybe even in the 1940's, live in town?
- H: Practically all of them lived in town and very few commuted from surrounding areas. And at that time, although we were just an average in the state as far as payment of wages is concerned, we were able to get select teachers from colleges like Oberlin and Ohio Wesleyan and almost anyplace that you would want.
- C: Could you, if you don't mind mentioning, when you came here, what kind of salary the superintendent was given and also, what were the teachers making in the 1930's?

H: I don't think I should say that out-loud in public, because somebody else who might get this tape would think that I was not realistic in relation to all factors of salary increase.

When I taught in a one-room, all-grades elementary school, I purchased a three piece, mans, all wool, Hart Schaffner and Marx suit for \$25.00. Price one today at the Southern Park Mall.

Oberlin College had eight graduates with chemistry-science-education majors when I was looking for such a replacement. Business companies hired all eight for starting salaries of \$8,000.00 when it was a "sin" to pay over \$6,000.00 to teachers. The one who is now still here, Dennis Zettle, who is a superior and professional teacher, was found at Marietta College and wanted to be in this area on account of parent's illness. He will teach each student in high school all of the "basics" of chemistry and as much more as the student wishes to pursue. Such teachers are priceless in salary compensation.

We're in inflation now and it requires a lot more money to operate, but you would find many factors involved. Of course, a dollar would buy so much more at that time that I think it hardly makes a fair comparison to mention that in relation to today's salaries because immediately, current teachers would begin to think that that's a tremendous increase, but there are so many factors that if you get an honest comparison, you have to have some inflationary values and other things that are involved.

C: Did you hear teachers complain about wages in those days like they do today?

H: I don't think that you heard very much because there was an abundant supply of good professional teachers available at that time. In 1934, which was just following that Depression, there were so many people, good people, unemployed in so many fields that it was a matter of getting "bread and butter" to survive.

C: So, when you think of the 1930's here, it was never difficult for you as a superintendent to find people to fill certain vacancies.

H: No, and yet in some of the more recent years, it was very difficult. We had to practically confine our

selections to teachers available around in the smaller colleges, which are good. But those teachers at that period would come from Geneva College and Mount Union, which are good training schools, but it didn't give you the opportunity to pick a cross section from a wider area.

C: When you say later years, you mean in the 1950's and 1960's?

H: Yes, well, even 1940's and 1950's at that time. And then there developed a scarcity of teachers that were available for employment.

C: When you think of the 1930's, you mentioned that your curriculum was more or less college prep. Did you have any type of subjects related to music and art and sports? Were sports a very small part of your school system when you came? It's such a large part of school systems today.

H: Sports didn't predominate there as much as they do today, although from my own personal opinion, I can't see any reason why we shouldn't have competence in all areas of your curriculum including sports; and football and that area was just a matter of what--bigness in size of school? Now it has developed into a game of movement and skill and various possibilities that way.

C: Let's talk about the financial situation during the 1930's; not so good, we've got the Depression. Did the school system ever feel a crunch as far as funds and operating costs because of the Depression, or was there always a plentiful supply and you just operated under normal conditions almost?

H: During those Depression years, most of the school districts of Ohio had problems of tax collection and as a result, their funds would be limited and then there was permissive legislation that enabled a Board of Education to issue script in paying teachers and so forth. But East Palestine was very business-like operated and in all of those Depression years, they never missed a teacher payroll. They collected adequate money even though it was maybe down to a 70% collection of taxes that they always figured to collect enough money to have money to pay current expenses and teacher's salaries. And that was one of the reasons I came here.

Of course, at that time, W. S. George Pottery had a

payroll here, bi-monthly, of \$36,000.00 to \$42,000.00 every two weeks. And putting that much money in circulation here made them just a little different in that they had prestige in not issuing the script that was used to pay teachers in many Districts.

That script was acceptable to pay taxes and so forth and so it moved and bought things and stores recognized it so that they didn't have any problem in the Board of Education circulating script. But it was a much more solid foundation to operate on a cash, money, basis than on a paper money issued by the Board of Education.

C: The fact that there was a Depression, did you have less kids coming to school because many had to help out with the family or did the student enrollment remain steady during the 1930's? Do you remember?

H: It remained very steady here all during those years. It was the dads and mothers that had the financial problems and in working, because there just was no work available or no employment available for them and it was a matter of--there weren't those Government subsidies and so forth at that time at all; so that the local communities had to work that out to see that people in that community were able to be housed and eat, have adequate food. Family gardens were very abundant in that era.

C: Do you remember, during the 1930's any unique problem with students? Were there any discipline problems so to speak, that you really remember? Kids were pretty well behaved?

