YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Depression Project

Life During the Depression
O. H. 372

DORIS HULL
Interviewed
by
Maribeth Harry
on
June 14, 1976

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INTERVIEWEE: DORIS HULL

INTERVIEWER: Maribeth Harry

SUBJECT: Life during the Depression, White House Fruit Farm, Education, Presidents

DATE: June 14, 1976

HA: This is an interview with Mrs. Jerome Hull for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on the Depression years, by Maribeth Harry, at 9349 State Route 62, in Canfield, Ohio, on June 14, 1976, at 7:00 p.m.

Mrs. Hull, what do you remember about your parents and family?

HU: I grew up on a seventy acre farm in Central Ohio about four miles out of Delaware, which is the seat of Ohio Wesleyan University. My father was a widower for several year, his wife had died and left him with three, small children. The youngest one was just a baby. He farmed the children out for a few years and then he married my mother. I was the oldest of eight children born to her and my father.

Dad farmed as most people did in those days, rotation of corn, wheat, oats, and grass. We always had a few cows. We did all of our farming by horses. There were four girls before there were any boys, so we girls had to do much of the work that boys normally would do. We went to the fields when they cut the wheat, and left it in shocks on the ground, and mother and two or three of us older girls, before we got in to our teens, would put the sheaves into shocks. There it would cure and later be hauled to the barn in horse drawn wagons. The threshing machine would come in, and it was customary for the family on the farm, where the thrashing was to be done, to see that the men had a place to sleep. There were always three men, sometimes five, and it was many times difficult to find a place for them. Many families were big families and so they often slept in the barn or granary. We could always feed them. The threshing machine was run by steam. I also remember that mother and we older girls would go to the cornfield with dad in the fall where the corn would be standing in big shocks. It was cut by hand with a corn knife and put in shocks. We would go to the fields and pull the ears of corn out of the shocks, and tear the husks off, and throw them in a small wagon that had a four sided bed on it. When we got the wagon full or when the day got late, that would be hauled to the barn and thrown by shovelfuls into the corn bin. My dad also traveled around the country for a time and sold hay Then he dabbled in a secondhand store in the city for a little while; but our home was always on the farm.

I went to school in a one room school, and that school was located right on the corner of my father's farm, so we had about a block to walk on the highway. All the children walked to school. Some of them came from as much as a half to three-quarters of a mile, but everybody walked. One year I remember the teacher lived in the next district so she rode horseback to school and put her horse in our barn through the day. There were no divisions, of course. All the children in grades one through eight were in one room. Sometimes there was only one child or two in a certain grade. I liked school and I got along well in school. In that day you weren't chained to a grade for a year, you could go as fast as you wanted to go, as fast as you were mentally fit to go. When you would pass the Boxwell Patterson examination, which was made out by the state, then they felt you were ready for high school. I passed that when I was eleven years old, but my mother wouldn't let me go to high school at eleven. She thought I was too young. I would have had to ride, and I did the next two years later, in an open buggy pulled by a pony with my cousin and a boy across the road who would be in high school. I went back to this one room school another year and then started high school when I was twelve. I was born in 1901, so in November of the year I started high school I was really eleven, but I would turn twelve in a couple of months. I had to go in to the city, Delaware; there were no centralized schools in that day, not in our county at any rate. As I say, we rode in an open pony buggy in all kinds of weather. The plan was that either my cousin, who was a boy, or the boy across the road would furnish the horse and buggy for the transportation and I would pay the livery bill because we would put the horse up in a livery stable through the day and it would be there when we were ready to come home.

Naturally, we had to dress very differently than the girls who lived in the cities, and it was rather a bone of contention with me, but it couldn't be helped. When you were riding in an open buggy without any protection from the weather you really dressed warm We wore not fancy galoshes like you wear today, but they were made out of a heavy cotton material with big buckles. Of course, the city girls would see you dressed in those things and you really were, in their minds, a country hick. Instead of giving me an inferiority makeup it gave me a determination to show those city girls that I had just as many brains as they had. I was always able to stay on the honor roll, which gave me a lot of satisfaction.

However, after three years they built a centralized school in a village about two and a half miles from home, the other direction from the city. My father was on the school board. I wasn't very happy about changing schools, because Delaware High School was a very, very fine school. My father said, "Since I'm on the school board, any school that is good enough for other children is good enough for mine." So I changed schools and my education suffered considerably from it because we were in a state of flux; we had to find our way along. Everything was new and I'm sure that had I continued at Delaware High School I would have been better off, but that didn't bother me too much.

I got to go to college, then decided to be a teacher.

HA: Where did you go to college?

