

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

YSU Education Project

Education in Youngstown

O. H. 171

ELLEN NEWMAN

Interviewed

by

Jeanne Ontko

on

May 28, 1981

ELLEN C. NEWMAN

Miss Ellen C. Newman was born in Youngstown, Ohio in 1913, the daughter of John P. and Ellen Edmond Newman. A lifelong resident of Youngstown, Miss Newman was educated at Saint Edward's Elementary School and Rayen High School. After graduating from high school, Miss Newman attended the University of Pittsburgh, receiving both here B.A. degree in 1935 and her Masters in education in 1940.

Miss Newman taught bookkeeping and commercial courses at Chaney High School from 1935 until 1970. During the summers of those years she worked at General Fireproofing, U.S. Steel, Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company and the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company.

Five years after retiring in 1970, Miss Newman joined the staff at the Arms Museum as a tour guide. A member of Saint Edward's Church, she is also involved in Delta Kappa Gamma, the Catholic Collegiate Association, and the Mahoning Valley Historical Society. Miss Newman also keeps busy doing handwork crafts, reading and bowling.

Jeanne Ontko

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INTERVIEWEE: ELLEN C. NEWMAN  
INTERVIEWER: Jeanne Ontko  
SUBJECT: Education in Youngstown  
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O: This is an interview with Miss Ellen Newman for the Youngstown State University Oral History Project on Education in Youngstown by Jeanne Ontko at 1835 Selma Avenue in Youngstown, Ohio on May 18, 1981 at 7:30 p.m.

Miss Newman could you give me a short biography of yourself, where you went to school, your family background?

N: I was born here in Youngstown, my parents came here from Pittsburgh. My father was a bookkeeper for Republic Steel. I went to Saint Edwards School, Rayen School, and to the University of Pittsburgh.

O: Why did your parents come here from Pittsburgh?

N: My father worked in Pittsburgh for Republic Steel and he came here when they first opened their general offices here, I think in 1911, before he and my mother were married. He was born in Maryland and had worked in the coal mines down there in Maryland, but he came up to Pittsburgh when he was twenty or twenty-one and took some business courses.

O: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

N: I have three brothers and one sister and they're all in business. My one brother is an attorney, one is a CPA, and one has an insurance business, and my sister was a bookkeeper and I taught bookkeeping.

O: Oh, was it at Rayen that you taught?

N: No, I taught at Chaney.

O: Oh, Chaney, oh you went to Rayen, okay I see. When you were going to Rayen School, I'd like you to compare how your own high school experience, compare it to with when you taught at high school. Do you see any difference or do you remember some of the teachers you used to have when you went to Rayen?

N: Oh, I remember a lot of the teachers. I took straight academic work in high school and had some of the old Rayen teachers, Belle Pyle, Miss Lida Baldwin, Miss Miriam Thomas, Mr. Fred Thomas, some of the teachers that had been there for years and were very good teachers.

O: When you say academic course work, what do you mean by that?

N: I took four years of Latin, three years of French, four years of math, only three years of English because that was all that was required at that time, and one year of science, I guess.

O: How many kids were in your class, your graduating class?

N: About 165.

O: That's pretty big then, wasn't it?

N: Yes.

O: When you were in high school, did you decide to become a teacher then or what made you decide to become a teacher?

N: Well, at that point I liked to study and I thought I wanted to go to college although it was in the Depression and I thought it would be out of the question really, but there wasn't much that you thought about for girls to do except a teacher and go into nursing and I knew I did not want to go into nursing. So my aunt and grandmother lived in Pittsburgh and I was able to go up there and live with them with free room and board.

O: Is that why you chose the University of Pittsburgh then because of the people that lived there, because you could stay there?

N: Yes, I could stay there.

O: You got your BA degree there?

N: Yes. I majored in mathematics and I took a minor in commercial subjects only because it said in the catalog that that would be a good choice to take as a minor. Then when I graduated that was where the opening was so I always taught commercial. I never taught anything else.

