

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Dorset United Methodist Church

Youth, Travels, Past Ministers,  
and Trends in the Church

O.H. 85

CLARENCE SPENCER

Interviewed

by

Patricia Beckwith

on

November 18, 1977

CLARENCE SPENCER

Clarence William Spencer was born on July 9, 1896 in Dorset Township, Ohio. He was the son of John William and Lou Spencer. He attended the Lenox and Dorset Township schools in his youth.

On October 1, 1920, he married Bessie Loomis. They became the parents of three children. Their first son, Bill, was born in 1922; their second, Jim, in 1925. Their daughter, Mary, was born in 1935.

Mr. Spencer has been self-employed in the lumber and saw mill business since 1913. He belongs to the Dorset United Methodist Church.

His hobbies are travelling and woodwork.

This interview was conducted at the Spencer home, 3515 Footville-Richmond Road, Dorset, Ohio, on November 18, 1977.

PATRICIA BECKWITH  
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INTERVIEWEE: CLARENCE SPENCER  
INTERVIEWER: Patricia Beckwith  
SUBJECT: Youth, Travels, Past Ministers, and Trends  
in the Church  
DATE: November 18, 1977

B: This is an interview being conducted with Mr. Clarence Spencer for the Youngstown State University. The name of the project is the Dorset United Methodist Church by Patricia Beckwith. The location is 3515 Footville-Richmond Road, Dorset, Ohio. Today is November 18, 1977, and the time is 7:00 p.m.

Could you tell me where you were born and any special memories of your childhood that you might have?

S: I was born in the southwest corner of Dorset Township on Allen-Comp Road. My father moved here in 1890 when the dirt roads and horse and buggy were still here. We used to walk to school and I went to school in Lenox Township. It was right at the corner of Allen Comp and East Union Roads until they centralized it, then we went back to Dorset. We lived a mile and half from the school, back and forth. We had a farm of 175 acres which we farmed. Dad also ran a sawmill, he and Nelt Furber. So we worked in the sawmill a lot of the time when we were kids. Really, we had lots of fun going to school, working in the woods, running trap lines, and doing all those things kids do.

B: Do you have any special memories of school? Any special teachers?

S: I had a teacher when I was about in the second grade, and the teacher didn't have very good discipline. She couldn't make the kids behave. She got the prosecuting attorney down from Jefferson. His name was Taylor and he had great big eyes. He came down there and almost

scared me to death. He said he wanted to give those boys a talking to. It was three boys that were giving the teacher all the trouble. He talked for about fifteen or twenty minutes. Gee, I never did get over that. He left finally and he was going to put them in jail, but two days after he left the situation was just the same way it was before.

B: Were you one of the three?

S: No. They were older than I was. I would have been probably, had I been their age. But that was one of the things that I always kept in mind. I was really hysterical. Then, they centralized Lenox School and we went to Dorset up there by Allen district and up on the other end of Allen Comp Road. We went there for as long as I went to school. I got ten cents a day for going early and building a fire and taking care of the fire during the day.

B: How old were you?

S: I was in the third grade when I changed and went to Dorset. Professor Broulman taught over in Dorset Center School and then he'd go to these other districts about once a month. So, the day he came we were looking at our trap line and we'd caught a skunk that day. Broulman came in and in the hallway he put his hand over his nose and left. This little teacher put up with it all the time. So, we sold the fur to Austin Allen. We were making quite a bit of money, but it wasn't doing our education any good; it wasn't doing the teacher any good either. Then, my dad bought four Mustang ponies, wild ones, when I was about ten years old. We tried to ride them and they threw us off time and time again. They were wild and nothing bothered them. You'd get on them and-bang-away you'd go! But we survived. It was quite a thing!

B: Did you use the horses to haul lumber?

S: They were small and they weren't any good for that then. We had a team of oxen and we did all our farming with these oxen one year when we had no horses. I would sit on the mowing machine and my brother would drive the oxen when I was real small. We did all our farm work with those oxen. Their names were Hank and Seth. They had more brains than we did; they were really nice. There's no way you can keep an oxen from running away because you can't hold them. But, they were a nice team. Dad's partner also had a team. His team weighed a ton a piece. They were a beautiful team, but they ran away. They straddled something and then they stopped. Down

at the mills, the oxen did all of the work. We had a great time.

B: Do you have any special memories about your mother when you were young?

S: Yes, I was about eight or nine when my father and mother separated. Then my stepmother came in, in about four or five years. But from then on I don't remember too much about my mother. My stepmother was just as good as my real mother. So we were poor, but we had a good time. We had the horses and the cattle. There's a little town name Sentinel, just beyond our farm. We used to get all our groceries down in Sentinel. It's on Sentinel Road. The Pipers ran the store and we used to go down there and get all of our groceries.