H: Very, very good citizens and that was a part of our philosophy here, but of course, I always have indicated that the most important situation in a good school system is: whenever you employ a new teacher, to attempt to get a better one than you had before. In other words, you can't solve all of the problems of the school system in one year, but it takes a length of time, step by step employing or recommending good teachers, who, in turn, will upgrade the school system. We had some very professional teachers at that time, right following those depression years, because it was a pretty selective group with an abundance of teachers available.

C: And you would say the community and the parents were

very much behind the schools during that period?

H: In the smaller communities, the school was the center of the activities about which that area participated.

During those war years, I remember one particular thing where the federal employment office asked us to help a great deal in harvesting crops and this being an apple and fruit area, the big problem was to get the orchard work done in the fall before freezing. So, they asked us to participate in an apple picking program and we organized two groups in the high school and took one week off to help harvest apples and other crops. And at that time, we picked in that week, better than 38,000 bushels of apples, the students in the high school.

The most appreciative one, the manager of the Firestone Farm up here called me and said, "Could you spare a load to help them pick up potatoes?" Because at that time, the Firestone Homestead farm up here was raising potatoes. They planted these big Kataudin potato variety and the soil was very fertile, rainfall was abundant that year and I never have seen a more abundant crop of potatoes up there.

As we took out of our group of high school one load, we told them that we were separating the men from the boys to pick potatoes if they wanted to earn a little more than apple employment. I remember especially that one girl insisted that she wanted to go along with that group. She lived in Unity and had picked potatoes before and she wanted to earn the extra money as well as the other students. On Monday of that week, that group picked up 1,800 bushels of potatoes on that farm after they had been lifted, and every other day it was over that; so that they averaged more than 2,000 bushels each day for that week in picking up potatoes there.

And it was a beautiful week weather-wise. This week that we closed school was the first week in October and it was a beautiful week, dry and nice for picking up potatoes as well as apples. The next week it started to snow at this Firestone Farm Manager had gotten all of these potatoes under shelter in one week's time without having to be involved in the wet soil and sticky mud and so forth. He was most appreciative of getting that job done, but of course, the other orchard folks were very appreciative too, because the weather seemed to turn cold with much snow and rain in October, the second week of October.

That was one harvesting situation during the war, but as far as school attendance--our school attendance was very good. It took a lot of community cooperation because we didn't have a big federal government that took that over. It was all a local situation,

C: Right.

In the 1940's, how about the situation with teachers? When you think back about hiring teachers in the 1940's, was there a surplus at that time, again, of teachers?

H: There was still somewhat of a surplus, but not as abundant as immediately in 1934 and that period of time. One of the other involvements of course, was to get deferment from the Selective Service, too, but that didn't seem to be too much of a problem, because they recognized that schools were a necessary function even during war time.

C: Now, there were some changes that you were responsible for as far as the buildings. We probably passed that up I believe. You were here when the new high school was built. Is that correct?

H: That is correct. In fact, most of the building improvements have taken place since I've been here. There was the high school building. It's hard to imagine today that you could buy a high school for \$290,000.00.

C: What year was that?

H: 1936. That was 1936, is the year the high school was built. We occupied it the 1st of January in 1937.

C: Prior to that, where had the high school been?

H: The high school had been where the present middle school is located, before the addition was put on the middle school. You perhaps know the old part of the middle school building, and that was utilized for the high school and that was the place where the two room portable building functioned with vocational education.

C: Your building was in the middle school, your office?

H: Yes, and then of course, we've had a building program whereby the auditorium was built on here. That was in the initial plan, but it had to be delayed a few years to work the financial part out. Then there was the

other addition onto the rear of the high school, which was completed in, well, it was in the 1060's, 1961, and that was when the middle school addition and gymnasium was built on there at the middle school building.

C: So, during this period, you talk about two new additions at the high school in the 1960's and the middle school. Funds must have been adequate for you. No problem with levies in town here?

H: When I came here, school levies for buildings and a new high school had been defeated and some of the folks tried to discourage us about presenting them, at that time. But then came along the Public Works Administration from Washington that would take care of 45% of the cost of it. So, that made it very desirable what, would you say, educationally, a good buy. In addition, the dollar would buy so much more at that time. They passed that issue and then we had an accumulation in the bond fund that we couldn't use for anything else and we put the auditorium on the high school building, which was in the original plan, but we thought we wouldn't have enough money to equip the new school building with furniture and equipment of science and home economics, and other departments. So, the auditorium was built on shortly after the completion of the new high school building in 1937.

