

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Rayen School Project

Student Experience

O. H. 428

HELEN HALL

Interviewed

by

Hugh G. Earnhart

on

December 16, 1980

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Rayen School Project

INTERVIEWEE: HELEN HALL

INTERVIEWER: Hugh Earnhart

SUBJECT: Various Establishments in Youngstown, Olive Arms and her family, Different Families in the Area, Rayen School

DATE: December 16, 1980

E: This is an oral history interview for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on the Arms Museum with Helen Hoover, at 1216 Fifth Avenue at approximately 1:30, December 16th, 1980.

Miss Hall, tell me a little bit about your childhood, your family and growing up.

H: Well, I was born over on the south side. When I was four years old, in 1907, my father brought a house that Mr. Will Hitchcock had built out there in Scienceville. His mother thought that he should be closer to the Hubbard Furnace, so he built that house out there on what is now Liberty Road.

Then his mother died so he went back to live there on Wick Avenue. He could still get to the Hubbard Furnace. My father thought he would like to bring up his girls in the country. We had 25 acres. We lived there for forty years. That's why I came to town to school and all that.

E: What was it like growing up in those years right ahead of the First World War?

H: It was very peaceful. We did a little farming. I know about it, but not like you do. We had cows and chickens, but we never had any horses. We tried to have a big vegetable garden and a nice flower garden and did a lot of landscape work, because the Hitchcock's weren't there very long. William Hitchcock says he vaguely remembers living out there. I've talked to him about it.

E: What about your family?

H: My mother was a McKinnie. The McKinnie's had a lot of land on Market Street. Their farm was from about Myrtle Avenue out beyond Chalmers Avenue. My grandfather McKinnie got tired of that and owned along Cleveland Street. That's where I was born. That's about all I remember about the south side.

E: What did you do as a family?

H: Not too much. I have an older sister, but there really were just the four of us. Then of course, my grandparents did come; their last few years they came to live with us, my maternal grandparents. My paternal grandfather went down on a ship in the Atlantic Ocean before my father was born, so I never saw him. My father's mother was a Barclay. The Barclay's settled over there on Mahoning Avenue. It was really a south side beginning that just happened to get to the country.

E: What did your sister . . .

H: She's still living up in Toronto. She has lost her husband. The reason she got to Toronto: We had a summer cottage up in Algonquin Park and . . . the reason we had that is back in 1917 my family learned about a girls camp in Algonquin Park and we were sent to that and liked it so well. You leased your land there and built a cottage. We still have it. It's still in the family. That's how I lived from May until October, up in the woods there. I miss that part now.

E: I'll bet.

H: I think it did me good to know how to live like that. She met her husband up there and that's why she's up there.

E: What did your father do?

H: He was with the Mahoning Abstract Company before the Realty Trust Company was formed. I didn't ask enough questions when they were still living. I realized later that I could have asked my grandparents more and I just didn't. I wasn't old enough to care. I try to read all of these things.

E: What was his role in the Trust Company?

H: He was president. Mr. Arms was vice-president. Bill Carroll from Tallwan was his secretary, and Phil Schaff got in there. He came as a young man before he was married and lived in a boarding house on Bryson Street. Then in due time, he courted Janie Booth. That's where Chuck came from.

The Realty Trust Company sold real estate and then I don't know what all they had. They were in that old building that was in there before the Palace Theatre. The Realty Company built the one that's still now, the Realty Building. They moved over so they could build the Palace Theatre. My father was interested in the Palace Realty Company and the Hotel Ohio too. He was kind of in on the building of it back in 1912. I can remember talk about that.

E: Just to ask another question about the Realty Company. Do you remember anything about what your dad may have said in regards to the economic problems that were coming in the 1920's and on into the 1930's?

H: He knew trouble was coming in the late 1920's and into the 1930's. Here's a story that he told: I didn't hear this, but he did tell us at home. Mr. Masonwick came into the office one day after social security was in and told Wilfred and my father that they better sign up. They both said, "I'm not going to take anything from Franklin." That was my dad. I'm glad they did. But their reaction was they weren't going to take anything from Franklin.

E: Right, you know, it was a total new concept almost revolutionary in nature.

H: Now, Mr. Masonwick had an interest in a plant down in Salem. Oh, what was that plant? He went down there.

His daughter married Carl Dennison. He's Joe Butler's brother-in-law. Francis Wick, his son, I knew when he was still going down . . . it wasn't Mullins. I just can't remember.