HU: At Kent. I didn't belong in Kent; I belonged in Athens, but my father, with eleven children to look after, three others older than I, had no money for college for me. The two stepsisters had gone to high school in Delaware and graduated. One of them became an office girl and the other girl became a teacher. In that day, when she was getting to be a teacher, she didn't have to take any training. The fact that she graduated from high school made her eligible to be a teacher. My father had no money to send me to school, but fortunately I had this stepsister, one stepsister, who was living in Kent. Her husband was working in Kent. She said to my folks, "If Doris would like to come to Kent and live with us and go to school, we'll take care of her." In that day you could go one year to Kent and that gave you a certificate. However, I took my full two years so I was eligible for a life certificate when I got out. I went to college those two years with made over clothing. My sister made me an overcoat, a winter coat, out of her husband's old coat. She made me a skirt and three middies and one wool dress. That put me through college.

HA: Do you remember the cost of tuition?

HU: None.

HA: None?

HU: Not in that day. That was a state institution.

HA: There was none at all?

HU: No.

HA: You bought your books?

HU That's right. If you lived in the dorm, of course, you paid room and board. I didn't have to do that. I lived about two miles, at least, from the campus. I lived on West Main Street; the campus was on the east side of town. That walk was good for me, it didn't hurt me. I should have gone to Ohio Wesleyan if I had just wanted a B.A. They didn't have any teacher training curriculum then, and I wanted to be an elementary teacher. I had to go either to Athens, Bowling Green, or to Kent. Kent had just been established very shortly before that. It was very, very new. In fact, I was there when they were having difficulty with Dr. McGilvery. They were going to put him out. They were accusing him of having illicit relations with his secretary, and I can't recall her name I was chosen to represent the student body in a little trial they had. It was quite something

HA: Did you want him to be removed?

HU: No. I was for Dr. McGilvery; he was very, very nice to me.

I graduated at Kent and then the problem was where was I going to teach. The man from the head of the schools in Cuyahoga Falls asked me to come over for an interview and I did go over two or three times. He had a very fine opportunity for me in visual education, but the whole thing was new. Nothing had been done in it before. I just didn't have enough faith in myself that I could set up something that was entirely new to me as well as to everybody else.

In the meantime, Jerome Hull, who was head of the county schools in Mahoning County, came over one day. He was hunting a teacher for a one room school, a model one room school. He came to Kent, and Dr. Stouffer, who was the placement officer, knew me very well because I had his little boy in my seventh grade training class, whom I loved. Dr. Stouffer called me down for an interview. Mr. Hull made me an offer, which of course was not as fine as the one in the city would have been, but I was a farm girl and I knew I'd feel very much more at home in the one room school. I grew up in a one room school, so that was not strange to me. I ended up over here in the far western corner of Mahoning County, right on the edge, in a one room school called a model one room school. There were three of them here in the county. They were called models because the students in the county normal school, located here in Canfield, before they could graduate had to do their practice teaching somewhere. They were sent to these one room schools, and I guess, the county superintendent wanted particularly strong teachers in those three schools, as supervisors.

HA: What was the name of the school?

HU: It was way out in the country, Fishcreek, on Courtney Road. Courtney Road runs parallel with Route 62, but about three miles north of Route 62, off old 62.

HA: What years were you at Kent?

HU: I was at Kent in the fall of 1917. I was there for two years. I stayed in Fishcreek three years. I loved it. We instituted some new things. I would say the greater percentage of the people were either farmers or their parents were brickworkers in the brick plant, The Alliance Brick Plant. That gave me a great number of farm children, and that was my first experience with anything but strictly English-American people. The names nearly drove me wild, to remember those odd names of these kids, such as Bicksell and Posty; names that just weren't in my vocabulary at all. Anyway, we instituted hot lunches, which had not ever been known up in here. The mothers, one mother--believe me we had all kinds of meals--would cook one dish, enough for the whole school. When I had a full school it was about forty children in grades one through eight. They would bring that to school about a quarter to twelve and I had a coal oil or a kerosine-burning, three-burner stove in the back of the schoolroom so we could keep it hot. At twelve o'clock when the children are ready to eat, each child would ladle out whatever she might have brought. Some of those dishes were not typical American dishes. They were dishes that were familiar to these farm people.

HA: Do you remember some?

HU: No. One of the girls that was in the school at that time called here yesterday, spent a couple of hours with me. She was laughing about some of the things that they brought, a particular stew that somebody had. I don't recall. They did that three days a week, and on the other two days I made hot cocoa for the children at noon.

Then we had community plays that we put on at the school where we used not only the children, but the adults in the community. We had a lot of fun.

HA: What years were you there?