And then the other bond issue, which the people approved, \$650,000.00 for the addition to the middle school, the new part of the middle school and the gymnasium at the middle school.

C: So, during your stay as Superintendent, there wasn't a great amount of resistance as far as supporting the schools? Levies were quite successful as far as bringing in up the additional funds?

H: Yes, generally speaking, the levies were quite successful. I went back and read a lot of old school board notes, minutes of the Board of Education, and the thing that I gathered from the community that when the Taggart Building and this middle school, main part, was built, that people in the district didn't get value received for the dollars expended and so we decided that our theme song on our board promotion was that we were going to get value received for what we spent.

I think we had such an excellent school board, with business ability to work with here in East Palestine, that it made it easy because they tried to exercise

every policy possible to get value for the dollars they spent and I'm sure that the people in the community recognize that.

- C: When you talk about the school board, today we seem to be getting away from having professional people on the board. When you were Superintendent, thinking back through your tenure in East Palestine, did you have a lot of professional people that you would say, were business minded and had a good deal of education?
- H: Two or three of those persons were executives with the George Pottery, who had had college and other background experience. Another member was Dr. Atchison, who was a good member and he was interested particularly in improving our music department at that time. And so, we really had for the first band director and music supervisor, a man by the name of Eugene Witters, who went to Akron University as head of the Music Department at the University. And he was a capable promoter and a capable instructor and put in many more hours than the usual day that you have under today's negotiations, that is, he did a good job in the music area. Another man on the board was a businessman who travelled for one of the big paint companies here. Also, this Mr. Oliver's father worked as Assistant State Director of Education in Columbus.

When Mr. Hissong was State Director of Education, he said that in his association at that time, there was a tendency to change from Board of Education with a higher degree of education and background and he could see that all over the State of Ohio. I don't think it was characteristic of any one community, but we did have a very excellent Board of Education. It went through our high school building program. Mr. Bycroft, who was one of the executives over at the W. S. George Pottery, was President of the Board and you just didn't find better folks and more efficient folks to work for. And their objective was to do the things that were best educationally for our school district. It wasn't a matter of political advantage or that sort of thing. It was strictly one question: What is best for education?

- C: When we go back to the 1940's here, the students again, were they good students? Were there any discipline problems emerging? Did you see any change in the students now, after the war especially? Did you see anything different about the community?

- H: Well, I think that our community here has changed a little in that respect, in regard to the type of community. The different factories that moved in have brought more of a cross section of what you would have in an industrial community, and so, I think there was some little difference in that respect. We had very few what do you say--citizenship and respect for law and order problems and that sort of thing.
- C: No vandalism during this period? It was unheard of almost, in East Palestine?
- H: No vandalism. Almost unheard of, that's right. Of course, I realize that when you get more of an industrialized community, you add to that cross section in relation to the number of problems which you have which you, no doubt, have experienced here in recent years, too.
- C: As far as parents go, today, I feel there's a shift to having the parents always defending the kids and the teachers very often are wrong. When you think about the 1940's and the 1930's even, were the teachers right and did the parents say, "If the teacher said that's the way it's going to be done," that's the way it was? Were they very respected in the community?
- H: Parents in that period of time, with very few exceptions, always respected what their guidance folks and teachers thought was the better thing to do. Very seldom would we ever have to take a case of school citizenship over to the probate judge or a place like that. Of course, even at that time, they said that we utilized the probate court the least of any one of the schools in the county, but we just didn't have problems like some of the other industrialized cities at that time. It was more of just an atmosphere of cooperation and trying to get a good education, and cooperation of the parents was very much in evidence in 99% of the cases.
- C: How about if we got to the 1950's? Are there any things that stand out in your mind as to changes that took place in the school system? Any unique things in the community that you can think of?
- H: Well, from the time that we built the building over here, we tried to give more vocational work here because at that time we didn't have a special vocational school and for that reason we tried to add to the curriculum. We had a little more of a guidance opera-

tion, but not anywhere equal to the personnel that you have in the guidance department that is required by the State Department of Education nowadays.

Most of the guidance was a professional association with the teacher and the pupil and of course, that's always one of the reasons why excellent professional teachers are important in the school system. That's basic, you can't solve all those problems in one day, but you can improve them all the time.

C: By the 1950's, could you see the government getting more involved in the schools and education and funding, more or less trying to dictate, or could you more or less still run your own show here in East Palestine; what the community wanted?