O: How much course work did you have to take to get a major in mathematics?

N: Oh, we were on a semester program then rather than quarters and I really don't remember how many semester hours I had to have, but I took math every year, of course.

O: Four years then, that you went through. When you went for your Masters, what was the date you went? You went right afterwards then?

N: For my Masters?

O: Yes.

N: Well, I found out when I was in the middle of my senior year that I needed bookkeeping for my Ohio certificate in commercial and I hadn't taken any bookkeeping. I had just taken shorthand and typing and some of the other business subjects, so I started my final semester of school and I took one year of bookkeeping in that last semester and then I took another semester of bookkeeping in that first summer, and since I had started they gave me graduate credit for that semester of bookkeeping so I went on in the summers then. Also at that time, they had what they called extension courses here in Youngstown from the University of Pittsburgh.

O: Here at Youngstown?

N: Some of the professors came here to Youngstown and most of the classes were down at the Board of Education Building as I remember, and they were held after school or on Saturdays. I got a number of credits that way.

O: Oh, that would be good, that would be convenient.

- N: Yes, that would be convenient. A lot of people at that time got their Masters at Pittsburgh just because of that.
- O: Yes, one of the other guides was telling me about that, that's how they did it. I think it was at the Board of Education he said that the classes were held. You know how it took you five years to get your Masters, well you were working then in between?
- N: Yes and that was just summers and these afternoon and evening classes.
- O: Well, I'm glad it only took me two years to get my Masters degree. After you got your Masters, did you go right into a job here teaching?
- N: Oh, I got my job right out of college when I got my Bachelors Degree.
- O: Did you apply?
- N: I applied at several places around Pittsburgh and around here in Ohio and of course I applied in Youngstown. I didn't know until about the last week in August that I had a job. They called me to the superintendent's office and there was an opening at Chaney for bookkeeping. Then after I got a job, many of my friends who were English and social studies majors were pretty upset because I got a job and they didn't. It was still hard to get a teaching job, but that's where the opening was.
- O: Of course, it seems like even now that they have more English teachers.
- N: Well of course, I had a minor in English and a minor in social studies only because those were required courses to take.
- O: What grades did you teach then at Chaney?
- N: Bookkeeping started in the tenth grade and at the beginning I had mostly beginning bookkeeping classes. Chaney was a junior-senior high at that time. I had business math in the ninth grade, I had some seventh and eighth grade math classes occasionally. I did teach a geometry class to sophomores for a couple of years and I had some juniors and seniors in class.

O: When did it become a senior high then?

N: In 1954 the new Chaney High School opened on South Hazelwood Avenue and it was just a senior high. The former Chaney on North Hazelwood Avenue became West Elementary and Junior High.

O: Oh, I didn't know that!

N: The original school had elementary and all the way through to the twelveth grade. The elementary wing was a separate wing, a separate principal, but the high school was junior and senior high school.

O: What was your favorite grade to teach and was book-keeping your favorite subject?

N: Yes, bookkeeping was my favorite subject, although I taught shorthand and typing at different times, but bookkeeping was my favorite subject. I think the tenth graders I liked the best. Even when I started to teach I thought that the seventh and eighth graders were just the hardest people to handle.

O: Really, why?

N: Oh, I don't know, they just seemed to be so hard to handle. They didn't want to sit still maybe.

O: Oh, that could be! What grade school would they be coming from then, now this was when Chaney was still West? What grade school?

N: They came from Stambaugh and from Washington and Saint Brendan's and Holy Name.

O: Oh, where is West at?

N: Well, it's on Hazelwood, on North Hazelwood. Do you know where Saint Brendan's is?

O: Yes.

N: Well, it's right next, the next block.

O: Is that it?

N: Yes, that's West.

O: Then Chaney would be farther south.