HU. I went there in 1918-1919, 1919-1920, and 1920-1921. At the end of three years, life was even more difficult where I was teaching; much more difficult really than where I lived at home, because we had improved roads and that kind of thing. Over here the road that I lived on was mud--I had to live with a family in the community. You shared the house; you got no privacy except your bedroom and it was not heated; there was no indoor plumbing; there were no electric lights. You walked to school in mud that many times was so deep you couldn't navigate. The man of the family with whom I lived was a dairyman. He lived back a long, long drive. Every morning he took his cans of milk out to the highway for the milk truck to pick up. He took them out on a mud boat, which was just two runners with boards across. He could set his milk cans on there. On very, very terribly muddy days I would carry my books home from school that I had to work on at night in a traveling bag. He would let me stand on the mud boat with him with my traveling bag, and he would take me on up the hill to school. The school was a good half mile from where I lived. Of course, it was pulled by a horse and she put her hooves down in that sticky mud and brought it up with a lot of splashing mud. We were messy. Anyway, that was life; that's the way everybody lived in the area, they couldn't help it.

After three years I thought I would leave teaching. I had to go by train from Alliance to Youngstown; it took all day. I went up to the county board's office and I said to Mr. Hull, "I'm going to quit teaching. I'm going into social work " He said, "Miss Humes, you don't want to do that because you would see more squalor and filth than you ever thought existed. We're opening up a new school in Canfield. I need an eighth grade teacher and you can have it."

HA: How nice.

HU: I came to Canfield that fall. I taught one year and we were married!

HA: That's why he didn't want you in social work.

HU: I used to tell him he could sell gold bricks. Then I had to teach the next year because the girl who was hired to take my place had resigned. We found out when we got back from our honeymoon. It was about time for school to begin. We were married late in July. The board said that since we were living with Mr. Hull's mother on Crory Road, it doesn't take two women to keep a house for Jerome and myself and his mother, so why don't I teach this year. This would get them off the hook. I thought okay Then I thought I was retiring, and the next fall Guy Hoover, who was a teacher in the eighth grade in North Jackson, went on an African safari that summer and was to be back for school in the fall.

HA: That was unusual at that time to go on an African safari

HU: That was. He did a lot of traveling He didn't get back, so when it was about time for school to begin they went looking to see where they could find somebody. They figured it would just be a month or so, so I decided that I would do that. I taught in North Jackson, but that ended up being a half a year. I only taught the first semester, because by that time I was pregnant with our first baby, Donna Jean, who was born the next July.

HA What happened to the man on the safari?

HU: He came back eventually. I got a letter from him the other day. He said, "Just moved in to Copeland Oaks." He is very elderly now.

HA: Did he lose his job?

HU: No. When he came back he was very popular in North Jackson. That saved the day. I loved those North Jackson kids; they were very wonderful to me. I married and then we had our own nine and I didn't have any more time for teaching

HA: You had nine children?

HU: Yes.

HA: I didn't realize that.

HU: Seven sons and two daughters.

HA: I can't believe you're seventy-five.

HU: Well, almost . . . I'm seventy-four. I'll be seventy-five in November

HA: You look in your early sixties, and you had nine children?

HU: Yes. All born at home except the last three; they were born in the hospital. Dr. Campbell delivered all my children for $25 apiece.

HA: Those were the days.

HU: (Laughter)

HA: What is it now, a thousand?

HU: I don't know.

HA: I don't know either.

HU: I've had a good life. It has been a very busy life here on the farm, very, very busy, but we all had a good time.

HA: Did Mr. Hull also have this business . . .

HU: He was the first county superintendent of Mahoning County.

HA: Do you know what year that was?

HU He went in that in 1914.

HA: When did he begin business here?

HU: In about 1939 he gave that up, but he had established the orchard. He bought this farm in 1917 at sheriff's sale. It was his mother's birthplace, but his mother did not inherit the farm. A younger brother inherited the farm. He knew it was coming up. The youngest boy in a family of ten children, his mother's family, inherited the farm He was not educated and he got mixed up in blooded cattle with people who knew much more than he did and he found himself about to be foreclosed. Since it was his mother's birthplace his mother pursuaded Jerome that he ought to bid on it. He was going fishing in Canada and was going to be gone when the sale took place. He left a sealed bid with Stanley Howard, who is now dead. He lived out here in Goshen Township, and I have in the desk the telegram that Stanley Howard sent to him up on the Frenchman River in Canada saying, "You just bought a farm."

HA I'll bet his was the best bid. It had to be, but I'll bet he wanted it for his mother.

HU At that time this was just strictly an ordinary grain farm, wheat, oats, and corn to feed the cattle that this man had.

HA: What are blooded cattle?