Another thing, we didn't have any refrigeration then. When we had to have a lot of cows butchered and sell the beef in the summertime we'd go and hang the cow up in the woods in a tree, after dark when the flies weren't bad. The beef would hang there all night. Then Piper would pick it up and deliver it the next morning. He would cut it up and deliver it the next morning because it all had to go that day or it would be spoiled. The place where we lived had a water mill on it. There were people named Bassett who had their mill in about 1870. Of course it was gone when we were there but Bassett Creek still takes the name of Bassett Creek. It backed water clear up to Sentinel Road. Well, you can't see it from the road, but there's a big bank, and it must have taken a hell of a long time for horses and scrapers to do it because they didn't have any machinery then. But it's still there.

Then, we'd go to church. There were two churches down in Sentinel; a Methodist and a Baptist. One of them had Mayhew, who preached in Sentinel before he came to Dorset. So, we'd go down to Sentinel to that church. Then they closed the church and the other one finally left. Mayhew then came up here to Dorset. The church had socials, pie socials. At Easter they'd have eggs. I remember one fellow ate 36 eggs at one time. They were raw, fried, and boiled, but he ate 36 at one sitting!

B: Was that a contest?

S: Yes, to see who could eat the most. The girls would bring pies and sometimes they'd be auctioned off. Some of them would go for \$2.00 or \$3.00 and that was a lot of money then because we were working for a \$1.00 a day.

- B: Did it depend on whether it was your girlfriend or not?
- S: Yes, it depended on who you were. I worked for \$1.00 a day for a long time. Those were the wages people were getting then. Our road was mud and then they finally put gravel on it and fixed it up, but that was a long time ago.
- B: What did you do after school? Did you graduate?
- S: No, I never graduated. I didn't go to high school at all.
- B: So what did you do after the eighth grade?
- S: We ran the saw mill; my brother and I ran it. Kline is my brother. We even sawed out lumber for this church over here and for that back Sunday School room. I was only sixteen or seventeen years old. So we ran the saw mill.
- B: Was this on your family farm?
- S: No, it was over in Lenox. We had a dairy of our own and Kline and I took care of the dairy. We had four or five cows. There was a fellow named Seth Giddings who would buy some cows at \$25.00 a piece, and he'd buy some good ones. So, we milked cows and then in 1913 when I was 17 years old we took a milk route. We hauled milk to Cherry Valley to a cheese factory. It was the Woods Cheese Factory about a half a mile north of Cherry Valley on the east side of the road. It isn't there anymore. It cost me \$50.00 a month to feed my horses and they went about 12 miles for the trip. We took out a contract until the first of December. The first of November in 1913 it snowed, so they shut the cheese factory down because no one could get through. Then about the only thing to do was to hunt.
- B: What are your memories about World War I?
- S: Well, I was working down at the mill we had at Gustavus on government stuff. I registered in Andover in May and the war was over in November, so in another week or two I'd have been in. I could have enlisted but I didn't. If the draft had been a little different I would have been in.
- B: Do you remember having to sacrifice at home and giving up things because of the war?
- S: No, on the farm I don't remember so much about that because we lived off of the farm and we went to town only once a week. We had our flour ground and we had

our meat. My mother baked the bread and there wasn't much to be bought. People in the rural areas didn't suffer as much because they didn't buy anything anyway. They didn't live off of the store like people do now, with carts full of pies and cakes and all those things. When we needed anything, we'd take eggs or chickens or something and trade them. This Piper, down in Sentinel, was a nice fellow. He'd take anything because he could sell it. So that's the way we got along.

B: Was the Depression about the same way, do you think, for the people in the rural areas?

S: Well, the Depression was different. That is in the 1930's; that was different. But in the World War I as far as I'm concerned, it wasn't. . . Out here in the country, if you weren't in the army you didn't notice it as much. All you noticed were the ones that left and never came back and there were a few of them from Dorset, too. But in the Depression things were all together different.

B: How was it different?

S: No one had a job! They had no money to make the payments on their homes. So, they'd lose their farms. I remember seeing a lot of sales where they were sold out; \$10.00 an acre was the going price. We worked all the time during the Depression, too, and loaded lumber on the railroad. We never took anyone up there to help us because there were always people up there that were going back and forth just looking for a job. The railroad put on two gondola cars for people to ride in free. They couldn't keep them off; men, women, and children were riding in those open cars. They'd just be going somewhere looking for a job.

In 1929 we sold automobiles. We got the cars out of Toledo and up through Cleveland, there'd be just a string of men, women, and children and you could pick up people. We always picked them up and there was no chance that anyone wasn't safe because there was no crime like there is now. It was something!

My brother and I had been partners for sixty-five years. Ever since we were about twelve and we're still partners. That's a pretty good record for a partnership with a relative. The way we dealt and got along together was if anyone did anything the other didn't like, he kept his mouth shut. So, we never had any trouble. But, it's an awful job to keep still. If you don't say anything you never get in trouble.