- N: Yes, almost down to McCollum Road.
- O: When I come home from the museum and home from school too, I go down where the cemetery is.
- N: Belle Vista Avenue.
- O: Belle Vista yes, and then I can always see kids coming home so I assumed that Chaney was around in that area. How many students would you have in a class when you first started?
- N: Oh, sometimes I'll bet there were at least 35 in the classes. They were quite large, the school was pretty crowded. Five classes and a study hall or maybe six classes all the time.
- O: Then you had over one hundred kids then definitely. Did you like having big classes?
- N: I didn't know any different then, that's the way it was. We had, of course, lots of papers to grade and there was that kind of a difference.
- O: Was homework important then for bookkeeping?
- N: Homework was important and that's one thing that changed as the years went along. People were less and less willing to do homework. Of course in bookkeeping we always started all of our projects in class and discussed things and then supervised them as they got started on the work. They had to do some work at home. They get more and more resentful I think of homework.
- O: Really?
- N: They didn't want to do homework.
- O: How much homework per se would you have to do as a teacher? I'm talking about preparation, grading papers, how big a part of teaching is that or was that for you?
- N: It was quite a big part. If you had free periods during the day you usually spent that whole free period grading papers and then at certain times when I had large projects coming in at once I always have to take them home to grade. Preparations, setting up lesson plans took time, although we did not have a



principal that required written lesson plans or even checked them. He never came around to see if you had lesson plans, but we had something worked out so you had an idea, of course, what we were doing each day.

O: Well then, afterwards, did you have to send in lesson plans and things like that so you'd get more structured?

N: No, we never had to send in lesson plans when I was at Chaney, but we were supposed to have an outline at least there so in case something happened and we weren't there, a substitute would be able to follow it.

O: Who was your principal?

N: Dr. Ricksecker, C.W. Ricksecker was the principal of the old Chaney and the first year down at the new building and he was a very, very strict disciplinarian.

O: How do you spell his name?

N: R-I-C-K-S-E-C-K-E-R.

O: As a disciplinarian, how was he?

N: Oh, he was very, very strict with both pupils and teachers. He was good to work for as far as I was concerned because he expected people to do the right thing. He went around the hall all the time with a pen and pencil and if he saw someone doing something wrong he would stop them, "What's your name," write it down and stick the list in his pocket to be dealt with later. At noontime he went out and patrolled the streets all around the school to see if there were any pupils out there who should be in the building.

O: Truancy?

N: He was really very, very strict, but that's why Chaney's name developed as a good school! Teachers wanted to go to Chaney to work because it was easier to work under a program of discipline that way. I'm afraid that's not the way it is now.

O: How long was he there then?

N: He left in 1955, he retired when he was seventy - 1955. He was one year down in the new building. He got that going and then he retired.

- O: Did you have any discipline problems or how did you resolve them if you did? Can you recall any instances?
- N: Oh yes, there were lots of problems with people. They come to the tenth grade from several junior high schools where they have been "upper classmen" and it takes them some time to adjust to being "under classmen".
- O: What would they do, what were some of the things they would do?
- N: Mostly talk out of turn and not pay attention when we were trying to discuss things.
- O: How would you handle that?
- N: Well, sometimes it was a problem; let me think.
- O: Would it be easy, well, I'm sure it wouldn't be easy. It would be a difficult problem, but would you send them to the principal?
- N: Not unless it got very, very out of hand. I didn't like to do that, I liked to settle it in the class. To just talk to them, try to get them calmed down oh, maybe change seats so they weren't sitting with the people to whom they could talk all the time, sometimes have them come in after school for a detention, but I didn't like to send them to the office.
- O: How long would the detention be after school? Was there a time limit?
- N: If they were sent to the regular detention it was possibly a half an hour. School closing time changed at different times and there would be one teacher assigned to that detention to stay there and check on the people sent there.
- O: What would they do then, the students?
- N: Supposedly they were to study while they were there, but the teacher in charge of the room sometimes just let them sit and do nothing.
- O: Oh really?
- N: I never had the detention so I shouldn't talk about

other people. It was a hard job to have, handling everybody who had misbehaved in one room.