HU Pure bred cattle You always pay three or four times as much for them if they have a pedigree. That's how he got himself in so deep that he couldn't get out. He lived here for years though after we moved here. Mr. Hull planted the first orchard between here and the woods in 1917, and we were married in 1922 and we built the house, or started it, in 1925. We moved in in February of 1926. Donna Jean was born in July of 1926. Then father's term was up; in fact, he was defeated. He wasn't defeated as such, but the county board changed; the personnel of the board changed. They decided to hire another man At that time he decided, therefore, to devote his full time to the orchard. It was big enough by that time that he could very well afford to spend all of his time on the orchard. It was all apples then. Of course, our children were coming along.

Then in 1932 Canfield was without a superintendent and they asked him if he wouldn't take the job since he lived so close. He did that for two years. Then he divorced himself completely from school, except to be on the county school board for I don't know how many years.

Of course, it was at the time that our children were coming along that the recession hit We had built this house. Rationing didn't hit us too bad; it did in gasoline because by that time we were using tractors, and not diesel tractors, but gasoline tractors. We began raising turkeys about that time. As I remember we had to have some rationing in kerosine. We used kerosine to heat our brooders. We bought the turkeys when they were day old, and of course they had to be kept very warm. We managed.

We kept enough pigs for our own pork We always kept two cows. We didn't have a dairy, but we kept two cows. We had our own milk; I made my own butter; I baked all of our bread. The lard from the pork that we butchered was much more than we could use in cooking so that gave me enough to make laundry soap. I had to buy our facial soap though. I was doing this all the while, that's why the recession as such, foodwise, didn't hurt us too much. We also had our own fruit. What we really had to buy was coffee and flour and soap and sugar. You could make sugar do what you wanted it to. You didn't have to bake cakes and pies and cookies, which took the sugar Of course, I never made candies or anything of that sort We managed quite comfortably really; the problem was to get your fingers on money. That's what wasn't to be had. We had one, full-time man; my brother-in-law has worked here since way back shortly after we built the house. He came up from Delaware, he and my sister, his wife, and lived in a little log house that was down here right on the turn as you come up the drive where the two, big evergreens are. We had to see that he was cared for. He was getting his family at the same time we were, but he only had five children. He got $25 a week in money. He got his pork, his milk, and his fruit, and a house in which to live.

HA: He did very well, especially for that period.

HU: It was up to us to see that we always had that $25 for him every Saturday night, because after all, he had children who had to be clothed.

We were selling apples , at that period, three bushels for a dollar.

HA: Your best? They weren't throwaways?

HU: No, they weren't throwaways; they were standard apples. Three bushels for a dollar, that wouldn't have been so bad. You sold them in quantities wherever you could find somebody who could pay for them. We sold I don't know how many truckloads to a commission house in Cleveland. The man who represented that commission house had been here in person and bought them. I'll never forget, he was supposed to pay at a certain time. That date came and he didn't pay it. It seems to me it was a late spring sale We had our own cold storage. The taxes were going to be coming up. Father would call him on the telephone, a long distance call to Cleveland, "Now we need that check." Yes, it would be in tomorrow's mail, but tomorrow didn't come. We finally did get it, but we literally sweat blood. I suppose they didn't have it either

We sold carloads to the government; the government bought apples for the schools. It was a way for the government to help move some of this produce that individual people didn't have money to buy. They bought the apples and then gave them to the schools. The schools could make them into applesauce or they could give them out as fresh fruit every day at mealtime. It was like giving them away, really.

We had the same situation with turkeys at that time. I remember we sold ten, big turkeys, the biggest turkeys we had, to a very prominent lawyer at that time in Youngstown. He didn't pay, he didn't pay, and he didn't pay, finally Jerome said that he had moved out of his office. He apparently wasn't doing well either. Mr. Hull said to me, "If you can collect that money you can have it." It was about $40, which was really something then. I found he was making his headquarters in a bar on either Phelps or Hazel Street, I'm not sure which one of those cross streets. Anyway, I went in to Youngstown one morning, one Saturday morning, and I remember that I located that bar and then I looked both directions to be sure that nobody that I might know would see me go in there I found him. He never did pay. We consulted a lawyer and the lawyer was a local friend of ours and he said, "Let's put it this way, if you ever get it, don't ever sell him anything again." Of course, we didn't need that advice; we knew better. Money that you lost in those days was a bitter pill.

HA: Did you lose much in the bank?

HU: No. Thank heaven we didn't. Everything we had was in the Farmer's National here in Canfield. Mr. Hull's brother's daughter had some in the central bank.

HA: The city bank?

HU: Yes. She lost it.

HA: They said that it was unstable prior to all those financial difficulties. The Farmer's Bank never went under?

HU: No.

HA: Never closed?

HU: No.

HA: I didn't know that. Weren't you relieved?