H: Here we participated very little in Federal projects and so, we didn't get into some of those Federal activities that are pretty commonplace now. In the first place, I think the Constitution says that the major responsibility for education is with each of the States of the United States. And through some of these non-educational financial programs of the Federal Government, it has crept into the place where they provide some of the money and they also tell you the range of things that are involved, as far as they're concerned.

Just as an example, I have understood that the present administration were asked why we didn't have more minorities in East Palestine, and you'd never get anything like that out of Washington before. It's interesting to me because I believe that education as a whole will make more progress and will advance much more even though there are some States down a little in educational values, but there are other States that are so much higher in educational values that when you begin to average it up . . . I think education would be better if it were delegated to the local community and the state, rather than out of Washington.

C: During the 1950's when we have the Russians putting Sputnik in Space, there's sort of a drive for science programs and math. Do you recall anything in East Palestine that's related to this?

H: Yes. When that thought was publicized, immediately the nation seemed to want two things; science and math. But from my point of view, science and math, since I have majors in those two areas, they got to the place

where that was the only areas that you needed. It was over-emphasized for a while, although subjects like chemistry and science had made tremendous steps of progress in that period. I think they forgot that there are other areas in the arts and education which also need competent people.

C: So, East Palestine didn't jump on the bandwagon as far as that goes? You already had programs involved with that?

H: Yes, we had programs that were involved. And I even remember one of my students from up at Sylvania who has remained a friend. He took chemical engineering and also mechanical, a combination of those, and immediately when the atom bomb was being developed, he was assigned a responsible job to help produce that first atomic bomb. Those folks were kept on the base there, and all of their letters that went out of there were censored by those security officials so that for about a year and a half, when he'd write to me, he'd write me a two-page letter that didn't say anything.

We were accustomed to getting quite a little information because he had college engineering in chemistry. And then of course, after they dropped that atomic bomb on Japan, I understood why he couldn't say anything about the things that were common to us in communication that way.

I often joke with him now about it. I couldn't understand his letters for about a year and a half.

C: So, your curriculum in the 1950's more or less stayed the same, it was still college prep, geared to the college prep student.

H: Yes.

C: Who were your principals during the 1940's and 1950's? Could you recall some of those people that served under you?

H: Yes. One who is retiring this year, Mr. Cooper, was principal and he is up near Rootstown as local superintendent of that area and retiring this year. We've had very good help in that direction. We had a few problems. We didn't want our new building defaced. We spent time to track those little things down so that they didn't get out of hand and we would correct

them and those principals were very capable and persons who had objectives of utilizing education for the worthwhile values. As an example, well, it's an example of respect for law and order and it follows over from education into adulthood when they're framed in some of those areas of that type.

C: You mentioned Mr. Cooper, do you remember any other teachers or principals who were in East Palestine who moved on and became quite successful in education or other areas? Are there any you could name?

H: Well, we have many persons who have moved on educationally to more successful places.

C: Maybe those that stand out in your mind if you can think of them?

H: I think that it's no different in the educational field of progress, folks who have been here, than it is with football coaches or any others. You've had many that have had their first position here and then become head coaches. Of course, anything out before the public, it is a little more easily evaluated by them than is something where it mostly happens in the classroom and in the area of education.

We've had a lot of very capable science teachers here. Those that have gone like Mr. Dickey went on and got his Doctor's Degree in chemistry at Ohio State. There were many different ones that way, Mr. Henning was another one. And that would apply to almost any area of our educational system here.

But the objective always was to get a better teacher when you had a vacancy and I think you do those things just step by step and yet those are the measures of successes of individuals like that in science or math.

They [the public] see it a little more conspicuously in the sports area because the downtown folks tend to evaluate them by the wins and the losses and that isn't as easily done in your curriculum area or the teaching area. That is, there are fewer front page headlines in educational classroom curriculum. John Reid was a Superior student of history and social studies and began pupil achievement,

C: When you were superintendent, did you feel community pressure as far as coaches went, if they weren't win-

ning? Like there's community pressure today in schools, or really, the community didn't exert that pressure on the administration?

H: I think you always have that, community pressures on almost any situation. Of course, if you attain a group who have had teaching success, just like Mr. Dickey over here, is an outstanding science, physics, and chemistry teacher. He doesn't make the headlines like those other ones, but he should make headlines if we were trying to recognize him.

I only remember of one time when he was recognized as being a good teacher and he isn't the only good teacher but there are many others just as deserving. It's just a part of the system that they don't recognize the other categories of education as they should really be given recognition.

C: To close out the 1950's in East Palestine here, do we still have the parents supporting the schools and the students. Are they still pretty well behaved or when you see the 1960's approaching, do you see more of a change in the students here or are still things pretty good?