O: That would be frustrating. Do you remember how much you were paid throughout the years as a teacher? How much you started out with?

N: Yes, I remember how much I started. When I started in 1935, Youngstown had what was considered a very, very good pay scale. The minimum pay was \$1350.00 a year and I think it went up to \$3250.00 a year. It was still Depression and there had been a twenty percent cut on that pay, but it was back up to ten, so when I started, my first year was \$1215.00. The contract was supposed to be for \$1350.00, but there was a ten percent cut. It took you seventeen years to get up to the maximum at that time and I don't know what it is now, it's much, much shorter time, and of course, salaries increased pretty regularly. I saw in the paper the other day where the average salary in the high school is \$17,000.

O: Oh my! It certainly is a lot different than when you first started out then. During the Depression did you always get paid then?

N: When I was teaching, yes. There had been times when they didn't before that.

O: Did they lay off any teachers?

N: I don't know whether they had to lay off any or not, I suppose they did.

O: How about, how would the Depression affect the students? Could you see how it was affecting them and then if it was affecting them, did the school do anything to help the students or help needy families?

N: I don't remember particularly about that. We had a lot of poor people you know, but there was no paid lunch program or free breakfasts or free lunches or anything like that at that time. Some of them sometimes came to school with their clothes just pinned on them and they didn't have very many clothes.

O: Did they talk about the economic conditions?

N: No, not really.

- O: They didn't mention that? In your own class then, would they talk about World War II, would they mention anything about that or how did World War II affect your students?
- N: Not in any particular way except as we had a few boys from the West Side that were killed in the service and if they still had brothers and sisters in school, it was hard on them.
- O: Did they have air raids at Chaney when you were there?
- N: They had drills yes, we had certain places assigned where people from each room were supposed to go and you had to stand facing the wall I think, with your head covered.
- O: Did the students know what was going on or why there were air raid drills?
- N: I think so, I think they knew, but on the other hand sometimes it was just a lark like a fire drill, you know, gives you a chance to get out of class. I don't know if they really considered it serious.
- O: Did they have assemblies or chances for students to get out of classes?
- N: Oh, we had a good assembly program. Almost every week we had an assembly.
- O: About what?
- N: Well, some of them were programs of music or drama or something of that kind. A lot of them were just instructional programs.
- O: Like what, could you give me an example of one?
- N: Well, when it was time to enroll for the next year, to sign up for the courses they wanted to take, they always had an assembly explaining all about their enrollment.
- O: How about football assemblies, did they have some of those?
- N: Oh yes, football assemblies and even basketball and we had a good basketball team. We would have assemblies for them too. Before a big game they almost always had

an assembly. They had quite a program, very much of a planned program, and that was not always just cheers, but different things. Since Chaney and East were big rivals, there'd may be somebody from East that would be over at Chaney and that would be part of the assembly.

O: Oh really?

N: The athletic director or somebody like that might be over and be on the stage. We had a lot of good programs. We had a good drama department, good music department.

O: Who was in charge of the Drama Department?

N: Back then it was Miss Mollie Russell.

O: What kind of plays or what would they do?

N: Oh, they did many different skits on different holidays or at special times. The Drama Department had one big play each semester and then a play that was called a senior play each semester because when I first started there were two graduating classes a year. So, the January graduating class had a senior play and the prom and all the senior things, and then the June class had that again.

O: What was the best play that you saw put on there. Do you remember?

N: No, I can't think of one.

O: Could they be musicals?

N: Oh yes, there were a lot of musicals put on by the Music Department. Occasionally the Music and the Drama Department would get together, but mostly each department put on its own show.

O: Who was in charge of the Music Department?

N: Mrs. Allein Holden.

O: Do you remember some of the other teachers that you worked with?