HU: Oh my yes! There was a lot of thieving in that period too People couldn't afford to buy, and so they stole. Of course, that was their excuse. We had to hire a guard to patrol our apple orchard. We only had the one farm then. Even with that, one night, he came on a bunch of men that had seventy bushels all busheled up and ready for a truck at a given time; all arranged to come down the highway and quickly load them in and get away. We had a young man that drove a nice car and came out and wanted work. We gave him work picking apples. We had lots of things in our garden because we always had a big garden, so I told him to come up to the garden and take what he wanted, what he could use, what his family could use in vegetables. Do you know that one night the guard woke us in the middle of the night and father came downstairs and who should the guard have at the point of a gun but that young man.

HA: Do you think he was reselling it?

HU: I don't know. We impounded his car, the law did, for a while. He redeemed that. It almost made you lose your faith in mankind.

HA: Especially when you opened your home, your garden.

HU That's right. We tried to help.

HA Look what happened.

You were saying that the churches, you believe, suffered the most

HU: Probably, I remember what a time we had raising that money at the end of the year to be sure we could pay preacher before he went off to conference. You were really blackballed as a church if you sent your minister to conference not having his salary paid.

HA: Do you recall what the salary might be?

HU: I would imagine probably around $7500, not more than that.

HA: In the 1930's?

HU: Yes. No more than that because they got their house; it was a furnished apartment, so he didn't have rent to pay.

HA: That's very good because some preachers today make that starting. You do not get a house. That was very good, especially at that period

HU: I think that's the way ours ran.

HA: I know you spent January, February, and March of this year, 1976, in Africa Would you tell us what prompted the trip?

HU: Two of our seven sons became medical doctors. The youngest of the seven felt called to the mission field. He volunteered his service to The Board of World Missions of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and he was sent to Zaire, Africa, to be doctor and surgeon in Good Shepherd Hospital at Tshekaji which is a small settlement of natives out in the bush. There were no grocery stores, no gas stations, just the natives' homes plus the small hospital, a nursing school dormitory and three houses for the hospital personnel. It is ten miles from Kanonga where you can find some of the amenities of life. You get there from Kinshasa where your Pan-Am plane lands in a small three or four seater plane. When I arrived the pilot had to gun the motor to chase the goats from the hospital grounds so he could land. I would love to tell the story of my getting into and getting out of the country, but it is too long for this interview. The mission board determines what kind of a salary your missionaries are going to have. They give them a house furnished with a kerosine operated refrigerator and a gas operated stove; that's propane gas. The rest of the furnishings they have to find wherever they can. The salary is commensurate with a beginning preacher's salary in this country, which isn't too hot.

HA: No.

HU: Then, of course, they have such awful inflation over there. We don't know what inflation is here. They would pay 30¢ apiece for eggs, $4 a pound for weiners, $1.60 for a spool of thread, $17.50 for a gallon can of dried milk. They were paying $100 for 50 pounds of flour. I think it had gone down to about $80 when I left.

HA: We complain over here.

HU: It's just unbelievable. You can't buy ready-made clothes for women over there. They have bolt after bolt after bolt, whole floors of stores with these bolts of cloth. You buy your cloth and they have these little tailors that have a hole in the wall just big enough for you to walk in and take your measurements. Many times the sewing machine will be out on the sidewalk and they'll sew up your garments.

HA: At a high cost?

HU I never found out. I never got interested. Some of the natives inquired of Nancy, "Does your mother-in-law have an African dress?" She said, "No." I said, "Nancy, I don't see a point in it. I'm not coming back and the only time I would ever wear it at home would be when I'm giving these talks." They look so uncomfortable to me. They're long, clear down to your ankles or the floor, and the material that they make them from is a heavy material. I didn't see the sense of spending that much money.

I saw Walter one Sunday, although he had a half of a tank of gas in his Volkswagon, search for a gas station because you can't always get gas when you need it. They have to transport their children to school ten miles each day in to Kananga and ten miles back. He tried to keep the tank pretty well filled whenever he could find gas. So although he had a half of a tank, he had the tank filled and he had a five gallon can filled to take home in case he should run out someday at home, for $18.

HA: Horrendous. What major oil company is there?

HU: They don't have the same name they have over here. The natives can't afford even salt, and of course they never buy sugar. The missionary is caught in the same bind as the natives because their salaries just aren't going to cover all of these things in any great quantity.

HA: And we complain over here.

HU: Isn't that the truth?

HA: There's no reason to when you compare.

HU: Do you have some more questions?

HA: I was going to ask you if you were familiar with Fred Allen?

HU: Fred Allen?

HA: Yes, on radio.

HU: I remember that name. I didn't have a lot of time for the radio.

HA: (Laughter) Not with nine children.

HU: I helped on the apple grader. When we were dressing turkeys I helped on the turkey line, and many times I was having extra men to feed, and until I got the washing and ironing done I was busy. We didn't have wash and wear then. Everything was ironed. I had a mangle, but nevertheless it took time. I taught a Sunday school class during much of that time. My days were pretty full.