E: When you went down to your father's realty company do you remember anything about the office?

H: Yes.

E: When you walked through the front door what was the first thing that struck you?

H: It was one big, big room. Mr. Arms' office was there on Wick Avenue. The one my father had looked out on the Square more and the Stambaugh Building. One of the things we could do from school was go down there and stand on the steps to see the circus parade, and even look out the windows on the square side.

Part of the time our road wasn't hard surface and we couldn't drive in winter. We used the streetcar. I knew what it was like to ride on the tram streetcar.

E: What school were you going to at the time?

H: First it was the Yale Avenue School. Now that's part of the university campus. It was the street that ran between Arlington and Spring Street. They bought the country club that was up here where Saint Ed's Junior High is now by Crandall Park. I got through up there in 1917. Then I went to Rayen for two years. Then they thought I better go down to Walnut Hill in Natick, Massachusetts; that's down near Wellesley. I wasn't smart enough to graduate, so I just came home. I didn't finish.

E: Do you recall any of the teachers that were . . . let's see, when did you graduate from Rayen?

H: I didn't graduate. I only went there two years.

E: When did you go there I mean?

H: The winter of 1917 and 1918. Miss Baldwin, Lida Baldwin, you read about her, and Sarah Jane Peterson, Miss Catherine Smith, Ada Rogers, she was an English teacher, and Mr. Tear. He later became the principal. It was all older teachers. Of course, Rayen got going and Jim Wick was one of them.

E: What was a typical day like at Rayen when you were there?

H: We went about 8:30 to 4:00 or something like that. I would go downtown and wait and just go home. We could go over then to the YWCA cafeteria. There was a nice tea room there on Phelps Street where we would go. Then on down to . . . did anybody ever tell you about Burts Candy? He made candy and ice cream. You could go there for lunch, too. Mostly my lunch was packed.

E: You got out at what time, 4:00?

H: I think it was about that.

E: Then how long did you have to wait until your dad was ready to go home?

H: To 5:30 or something like that. It would depend on whether he was having some kind of a meeting. But that way I got to know who the Stambaugh's were. Mr. Rollin Steese who started up at Brier Hill . . . he was a trustee earlier, but I don't think they called them trustees. He was some kind of an officer at the Realty Trust Company along with the Stambaugh's.

My mother and father used to go on trips with the Stambaugh's and the Steese's. I mean they would go to Hot Springs, Arkansas. The men would play golf and the ladies would take their baths down there. They would take automobile trips to California because Stambaugh's had a daughter out there.

E: This, say hour to hour and a half that you had to wait at the Realty Company, what did you do all of the time, day in and day out?

H: I was supposed to maybe be doing my homework, but I sat there and listened. That was one of the things. One looked out and watched the traffic, and people walking by. I remember I caught on to who old Mr. Wirt was by seeing him walk by there. I forget whether he had an office in the Stambaugh Building. I think I later knew that. Just because you were downtown like that you did see people who were around all of the time.

E: What did the Square look like at that period?

H: There was a fountain there.

E: In the center?

H: In the center. Then of course, the soldiers monument was where it is now. Then they built the branch library. The fountain went from that path. There are pictures of the fountain, but I vaguely remember it.

E: What businesses were down around the Square at that time, do you recall?

H: There was a cigar store there on the corner where the Union Bank is now. It was the First National Bank then. I can remember the building before the central tower was built. Would that be Andrews and Hitchcock block? Then there was a drugstore where the Rhoades Building was built.

I remember the old Tod house. I don't remember the old hotel that was there before the Stambaugh Building. I learned all of those things from looking at pictures that I saw down at the museum when I had a chance to see more that we had at home.

I made mistakes by not keeping atlantesthat we had of just Youngstown or the county ones where it told who owned the properties and all. I've gotten caught up down at the museum. I found out a lot of stuff there.

E: When you came back from school, what did you do then?

H: You mean after I quit down at Walnut Hill?

E: Yes.

H: Looked after the old folk and kind of learned really about gardening and a little social life. The first garden club was founded here in Youngstown in 1915. My mother was one of the charter members. She, of course, got us into doing things. Then later I was asked to join it. Then the Junior League came along and I got in that. I had to do a little volunteer job, which I thoroughly enjoyed doing. I got out more that way.