N: Oh yes, Miss Emily Eberhart was the Librarian all the time I was there. Everybody from Chaney knew her because everybody went into the library.

- O: Oh, they did? Was the library used much?
- N: That Chaney building, the original Chaney building, the high school section was built like an H and the library was on the cross hall on the H so everybody going from one place to another passed the library and they all knew Miss Eberhart and the library was used a lot.
- O: Well, was it used by teachers too to send their students?
- N: Oh yes.
- O: Really? What were some of the other teachers then?
- N: Oh there were so many good ones. Miss Cora Turner was a math teacher. Mrs. Verna Rifenerick taught Latin, Miss Edyth Hadley taught English, Miss Madelyn Vinopal taught bookkeeping.
- O: Did they give you any advice?
- N: When I started there was one teacher who was supposed to be my big sister, to help me if I had any problems, and that was Miss Ida Cohen, who taught in the commercial department, She taught the advanced shorthand and typing and she was very, very good. She now lives in Florida.
- O: What was her responsibilities as a big sister and everything?
- N: Oh, just to see that I knew what was going on.
- O: What if you were a big sister then to a new teacher, what advice would you give him or her?
- N: Oh, I think it was more just to help them with the routine, if there were any problems about routine things.
- O: What would you tell a new teacher though now? Would you give them any advice?
- N: I think they have to start out with a firm hand the very first day to try to make the students realize that in order to learn there has to be a certain attitude in the class and that's what they're there for to learn and if the attitude in the class is not

conducive to learning then you might as well not be there. So I think the teacher has to start that out in the very beginning, like tone and respect, have respect for the students, but also that they know that she is the one in charge.

O: Did you have mostly girls in your bookkeeping classes?

N: There were a good many boys.

O: Oh really? Is that unusual?

N: I don't think it was unusual. Of course it was a business subject and it was supposed to be preparation for office work, but we always tried to stress in bookkeeping oh, planning a budget and how to write a check and keep a checkbook and things of that nature that should help them in their every day life.

O: Practical. The neighborhood that the school was in and the children, what kind of ethnic background would it be?

N: Well, it was very close to Holy Name Church, which was Slovak, so there were very many Slovak people there. At the beginning most of the pupils in the area attended the public high schools.

O: Why didn't they go to Ursuline?

N: Ursuline had been an all girls school for years, a private, tuition school.

O: This was in the 1930's then?

N: Yes, I think the first graduating class that had boys was about 1935.

O: Oh, I didn't know that.

N: But the Slovak people are very, very neat and clean and their homes were just immaculate and the West Side, the homes are still almost all home-owned and not too much rental property. There's still nice property out there.

O: Did you get a chance to go visit their homes ever?

N: We had to at certain times. We had to go around mostly to the homes of the pupils in our homerooms and visit them.

O: Why?

N: Well, it was at the time when they needed money just as they do now and further more I guess, and there was a levy up at different times and we were supposed to go around and just visit with the families in their homes. Sometimes you'd make appointments or sometimes you just tell the students, "Well, we're going to be coming around this week every night after school and maybe we'll get to your house on this day." The parents received us very, very well. We didn't talk about the levy, but just let them know a little bit about the school.

O: Was there any language problem then at all with the students coming in?

N: No, most of them spoke English.

O: They wouldn't have special classes?

N: No, they had no special classes back in that time.

O: Did they have any special classes for learning disabilities?

N: Not really back then. They may have started that three track for instance for English at different times so they'd have three different groups you know, for English, but when I started to teach they didn't actually have any special group. At Chaney we had the braille class for all the blind children of the city.

O: Oh really?

N: Pauline Powers, Dr. Pauline Powers was the teacher in the braille class. Their room was down in the elementary wing. Dr. Powers had students from elementary school all up through high school. Their text books were brailled for them. Miss Powers taught them all a little bit of typing.

O: Oh, that is really something!

N: We had some very, very smart blind students from the braille classes.