HA: No time for Fred Allen.

HU: I didn't have much time for radio.

HA: What was your impression of F.D.R.?

HU: I'll never forget the Sunday night when he announced the attack on Pearl Harbor. We had a big radio sitting right where my organ sits. Father was sitting there beside it and I was sitting on a stool at his feet when the message came over, "This is the day that will live in infamy because Pearl Harbor has been attacked." It was on a Sunday night, just about the time we were ready to get something to eat. At the time, F.D.R had a magnetic voice

HA: He had a lot of charisma.

HU: That's right, he did. As I look back I realize that it was he who opened the floodgates of socialism. What they did at that time was a step in the right direction, but we have abused it. We have gone far beyond what he had in mind.

HA: What do you think are the limits he would impose?

HU: I'm not sure because I often think that Eleanor may have had more to do with his stress on social concerns than he himself had. I wouldn't know how to answer that; I don't know. I think we are giving people today more than we can afford to give.

HA: I agree. It's way out of line now.

HU: That's right. The Democrats are going to begin to holler that we need to give complete medical care to everybody. You just can't afford that. Where's the money coming from? I think our problem is, as I see it, instead of our beginning to tax the very life out of people and corporations and businesses, we better begin to ask ourselves can we afford this. The barrel runs dry after a while.

HA Then what's going to happen? Inflation is high now for us, not for Africa.

HU: In Africa nobody owns any land; the government owns everything.

HA: That's interesting.

HU: You can get rights to the land. The mission board hospital which operates where Walter works, Good Shepherd Hospital, never has been able to even get in writing a right to the land on which the hospital stands. The government could take over, it's just that they know better than to take over because where would they be? They would be without any medical care. That's the only reason why the mission board really has no worries.

HA: Until some crazy person gets in charge.

HU: That's true.

HA: What did you think of F.D.R.'s New Deal? I know social security came out of it.

HU: The principle was good if it had been left right there, but we have enlarged, and enlarged, and enlarged, and changed until it's completely out of bounds.

HA: It's in gigantic proportions right now. What was your impression of Herbert Hoover?

HU: When Herbert Hoover was not president, but when he had charge of the food, the feeding overseas of hungry people, I think at least we were very much in accord with it. His efforts to save, to be thrifty, not to waste food, were commendable. Our boys can all tell you that their father always said, "You don't get any dessert until your plate is clean." He meant just that.

HA: And they wouldn't want to pass up your good pies.

HU: (Laughter) They sometimes ate things they weren't too keen about, but that was part of the price they paid to get dessert. I don't know that Herbert Hoover would go down as such a great president, but I do think that his great achievement was his feeding programs.

HA: Mrs. Hull, what do you think are the major changes since the 1920's until today?

HU: You can open a Pandora's box very easily, and once it's open it is impossible to ever gather what gets out and put it back in again. I think because of what we have offered people we have made people lazy; we have made cheaters out of people; we have taken away man's pride in his job. I think that's why you're having so many labor problems. Today too many people, men and women, go to work and their only concern is getting through from eight to five and then picking up the check at the end of the week, not what am I doing for my boss, am I helping the business that I'm working for, but what am I getting out of it. That is too bad. I think that is true. I think it's true as I look at some of these people who are teaching school, and this isn't universal; there are some very fine, dedicated schoolteachers, and yet I can see many others who cannot wait for the end of the day to come and who are not one bit concerned about those children If they get it they get it, that's their attitude.

HA: And they want higher wages.

HU: Yes, that's everywhere. We want, but we don't want to give in order to have what we want. I think that's one great problem with agriculture today. An old gentleman, Asher Manchester, who lived here where Kilcawley's farm is now, stood on my front porch years ago, and said, "You know Mrs. Hull, the American woman hasn't yet paid her real fair share of the dollar for food." We think we can squeeze what we pay for foods, squeeze enough there to have money to pay the luxuries we want, like a car, new things for our house, and so forth and so on. For many, many years that was possible to do, but I don't believe it's going to be possible anymore. The farmer today isn't the man who was so dumb he couldn't do anything else. I'm just as proud of my Dave, who works the farm, as I am of my boys who are doctors, or missionaries, or professors in college, or whatever. Sometimes I think it takes more brains, because he has to know so many things; he has to know the analysis of his soil to know what he needs to put in that soil before he ever plants a tree. He has to know what to put on that tree to keep the bugs away, to keep the weeds down He has to know what is the best kind of an apple tree, what kind of a root stalk to plant. After he gets it all raised he has to have a pretty good idea in his own mind of what it's worth. In other words, he has to have some economic know-how.

HA Definitely. Plus he deals with people that come here to buy. He has to be very well-rounded in all facets.