Mary Pollock and I became friends at Yale School and from that time on, the Pollock's were awfully nice to me. Bill and his wife are still nice to me. Through Mary Pollock I got acquainted with Dr. Elsaesser's daughter, Sue Elsaesser Lassey. She is my best friend now. She is twelve years younger than I am. She comes over here every Saturday and we go out for lunch and I get a few errands done that I need to do. I look forward to getting out that way. I think that's one way I knew more about people who lived there on Wick Avenue, because her late cousins and all that came in to Pollock's. Sue's grandmother, Mrs. Ford, was a sister of Mrs. Pollock.

I remember when Butler Art was built. I do remember the old Wick home that they tore down to build Butler Art, the Warner home on the corner of where the First Christian Church is.

E: Before we start talking about the people on the hill, what was your father like?

H: They wanted to get some of the real estate sold. They developed the land up along Fifth Avenue here and some south side kind of plats. I know he was interested in land.

E: What was he like at home? Was he a tough disciplinarian?

H: Yes, but he understood. He read a lot. He read a great deal. I still take the New York Times, I mean the Sunday one, just because he had it all, daily and Sunday. I was brought up on it. But, he really did read a lot. He was a great admirer of Herbert Hoover. One reason for that, Mr. Arms' brother-in-law, Henry Robinson, who had come from Ravenna, got into the government, you know, helping Hoover at the time of the First World War, the Belgians and all that.

E: The relief program.

H: Yes. Then the Robinson's went to California to live. I think they gave something out there to, well, Dorothy Welch has seen what it is in Pasadena, but in memory of

CD Arms. I had all the booklets about that. When I moved here, there were things that I had that I gave to the museum. I just knew I didn't have room to keep them all.

E: Was your father the type of person that when things went right at the Realty Company it was right with the world and so forth, and when things went bad, he . . .

H: Well, he realized that he didn't have some of the money part that Wilford Arms and the Stambaugh's had and all that, but they were his friends. My father was one of the trustees of the auditorium; I mean Henry Stambaugh had that in his will. I heard an awful lot about it as it was being built. He would come around here every day and see how they were coming. Same way when they built the Palace Theatre. He looked that over, too.

E: How did you become acquainted with the Arms family?

H: Just because of Mr. Arms, Wilford, being there in the office. I think that's the only reason, because the men saw each other every day. Then we did some going back and forth. Of course, we couldn't entertain like Mrs. Arms did and have all that silver and china as fine as hers. They were very understanding. I remember they wanted us to come out to the country to see what she was going to build out there. Even the garage that they built had two apartments over it; they would stay out there in the summertime. We went out there to see that. She had it all staked out, the land where she was going to build her house. You could see where it was going to be. My, that has changed out there. I've been out there. I know a few people who live there.

E: What was Mr. Arms like?

H: He had a nice sense of humor. I was always a little bit afraid of him, I think. He was very dignified. He walked up and down Wick Avenue. He would walk down in the morning, then he would go home for lunch. My father went over to Youngstown Club for lunch. He was dealing with all of his money. I guess he had that. That may have been why they founded this little brokerage company out of Cleveland. He did like the out-of-doors. I think he used to go duck hunting.

He came from Sodus, New York. I've learned of other people from Youngstown too, but he happened to come from there. Freeman Arms and his father Charles Dayton Arms came from up there. They wanted to come to the Western Reserve. They stopped up in Brookfield and had



a store before they came on down to Youngstown. That was a story.

E: Was Mr. Arms the type of person who would look forward to a vacation and go on a vacation?

H: I don't think they took very many. I know they never went abroad, but they took western trips. She was pretty crippled up with her arthritis, I suppose, by an early age.

E: Was she?

H: Yes. I just know they never went abroad like so many of the people that did.

He was a wonderful golfer. There at the museum we had all the cups that he earned or won here. I used to study them. Some of us would pitch in and shine the silver. (Laughter)

My father got to go with Mr. Adams, Mr. Steese and the Stambaugh's down to Pinehurst. They would go down in the fall for about three weeks and golf down there. I remember the country club and all of that out here. They did take time off in the afternoon. They would just leave the office and go out and play golf.

E: Was Mr. Arms interested in the house and so forth?

H: Yes, he was. But I think she had the upper hand. You mean in building?

E: Yes.

H: They were married in 1899. They moved into that house in 1905. I wasn't old enough to know that, but I've heard things through the years.

E: Did you ever hear why they decided to build that house where they did?