O: That's good.



- N: I never, of course had any blind students in book-keeping but I did have some of them in typing and often, as I said, they knew the keyboard when they came in there. But I would sometimes send Miss Powers a week in advance, the page numbers of the lessons we were going to do and she'd braille them and they'd keep that braille script in their lap and they'd just read so much and type it and then read it and then type it.
- O: Oh that is great, that is really good.
- N: Well, we had a lot of different things there.
- O: Yes, the programs.
- N: And we had a very good athletic department, good football and basketball teams.
- O: Who's in charge of that?
- N: Chester McPhee was the football and basketball coach at that time. Today, a separate coach in each sport has many assistants. During the war, when they couldn't get busses to take the teams around, I used to volunteer to drive. We drove all around and I had four or five of these great big football players in the car and listening to them talk and getting to know about them and their families. We'd go down to Steubenville and all kinds of places like that for games.
- O: Oh, it wasn't just city schools then that you played.
- N: No, they played a lot of other schools. There weren't too many schools in the city, although eventually they played Mooney and Ursuline.
- O: Yes, I remember when my brother was going to Ursuline. I know Chaney was a big rival, Chaney and Ursuline were playing in the City Series.
- N: Oh yes, the West Siders who attend Catholic high school so go to Ursuline.
- O: That's true, right.
- N: So that's why they're big rivals.
- O: The reason why they didn't use the busses, what was that?

- N: Well, it was during the war and the gasoline was rationed.
- O: Did your school participate in the rationing program, did Chaney?
- N: I can't remember how that worked. They did sell bonds, war bonds, and they had one club that was responsible for that and they handled all the details.
- O: A student club organization?
- N: Yes, one teacher, Miss Edyth Hadley, was in charge of the student organization. The club urged people to buy stamps, then when you got so many you could trade them in for the war bonds. They had big campaigns with prizes for those who sold the most.
- O: What kind of prizes would they give?
- N: I can't remember. But they did have them.
- O: Like a sweepstakes almost?
- N: Yes.
- O: What place did religion have at Chaney?
- N: Well, Mr. Ricksecker, the principal, was a very moral person and he had very definite ideas of right and wrong and I think that if you can teach people the basics of right and wrong, that's a pretty good start. He didn't condone smoking or drinking, he was very strict about that. At that time we read the Bible every day in homeroom. At one time there was a program started that had released time for religious instructions.
- O: What do you mean by that?
- N: Oh, let me think how that worked. I think the priest or the minister came to the school and the students had it like one period a week where they went and had instructions.
- O: Oh really? Was it voluntary?
- N: Oh yes, it was voluntary. They didn't get any school credits for it. I think the ministers and priests came to the school, maybe the students went and left

the building. I'm not sure how it worked, but it was a released time project. It was set up with the churches and the students participated in whatever one they wanted.

O: Do you remember who some of the ministers and priests were that would come?

N: No.

O: It would be different denominations then? You said that you read from the Bible then in your own classes?

N: Either the homeroom teacher did or had a student in their homeroom do it.

O: How about you, what would you do?

N: Usually a student would read.

O: Would read from the Bible? Did they have any particular passage that they liked the best?

N: Not that I know of.

O: Did they just read? Would it be a matter of meditation then?

N: Yes.

O: Afterwards, when religion was taken out, did this have any effect do you think on the students or on the teaching?

N: I didn't notice any difference in particular.

O: You don't think it helped at all?

N: I think that the student needs to get their basics of religion at home and if they have that basic that they can go on then. . .

O: I understand what you are saying.

How about field trips, did they ever take field trips?

N: There weren't too many of them back in those days. There were some.

O: Would you go on any with your classes?

N: I can't think whether we did in business or not.

Now I know I've gone as a chaperone with some other groups, like the history group went up on time to Pittsburgh to the Carnegie Museum and I went on the bus with them there and that was of course during school time.