HU He has to know how much money he can put into this crop because he has a pretty good notion what he's going to get out of it.

HA: What was your daily schedule like?

HU: I think days, regardless of the year, were pretty much the same for me. Our first baby was born in 1926 and about every eighteen months or two years there was another baby. We had a rule at our house that father would get the breakfast while I got all the children up, even the baby Everybody had to be at the breakfast table at the same time. I got the children out of bed; the ones who could dress themselves got along beautifully and I dressed the others. We all ate breakfast at the same time. Of course, breakfast over meant dishes. I had no dishwasher and I still don't have a dishwasher. One of our boys was mentally and physically handicapped; he had a congenital kidney condition and a foot with diabetes insipience, which meant that he demanded great quantities of liquid. He would drink a quart of milk as quickly as I would drink a glass of milk. That, in turn, made a lot of urine. He died at the age of twenty, but I never had one day from the time he was born until he died that I didn't have all his bedding to wash. Of course, there was the family washing and ironing that had to be done, not every day, but once a week at least. I baked my own bread, and that meant about six loaves, three times a week. I made my own butter, which meant that the milk had to be put in gallon crocks and put to cool in the basement on the basement floor. When the cream had collected then that meant the cream had to be skimmed and then had to be kept cool until I had collected enough to make my own butter. You churned the butter and then you worked the buttermilk out of it and then you rinsed water through it and then salted it and worked the salt through it, and then you put it in pads of the size you wanted. We had no refrigerator. We didn't have a refrigerator until our last baby was born, the ninth child.

HA: What date would that be?

HU: Mary Ellen was born in 1939.

HA. Was it a refrigerator with a fan?

HU: What?

HA: I saw a refrigerator once that had a little fan on it.

HU Really?

HA It was strange.

HU: Jerome always said, "Well, we don't need a refrigerator, we've got such a good basement." Of course, he didn't realize a cool basement isn't going to do what a refrigerator can do. Many, many, many times when the baby would wake in the night for its formula I would go to the basement and get the formula only to find that it had soured. Then it was a case of making up some formula in the middle of the night so that the baby could be fed. That was a part of living. There were two more meals to get; and lunch, when our children were growing up, was every bit as complete a meal as our dinner in the evening. Not true anymore, but at that time it was. The boys worked hard.

HA: They needed the food.

HU: They needed it. Of course, there was no end to cleaning when you have that many children around. I did have a vacuum sweeper, and that helped a lot. The author of Turkey World, which is a magazine devoted to the raising of turkeys that we subscribed to all the time we were in turkey work, came here to visit us and wrote us up in the Turkey World. He ate a meal with us, and told of watching this family gathered about the table where they saluted the American flag before grace was said, then they were allowed to eat. The boys still laugh about that. I guess our Jerry, our little Jerry, did it. He hung a little flag from the chandelier over the dining room table and for years and years, in fact until the children had pretty much left home, every meal was a salute to the flag before we said grace.

HA: That's very nice.

HU: I think families need traditions.

HA: This country needs traditions.

HU: Every Memorial Day we had a weiner roast. We always managed to have a fresh brush pile here someplace with all the trees that they were cutting down. It happened that our last baby was born on the 25th of May, which was five days from Memorial Day, so I was in Salem City Hospital on Memorial Day, but they had their weiner roast anyway. (Laughter)

HA: Good. I'm sure you wanted them to.

HU: That's right Traditions, I think, are great things. I also think that too many of our children today don't have heroes. Some people may say that is all right, but I kind of think heroes and heroines are good.

HA: I think children are looking for heroes. Do you watch "Happy Days" with the Fonz? That's basically the hero of today.

HU· Is that right?

HA: That's fine, but it's much different than the heroes that you had. My hero, I think, was Roy Rogers. Still, that's not even a hero.

HU: I think our public schoolteachers could do much more in promoting heroes of children, but we just don't seem to have them. I was laughing with Dave the other night. I said, "Do you remember how . . . " Many times, to get this gang to go to bed, I would go to the piano and play a march and they would form a line and march. They would go around and circle the room. They would march and march until they got tired and whoever was leading the march would eventually lead them upstairs.

HA: That's great! That's nice

HU Easter time I'll never forget the year that Jerome bought rabbits. They were huge things, chocolate rabbits, one for every child.

HA: About a foot tall?

HU: Oh yes! We lined them up on the mantel. Apparently--we always blame Jerry for it--somebody got up in the night and took a chunk out of several of those ears. (Laughter) In the morning they would always all have to go out and do the turkey work first. We would lock the doors to the sun room so they could see through and know what was in there. The same way at Christmas time, that's how we kept them out of the Christmas tree, by locking the doors so they couldn't get at the tree and they couldn't at the bunnies until they had gone out and fed their turkeys and watered them, and we had eaten breakfast. Then it was time to gather the Easter eggs which dad and I had hidden in here the night before. They would gather the eggs and at Christmas time they could take the tree apart.