H: It was land that her father owned beside his house, you see, which is the Romanian Church. He gave Olive the land, where she built. Then where the Dana Music School was, he gave to Kate. Kate built that house before she married Alf Rice. She was ready for Alf Rice.

E: Had the house and ready to go?

H: Yes. Annie had been married to Harry Bonnell. After Mrs. Arms' mother died, Annie and Harry Bonnell moved into the big house. I never was in the house until we

had the annual meeting there last year. I never was in it. I could see what the church had done to make it the church.

E: What about Mrs. Arms herself? When was the earliest time you remember her?

H: Being taken there to call on her when we probably were invited. I was kind of a little scared. I knew how capable she was at sewing. She did a lot of beautiful sewing, although she probably had a lot of her clothes made. Her artistic abilities too . . . there are some paintings down there that she did.

I was interested in having a chance to see her mother's scrapbook. I found some things in that. I had time to read them before we got really busy at the Historical Society. We found some things there that Dorothy Welsh didn't know. I took them to her and had her read them too. She was glad to know.

E: Was Mrs. Arms as meticulous about the help that worked there as she was about the house itself?

H: I think so. Did you ever meet up with George Riddle, the chauffer.

E: No.

H: He could tell more stories. We kind of knew that he would lighten things up. He began telling, when we were all down there--the new guides and all that, people who hadn't known the Arms at all--and Dorothy Welsh and I would be kind of horrified at some of the stories that George was filling people up with. She made him tow the mark all right, but still she was understanding.

E: How many people did she have there working most of the time?

H: Not any more than three or four girls in the house and then George. I think there was a gardener. I don't think George had to do the chauffering and the gardening until the last.

All of those ladies on Wick Avenue, things just had to be right. I know Mrs. Booth had a man and his wife who lived in the garage over back. That was, I think, 606 Wick Avenue. The Coopers were in her house.

I can remember Mrs. Pack who was Mrs. Booth's sister. Dr. George Pack was one of the first doctors here in Youngstown. But they lived where the Protestant Family Services is now. I even got over to John Ford's once in awhile, Judge Ford.

E: That group who lived there on Wick Avenue, the Pollock's and the Ford's and the Arms' and so on, did people stand in awe of them?

H: Maybe some people did. One thing, they were all related enough that they called each other cousin this and that and still to this day think of them. They were cousins, but some of them were a little removed. They did stick to that. I think even the Hitchcock's got in on that.

I remember when the Titanic went down and they knew that George Wick went down on the Titanic. His house was right next to 648. He lived in it a year or so before. Then his wife lived there up until the time she died. She was a Hitchcock. She was his second wife too.

E: When you went there to visit, did you feel uncomfortable going to visit Mrs. Arms?

H: Well, no, because she was always so friendly and nice. I even went to visit her after my mother died. I would never go without calling up. I would always call up and see if she wanted to see me. Then I would go whatever time. I recall that my last times were going upstairs to meet her up there in what she used as a sitting room.

E: When you would go to visit, what would a visit be like?

H: She was nice enough to be interested in what I was doing. Sometimes Mary Pollock even went with me. She knew about our place up in Canada and she wanted to know about that.

E: Was she interested in talking about the house and things of that sort?

H: Yes. She told me what she was going to do with the house. I remember her telling me before it really came out that she had all of her plans made for the museum. I think she said to Dorothy that she hoped I could be there sometimes. I did get there then.

E: Would she have a little lunch for you when you came?

H: Not always for those afternoon calls. We were, as a family, invited there when he was living. I remember we were kind of scared, although I knew how the Pollock's acted serving things. I wasn't used to many maids waiting on you. We had some, but I was brought up to kind of look after myself.

They were full of fun and had a good sense of humor, both of them. Everything wasn't all serious. When you think of all these beautiful hand works she did . . . I marveled at all of the things that she got ready for us to exhibit.

It's in her writing. Those things we have on the pantry shelf, you know, that's all her writing. She told what they were and then we kind of fixed them up with plastic to preserve them.

Dorothy knew Mrs. Arms had these and for years she was getting ready for this. Dorothy was with her about every day. She was doing the bookkeeping and that business, but she would come up from the office.

E: Mrs. Arms, her health was always a concern to her?

H: Yes.

E: Was there any attempt on her part to try to help relieve the pain and suffering that she went through?

H: Yes. She went to Johns Hopkins. I know they went down there to get some relief for her. I think it was just medicine that kept her going. I guess it was now what we just call arthritis stigmas. That was why she gave up trying to get up and down the stairs, why she stayed upstairs. She gave up, knowing that after Wilford died she wouldn't build the house on Loganway.