H: Of course, I don't have enough contact with students since 1962 because my retirement was in August of 1962, but you always have some pressures and that sort of thing. But on the other hand, we didn't seem to notice any outstanding difference up to 1962 when I left there, although you always have some few problems in a school system, but you don't spend your major time trying to solve them.

Now, I think with the circumstances since then, just as I've observed as an outsider, that there are more problems and vandalism and disrespect for "law and order" and perhaps it reflects something of the adult philosophy as well as the student philosophy. It may be a part of what they get at home in relation to citizenship.

C: So, you were in East Palestine as Superintendent until 1962 and that would give you about 28 years as Superintendent. Today they say the average superintendent is in one school from three to five years. What would you attribute to your long stay as Superintendent and your success with the community for 28 years?

H: Oh, I don't think you can place it in any one place, that is, any particular one reason. It's just a matter

of the picture, although my friends and superintendent friends used to kid me a little bit about that.

I had an opportunity to go to Conneaut, Ohio up here, which is supposed to be an advancement, but I couldn't see much difference in what I had and that. It's for that reason.

When I was back to the University of Michigan confer- ring with some of the educational folks, they said up there at the Placement Office, that some of the folks think that the hazard of administrative jobs now is so great that the salary differential isn't worth that many headaches. So, I think every place should recog- nize that there are more problems of citizenship.

- C: But you have been pleasing the people in the community, I'm sure that they were quite satisfied with what was going on, otherwise I don't think you would have been rehired year after year for 28 years.

Looking back on your 28 years as Superintendent in East Palestine, if there were any changes you would have liked to have seen or if you were able to make them, what things would they be? Maybe something, looking back in retrospect and say, "You know, I always wanted to do this in the school system." Can you think of any? Were there ever any?

- H: I think that every educational system has opportuni- ties for improvement and no matter whether it was thirty years ago or today, and there should be changes made to improve the school system. And I think there always will be things we learn that will improve this educational system and on that basis, it's just a mat- ter of setting up your priorities in relation to what is of greater importance and what is of lesser impor- tance.

Just as I had mentioned before, you can't solve all the problems in the world in one day or in one year or a very short length of time, but if you continuously improve all of those categories, in relation to what your priorities have been established by the administra- tion and the Board of Education, then I think that there will be opportunities for improvement now and there will be ten years hence.

Things that we know, it's just like many areas where we do not have all the facts of the situation as to whether it does improve the situation, but if it im- proves it, that change should be made. And I think

that's with us now as well as twenty years back or twenty years ahead. There will still be opportunities to better improve education by change.

C: After your retirement in 1962, you stayed in East Palestine in your present home here now. Were there any things in East Palestine as far as education that you saw? You could see some changes that maybe you didn't particularly like or you wish hadn't come about. Were there any things that you saw changing that maybe were inevitable in a way when looking back after your retirement?

And we can go right to the 1970's, too. When you think about the 1960's and 1970's in education, more or less sticking to East Palestine, what changes did you see that surprised you or you never thought would happen?

H: Well, I personally thought that we were a little slow here on vocational education, but again, I don't know whether they have the right solution now or not. In Mahoning County, they have one vocational school for that whole County and they do a splendid job over there. Here in the County, we have a vocational school at East Liverpool. We have a vocational school at Salem and Salem had one of the better ones even back in my time because industry helped finance it, because it helped prepare folks for the jobs that were available in Salem. But, maybe second-guessing you would say, that I would have just rather have seen a vocational school or just one in Columbiana County, but when one was granted to East Liverpool, and Salem wanted one and then that just left a little center area here available, which doesn't permit a vocational school equal to the Mahoning County Vocational School.

C: You said that there was a portable building here which had a type of vocational instruction for students right? Years ago?

H: Yes, but it was a minimum.

C: Did you always actually feel that you weren't meeting the needs of some of those students? Did you want to enlarge the vocational school here in East Palestine when you were Superintendent?

H: I would have been happy if we would have had more money to spend for it because vocational schools require a lot of equipment to familiarize the students with different

types of employable occupations. As I said before, that when we moved over to the new high school we made a step up and improved, locally here, and so that it wasn't that we didn't make any improvements, but there was need in Ohio for greater amount of vocational training to fit or to prepare the folks who were going into industry and it helps industry too, because of a greater skill and competence in that area. It's just one of the categories of education.

C: Well, I want to thank you very much, Mr. Hersh, for allowing me to interview you.

H: Well, I appreciate having a nice chat with you this afternoon. I hope I have covered something of interest for you.

END OF INTERVIEW