HA: You mean take it apart Christmas day?

HU: Yes. Take the gifts off of it. We always called it taking it apart.

HA: When did you set the tree up, the night of Christmas Eve?

HU: We didn't necessarily wait until the last minute. Usually they helped decorate it. Father and I would put the gifts around after they would go to bed and then lock the door so that they couldn't get in in the morning until it was time.

HA: I could never sleep at night on Christmas Eve. It was terrible. I was up at the crack of dawn. I couldn't wait to get down there. My parents used to sleep in because my sister and I would be up at 4:00, like crazy people. I was so excited. It never leaves you.

HU: I think kids are all that way. In fact, I often wondered whether we were quite fair with our children. For instance, Christmas morning and also Thanksgiving morning when we were in turkeys, whatever turkeys were not called for--and we always aimed to have a few more dressed than we knew we had orders for, and we didn't want to run out--whatever were left had to be put in the freezer. In order to get done without having to fuss about getting it done, father always insisted that those turkeys had to be wrapped and put in the freezer before we could open the Christmas gifts. On Thanksgiving morning everybody was so dead from having worked so hard the week before getting these turkeys ready . But nevertheless if we were going anyplace . . . we usually didn't because nobody was going to invite nine children plus two adults for dinner. So we usually had dinners here, but nevertheless that job always had to come first. Really, by the time we got all that work done and got ready, the anticipation had sort of worn off . . .

HA: You were exhausted.

HU: I'm sure I understand why he did it, for this way he didn't have to fight them. If they had opened their Christmas gifts and had all these things to play with, then you would have had to fight and fight and fight.

HA: It's perfect psychology.

HU: Yes, but it was kind of hard on the kids.

HA: I'm sure. Mrs. Hull, is there anything else you would like to add?

HU: I think that my three months away from home this fall, this winter, in another culture, gave me a new perspective on the blessings that I enjoy in my own country. There are plenty of things that are wrong in America, but there is nothing that is wrong that we can't make right if we set ourselves to it. It was a great lesson to me to learn very quickly what are essentials and what are necessities. It's surprising what you can get along without that we have every day and take for granted. You can learn to take cold baths.

HA: Use Woolite on your hair to clean it.

HU: (Laughter)

HA: I've done that, and it works. When I was in Italy the only thing I could take for six weeks were cold showers because they were having strikes all the time. I washed my hair with Woolite and it was just gorgeous. It worked. My own shampoo--I was using Prell--that wouldn't be clean in cold water, but I used Woolite. I don't know what I would have done if I didn't have Woolite. You can get used to it. In fact, it wakes you up.

HU: I never quite got used to sitting down in the bathtub in cold water. I could go on my knees, but I just couldn't quite bring myself to sit down.

HA: I could see a cold shower, but not a cold bath. That would really take something to get used to. Was this every day? Did they ever get hot water?

HU: Yes. The problem was that they had running cold water, but they did not have running hot water. They couldn't always replace their gas bomb they used in the stove right away. It took too much gas to heat water regularly. If there had just been one of us that's one thing, but there were five of us. Consequently, you didn't heat the water.

HA: I'm sure it was a long enough strain.

HU: That's right. I don't call it a vacation, I just call it a great learning experience in my life.

HA: You've had many I'm sure. You absorb and you're aware. You want to experience. Well, Mrs. Hull, thank you very much for your time.

HU: You're welcome.

HA: Mrs. Hull, please mention why you named your farm White House Fruit Farms?

HU: The government, to Jerome, was something that was sacred. He was very reverent about it and he insisted that the house be painted white and that it be called White House Fruit Farm. The rest of us would have like to keep the name Hull, and you'll notice on the barn we tried not to lose Jerome's name. It had always been Jerome Hull. Then the next time we had it painted David had come in as a helper, manager, and so it was Jerome Hull and Son. Then when Jerome died David didn't want his name put up there because he is simply the manager, but also just a shareholder like each one of the children. He said, "Let's not lose Jerome's name." The barn says White House Fruit Farm, Jerome Hull founder.

HA: This is in 1967?

HU: That wasn't on the barn until last summer.

HA: He named it in 1967?

HU: No, he named it long before we incorporated. We incorporated in 1967. He named the farm; that name has been on the barn for a long, long, long time. It was White House Fruit Farm--Apples, Peaches, Turkeys, Jerome Hull. Then, of course, we had to have it painted to get rid of the turkeys because we no longer had turkeys. Then we had it painted again last summer.

HA Thank you for adding, that was interesting.

END OF INTERVIEW