E: Wilford died at what age?

H: I forget whether he died in the 1940's or early 1950's. She died in 1960. My father died in 1945. Wilford lived a few more years.

E: That home that she hoped to build out in the country, did she ever say anything about it when it finally became a reality that she wouldn't get to build it?

H: I don't remember her saying it to me. She did realize that she couldn't go through with the rest of it alone, without him. If she had done that, I bet the house on Wick Avenue would have been torn down. Something would have come along.

E: Yes. Do you recall her talking about the decision to give that to the Mahoning Valley Historical Society?

H: I do remember . . . I mean now, this is what I had heard through Jim Wick and even Mrs. Grace Butler. She was just going to give what was in the house to the Western Reserve Historical Society. It was Grace Butler who was a close friend of hers who said, "Oh, don't do that." Then she decided she would just leave the house for that and the things would stay here in Youngstown. They nearly went up to the Western Reserve Historical Society.

- E: Was that mainly because there really wasn't a live and ongoing historical society?
- H: I think so. I think so because when it first started it was pretty active, then it kind of petered out.
- E: Yes, I think they had the stuff stored, at one time, in the public library.
- H: Yes and even in the Jonathan Warner house, the house that was there before the First Christian Church. They moved things back and forth quite a bit before they finally got it up there. I mean historical things. I don't mean any of hers. Well it was the Hitchcock furniture, that Hitchcock parlor furniture that was down on the second floor of the library. I remember seeing it down there.
- E: We were talking about Mrs. Arms making a decision to give it to the Historical Society. Do you recall the discussion on her part about how the museum or about how the Historical Society was to treat that property?
- H: No, she didn't tell me that. Now Dorothy of course, she's the one who knows all that, because Dorothy was with her all the time.
- E: Dorothy and Mrs. Arms got along well, didn't they?
- H: Oh yes. They must have, yes. She depended so much on her, especially after he was gone. No, all I remember one of these times I mentioned that I went to call on her was her saying, "I hope you can be there sometime."
- By that time, my mother had died and I was on my own. I had never worked. I did work at Livingston's to get myself on social security. I got a job down there for a couple of years which has helped to have social security now.
- E: What do you know about George?
- H: He kind of pulled hard a deal, I think, although he was a good chauffer. He knew how to run a car and take care of them and all that, but I think he dragged it and put a few things over on her just because she couldn't be around all the time. One of the stories was that he had been keeping the car clean and polished and all. He would just do the side she would see when she got in and out of it and not over on the other side. He would probably tell that. (Laughter)
- E: Now he lived out over the garage?

- H: Yes, except when we opened the museum, why, by that time, I think, he was married to this lady out of Hubbard and he would go home there at night.
- E: What ever happened to George?
- H: He died. His wife died too just within the last year. I just happened to notice that in the paper. She had her own place outthere that she had had from her first husband who just loved dogs and cats, and the place was full of that. I was invited out for supper once and all I could think of was maybe I was eating cat or dog hair. I like seeing the place and all that.
- E: How long did he work for Mrs. Arms?
- H: Oh, I know he drove them . . . What was the name of that osteopath up in Canada the people went to? I've been trying to think of that. Mr. Arms went up there, thinking he could help her. Now maybe that was up . . .
- E: They drove all of the way up there?
- H: Yes, oh they must have stopped overnight.
- E: I would think.
- H: I think it was that Buick car and it was when Wilford was still living. Doctor Lock, wasn't that?
- E: Up at Toronto?
- H: No, it was east of Toronto.
- E: Peterborough?
- H: Well, around there, but it was in Ontario. I'm sure it was in Ontario. She just thought she could be helped. They didn't help her much down at Johns Hopkins.
- E: What other responsibilities did George have around that place besides driving the Buick?
- H: I think he was supposed to do the lawn work, outside work. There wasn't a real gardener anymore. Of course after she was gone, he didn't have any car driving to do. I bet she asked him to even do some cleaning in the house, some of the work.
- Do you recall Hilda who was there?
- E: Yes.