O: What was, being that you were in commercial, that you taught commercial classes, do you have any kind of relationship with the commercial sector in the city?

N: We had the Commercial Teachers Organization and we did try to have speakers bring information for the commercial sector at our Commercial Teachers meeting. Also, a program set up, a city-wide program, where teachers had a day to go around to some of these businesses or industries. I went up to GF [General Fireproofing] one time, I went to the mattress company one time and different places of that kind to see how things worked there. Then we, the commercial teachers were always invited to one meeting a year of the National Office Managers Association. We met with them, the office managers from all different businesses all around, and if you went to that a couple of years you got to know a lot of those people pretty well and very often through those contacts they would call the school when they needed people for jobs in offices.

O: Do you remember who some of the people were that were involved in either of these associations?

N: I can't think of names now in particular.

O: What kind of encouragement would you give your students? Would you try to prepare them for college or for a job?

N: Well, the people who were taking straight commercial courses were not really prepared for college because most colleges at that point didn't take them on commercial credits.

O: Oh really?

N: They had to have academic credits for most of the colleges.

O: I didn't know that.

N: A lot of people took academic courses with commercial

electives so they could get their bookkeeping and typing at least and maybe some shorthand. We tried to emphasize skills that we thought were important in office work and ethics, such as loyalty to your employer and the fact that you don't discuss what goes on in an office when you are outside of that office. We tried to emphasize basics; spelling and arithmetic and things of that kind that are needed in any kind of a job.

O: Yes, like you said, it's for any kind of job, even for the students who are going to college. It's just a lot of common sense and responsibility that they should have had. Did you teach any English at all? You said that you had some background in English.

N: No, I didn't, I didn't teach any English as a separate subject.

O: You didn't have any? When you were there teaching, did you know of any English Department, any of the departmental teachers?

N: Oh yes!

O: Was there ever any problem with like censorship of books or anything like you hear about now a days? Do you recall any?

N: No, not as a concerted effort of any kind. Maybe some teachers wouldn't want the students to read some particular book, but I don't even remember parents getting up in arms about any books that their children took home.

O: That leads me to a few questions about PTA. To what extent was your involvement in PTA?

N: In high school we did not have to be involved in PTA.

O: Oh really?

N: Maybe there was one meeting of the year when they asked everybody to go to that meeting, but the high school teachers didn't have to attend.

O: Why?

N: I don't know why. They just didn't have to.

- O: Well, how would the parents and teachers get together? Would it be just what you were talking about before, that you would visit their houses or how would you tell them about the progress of their student?
- N: Oh, we really didn't talk about it. Now, they had visitation days occasionally when the parents would come around to the classes and visit the classes. And we'd talk to them and they were there at the programs. Many, many of the parents came for the various programs that they had in the evenings.
- O: What do you mean?
- N: Well, when they had musical programs or things of that kind you'd see lots of parents there. Sometimes you would call the parents and tell them about problems, but back then even the report cards of course were just grades. They didn't have to write all this explanation that they write on report cards now.
- O: You mentioned about homeroom, were you a homeroom teacher then?
- N: Almost every teacher had a homeroom, yes.
- O: Was this for four years you'd have the same students?
- N: No. Well, let me change that. At Chaney High School where I was the last few years, I did not have a homeroom, but I think that the teachers there had the same students maybe for three years. I was the school bookkeeper for many years and because I did that I didn't have a homeroom because that took extra time. Sometimes I didn't have study hall either. I spent the time I would ordinarily be assigned to a study hall and homeroom in the office working on the school records.
- O: Oh, I see. Well then, who would be involved, who would be the staff at Chaney? Do you remember how many people they would have working there?
- N: The principal, the assistant principal, and the two secretaries at that time. There was a Dean of girls and a Dean of boys which they now call counselors. I think now they have more.
- O: Throughout the years have you seen changes from when you started in 1935 and then retired in 1970. Have

you seen changes in teaching and in the students throughout that time?