- H: Well, her mother did Mrs. Arms' laundry work. George took it out and brought it back from her. Jenny was there when I went there. Jenny still lived there. She had been in the house a long time. I don't know that she was the cook, but she was in on the cleaning of it.
- E: The ten years or so that Mrs. Arms lived beyond Mr. Arms' death, did she still keep the same servants and keep the house up?
- H: I think so, although I don't know. I know the nieces from Cleveland would come down to see her. She would tell about that. They were Sally's children. They were Bonnell's. She did stick beside Charles Arms Bonnell, Annie's son. He was kind of pretty wild at times. I mean drunk. Oh, one thing George did, George would get sent over to get Charles Arms Bonnell out of some place in Cambridge Springs where they had him to kind of dehydrate him. He used to tell about being sent over there to get him.
- She took it all. I suppose because her sisters were gone and all. Even though she hadn't had any children of her own, she was thinking of theirs.
- E: When you would go to visit the house, what was the one thing that you looked forward to or amazed you or captured your imagination when you went in that house?
- H: Well, I don't think I was old enough to realize how she had had all the forged iron hardware made. I don't think I realized that then. I knew how she wanted all of the woodwork upstairs; that was painted kind of an ivory. I knew then, back in about 1923, when we were doing the things out at our house she had us come to just see the exact shade. We had that done by painters here in Youngstown and somebody from Sterling Welsh up in Cleveland came to advise on draperies and wallpaper and things like that. We just knew what good taste she had.
- E: Her copper sink didn't amaze you?
- H: Well, no it didn't. It really didn't. There was one at the Pollock's. I knew that one better. We had had a copper sink at the Hitchcock house. That house was built a little later. Charlie Owsley was the architect for that house. That's the one I lived in. There was a copper sink out there in the butler's pantry, so I think I did know. Although, I don't remember that we polished it up like one is now. It's really something.
- E: Let me ask you one other question then. Is there anything that I haven't touched on that you think . . .

H: I know how much she liked that rose garden in the back of the house and didn't want the way it was planted changed any. I think it has been some. I also know how much it bothers Dorothy Welsh when anybody does something that she knows is against Mrs. Arms' wishes. I feel the same way myself. I think some of the younger generations don't realize that.

E: As a little kid you went to the Realty Company.

H: Realty Trust Company.

E: Then you took an interest in the Historical Society and worked up there. When you first started to recall things, you were around the Arms'. When you went into semi-retirement, you were still around the Arms'. What's the attraction about that family?

H: Well, just the way they wanted those beautiful things and the house and everything she had in it. Of course, those things we were able to know, because she had marked them. Some of the things that are there now even had belonged to her sisters. She got them because they died before she did. They kind of came back. She knew when she had it all marked.

Dorothy let me look at first at an appraisal list. She didn't want any of the guides to tell if anybody asked the value of things. We weren't supposed to tell that. But the appraisal list kind of described things, so you knew what they were, I mean what kind of china and what kind of silver and all that. There were even bills of sale, so you knew where things had been bought in New York City. They would go to New York and she would buy things that she wanted for the house. I know there were a lot more books that they took off of the bookshelves there in the library so there would be shelf space to show some of the things that had to be locked up.

I do recall that after she got those jade jewel trees that were stolen, when she got them and got them down in, she had us come in to see them. She was so pleased with them and had them there in the front window.

E: Do you think that she had any premonition about what was going to happen around the university, the churches there, urban renewal or any of those things that led her to make a decision to 'we're going to have something'. She saw what happened to the Pollock House, the Ford House. What was it, the Arms' House that was right across the street?



H: No, that was Almira Arms Wick's mother and father, the Pete Arms, the stone house that was torn down.

E: Yes.

H: Well, that was Almira Arms Wick's father and mother's home.

E: Just all around her she had lived long enough to see that a whole way of life was going to disappear. This is one of the things that led her to make that decision to save the house and the interior. In her will, you know, you may do anything you want to the upstairs, but the downstairs must remain intact.

H: That was to try to have people realize how people lived with all of those beautiful things. She really was wonderful. As a young girl, you know, she did get abroad and went to an art school. She had that talent. She did enjoy the painting and drawing that she did, those sketches and all.

E: You know, I just thought, when did this arthritis business begin? Do you have any idea of the year or her age?

H: You mean how old she might have been?

E: Yes. It was after her marriage.

H: Yes. Well now, let me think. They were going down to Johns Hopkins before 1918 or 1919, because my father had a sinus condition and I know there was some doctor that they met down there that Wilford said, "Well, maybe you could get some help there." My father stopped at Johns Hopkins on his way home from Pinehurst one fall. Then he came on up to New York City and met me because at Walnut Hill they put me on a train in Boston to come down to New York and then come on home here. I'm just telling you all this to link up about what time I think that was. Whether the Arms went before then or not I'm not sure.