N: I think the change came when the government began to do more and more for people and people began to do less and less for themselves because they thought the government was going to take care of them when they retired anyhow and why should they worry about it. People are just less interested in doing things for themselves, I think.

O: You saw this in the students then?

N: I think so. They felt, "Well, why should I worry? I don't care if I get a job." For me, as I went through the Depression, getting a job was very, very important and you took a job because you knew you had to work, but as things got easier they didn't want this job, they didn't want that job, they just wanted a job that suited them, that would be easy for them. They were more selective because there wasn't that need there.

O: What about unions, were you in a union at all?

N: Don't get me started on unions please! (Laughter)

O: I just wondered if you know throughout your thirty years. . .

N: The Youngstown Education Association was our group at the beginning and it was just an organization of teachers. They did have people in there who worked hard for the betterment of teachers' salaries and so forth.

O: How did they go about doing that?

N: Well, they had committies and they would go down and interview the superintendent of the Board of Education and tried to do things of that kind. I don't know what years, maybe in the 1960's, when the Youngstown Federation of Teachers started to organize and they were the two competing groups and they had elections a couple of times to see which group would represent the teachers and so far each time the Youngstown Education Association has won out. But to do that they have had to use the same tactics as the unions use and I'd just as soon not talk about that.

- O: Okay, this is going to be a really easy question for you. Looking back what kind of changes would you have liked to have seen happen when you were teaching? Were you satisfied with it. If you could have done something differently in your 35 years of teaching?
- N: Oh dear. (Laughter)
- O: See, I told you it was going to be an easy question.
- N: I don't know what to answer.
- O: Were you satisfied with the administration?
- N: Oh, in most cases, yes. Oh, everybody always has complaints, but I believe if you're working for somebody you should work for them and if you don't like it, get out. Just quit if you're not satisfied. As I said, Chaney had a good reputation because of the discipline. People wanted to come here because it was supposed to be easier to teach there and people from other schools tried to get transferred to Chaney. And many times, as soon as they got there, they started a campaign to change everything and the reason they came was because things were done well there and that's what made the school the way it was. But then as soon as they got there they wanted to have it their own way.
- O: If Chaney was at one end of the spectrum, what school would be at the other end?
- N: I really don't know.
- O: How many schools were in the Youngstown School System then?
- N: I think. . . .
- O: Was East?
- N: Yes, I think that all of them were. There were six in there when I was. Rayen and South of course were the first two and Chaney and East both started in maybe 1925 or something like that and then Wilson and North were sometime after that. But I think they were both in existence when I started as senior high schools.
- O: What was the most enjoyable part about teaching and what was the least enjoyable part for you?



N: The most enjoyable part was just getting to know all the students and seeing how they did learn, most of them, and watching them grow and keeping track of them after they were out of school.

O: Have you kept track of them?

N: Oh yes, many of them, and seeing how they get along in life after they are out of school has been very interesting.

O: How about the Arms Museum, have you ever been taking a tour and have any of your former students come?

N: Yes, quite a number of times.

O: Do you remember them, their faces?

N: Oh lots of times, some of them I do, not all of them of course.

O: What would your least enjoyable part be?

N: Well, the least enjoyable part to me was when the unions all started bickering and the teachers were so divided. Everybody was trying to figure out what everybody else was doing and I did not appreciate that.

O: When you were teaching, when you first started out, did they treat women teachers differently than men teachers?

N: I don't think so, the salary schedule was the same and I never felt that there was any prejudice at all against the women.

O: How about if a woman would get married?

N: No, at that time married women were not permitted to teach. They had to quit before they were married.

O: Okay, well can you think of anything else I haven't covered about teaching. I want to thank you, I enjoyed it. Like I said, each guide that I do I always learn something different. I want to thank you very much.

N: I don't think I had very many profound ideas.

O: Oh, you'll be surprised! (Laughter)

END OF INTERVIEW