E: Well, see that would put her . . .

H: She was born in 1865.

E: No, she died in 1960. She was what?

H: She was 90.

E: Yes, she was 90. So that would be 1870.

H: No because Wilford was two years older than my father. He was born in 1865, because my father was born in 1867. My mother wasn't born until 1871. Olive was older than my mother.

E: So this had to pretty much hit her in her early years.

H: Forties.

E: Yes. I wonder if that had something to do with her painting?

H: Relaxing. One thing that George told about was her using her sewing machine. Her feet and knees and all wouldn't let her do the peddling, so she had him kind of lie down on the floor and move the thing up and down. She couldn't press on it enough, but he could keep it going. She was working it up and she could thread the needles and all that.

E: I bet you George loved that?

H: Yes, but he was glad to do it. The old sewing machine was up there in the attic.

E: Do you ever walk around that house when you work down there helping to organize the Arms home for the Society and so on? Do you ever just walk around there sometimes late in the afternoon when it's quiet?

H: Yes, I think I know what you mean.

E: Relive some experiences . . .

H: And think what it was like when Wilford would be coming home around 4:30 or 5:00 and what it was like for them then. You know, they sat back there in what she called the sitting room. They didn't sit in the library. I remember they always had--except in the summer time--a nice fire in the fireplace if you went to call. He would have a wood pile there on that back porch and he would keep that going. They were so friendly that way. They wanted you to be comfortable. I've thought about what it would be like to just live there. It would be kind of scary now, though.

I can vaguely remember what the bedrooms were like, because when I went to see her she would be there. She had made a sitting room out of that middle room upstairs there, not 204, that's 203 I think. That was her sitting room. That was where she would be sitting, in a chair by the window, so she could look out on Wick Avenue.

E: Would she always be there when you came? Was she a very punctual type person?

H: I never went without finding out when she wanted me. I remember even when my mother and I--when my father was still living--never went without calling to make sure she wanted to see us. Then we would be there at that time.

That was in the early 1950's I think. I know it was after I came into town to live in 1947. My mother died in 1957. But as I say, we never went unless she knew we were coming.

E: She always was in her sitting room waiting?

H: Yes, maybe with those ribbons in her hair and all fixed up pretty.

E: How would she greet you?

H: Well, I don't know. I remember her hands were kind of arthritic. You didn't just take hold very hard. You didn't want to hurt her. Maybe now there could have been something done for her that might have helped. Going to John Hopkins certainly, through the years, found a lot down there.

E: Because she had gone to Johns Hopkins and tried to get help there but had not been as successful as she might have hoped, did she ever think about going through any kind of quackery medicine or things of that sort? Do you ever recall talking about that?

H: Well now, it seems to me that this place up in Ontario was on that kind of order.

E: Was it?

H: I wish I could think of that. Maybe it will come to me.

E: You know, she had just tried everything; it was kind of desperation.

H: Yes, it was desperation.

E: To have an arthritic condition for a few years or something of that sort where that would be expected . . . but to have it as early as it hit her and as active a person as she would have liked to have been, this just kind of put the damper on things.

H: It did and that's why she just probably didn't get the house built out there in the country. I know that Mrs. Pollock went down to Philadelphia to somebody. I was with Mary once when her mother was in the University of Pennsylvania Hospital. I also know that she went down to Boston to Phillip's house and had a doctor down there. Her troubles were anemia. What I'm trying to say is, people did go away from Youngstown to get relief.

They used to say, "Why did people go up to Doctor Drile when we had Doctor Elsaesser here in Youngstown?"

E: The years after the Historical Society opened up the Arms

Museum when you gave tours, did you ever think at times when you were walking around telling them about this or that that you could hear Mrs. Arms talking to you as well?

H: Well, yes.

E: Or things you might say and she would say, "Now Helen, that's not exactly right."

H: Oh, I tried to be . . . some of the other guides would kind of make up a little more exotic stories about things that I thought I kind of knew. I knew from Dorothy letting me see the appraisal list and things like that. I knew, but I wasn't going to tell. People will ask about how much things are worth. Dorothy was so right for us not to tell anyway.

E: I've been going on here for some time. Do you have anything else?

H: I don't think so.

E: Thank you very kindly, Helen.

END OF INTERVIEW