- B: Do you remember what age you were when they were having the pie socials at the church?
- S: I was about twelve or thirteen years old.
- B: Were those some of your earliest memories about church where the socials were?
- S: Yes. Some of the church doings were pretty rough. They were just the same then as they are now. The kids didn't keep still. They had quite a job keeping them quiet for a while, but they got along all right.
- B: Do you remember why the two churches in Sentinel eventually closed down?
- S: The people just quit going. Sentinel wasn't big enough for two churches anyway. There's nothing down there. It's just the same way it was sixty years ago. There hasn't been a house built down there for years. There wasn't anyone there to go and when the old people died off, why, the young ones didn't go to church. But that's about the same thing we have here. They had two nice churches. The one church, I don't know when it quit, but they had a sidewalk right across a ditch. It was a wood sidewalk up to the church and we furnished lumber two different times for that church to replace the sidewalk. When those two churches closed the people that wanted to go to church went to Dorset or Cherry Valley, and then over to New Lyme.
- B: What are your earliest memories about this church?
- S: Well, we didn't move up to Dorset until about 1920 when I was married. Then I was away all the time, in the woods and different places. Bessie went to church until way later than that. How I happened to go to church was that she backed up into a car. She drove the car, backed up into another car, and smashed it. So I thought I'd better start driving her to church. She's a good driver, but she just happened to back up into this other car. It was Freeman that she backed into.
- B: When you were a boy was it a tradition in your family to go to church?
- S: No, not with my family. It was after they moved to Dorset in about 1920 that they went to church. They went to the Nazarine Church. Boy, they really practiced what they preached!
- B: Where was the Nazarine Church?
- S: It was down at Cherry Valley.



B: You mentioned Reverend Mayhew. I have a list of some of the old ministers. Do you remember any of them?

S: Reverend Mayhew was there from 1914 to 1921. That's in Dorset. Well, he was down at Sentinel before that. That must have been, I don't know how long before. I remember this Holbert and Kelley. I remember Guiler, King, Nuzem and Miller all these, but the others I didn't know anything about.

B: Do you remember any interesting little tidbits about some of these ministers?

S: When they built that Sunday School room there, last time we furnished some of the lumber for it. That was a big church and there was a big following there. I think everything was donated, but that was quite an addition they put on. I think Ira Mellinger built it or at least, I think he put it on. That was Albert's dad. I think that was before Mayhew came here, too. So, that was between 1910 and 1913, somewhere in there. It's been going good ever since, I guess.

B: Do you remember Reverend Mayhew?

S: Oh, yes, yes, I remember him. He built the house where Russell McConnell lives. That was new and he moved in there and we lived where Bud Hinkle does. So we were neighbors. He was a nice man. He was real calm and never got excited. He took everything as it came. He was a real man.

B: What do you remember about Kelley in particular?

S: Haskell Keep married one of Kelley's daughters. His other daughter, Frances, the one that is in New York, stayed with my folks and taught school here. She was a boarder. She was out here this summer, but that's about all I remember about Kelley because I was away so much.

We went to see this Guiler when he was over in the western part of the state and we stopped by two or three times when we went through there to see him.

Keane: I remember him. We rebuilt our house over where Bud Hinkle lives and the roof was off it, letting in the rain. We had just a little on the peak that was shedding water. He came over and we took washtubs to put up there to catch the water and he helped us. We got tub after tub of water off of that thing.

Nuzem; I think what I remember about him is that he was the one who used to smoke a little on the side, which is all right, but the people didn't particularly care for it. It really wasn't any of their business, I guess. I don't know why Miller doesn't ring a bell for some reason.

Edgar Smith; when he left here went to an Indian reservation up in Browning, Montana. We took our trailer and stopped and stayed there for a week up in the Indian reservation. We didn't stay with Edgar, but we were parked close. He writes us every Christmas.

B: Is he still living?

S: Yes.

B: Is he like a missionary to the Indians?

S: Well, he was a preacher to the Indians. They had a Methodist church in Browning. So he took us all around.

B: What were some of your experiences there while you were visiting them?

S: The first night we got there, he said, "Well, I've got to take you down to the hotel." That was the Glacier Hotel and it was on the Indian reservation. It was a mammoth thing. We went into the hotel and it was all made out of logs, great big logs. They had a Pow Wow every night. They had a fireplace larger than this room. When the Pow Wow was over and it was dark he said, "Well, we'll go out and see the chief." We went outdoors and it was so black you couldn't see your hand before you. They had tents there and he pounded on the tent, just like he was knocking on a door. He didn't get any answer. So, we went to another and I think we went to about four tents before he found anyone. Then, the chief was there and we went in and sat on the floor. The chief's name, I think, was McDonald. That wasn't his real name, but they called him Donald and they named the lake after him. He told us all about what they lived on. They had meat hanging all over the top of the tent. There, the flies didn't bother it because of the altitude. We were there for about an hour and he told us a lot of the old stories. Then we went back.

The most interesting place was there because they had many glaciers. They had liquor joints there, a bar on the reservations, and the Indians weren't supposed to drink. You couldn't sell liquor to the Indians, even though the bar was on their land. They couldn't buy anything, but everyone else could. He told us, too, that they had a white overseer. The reservation

had a veterinarian, a doctor, a hospital, and they had this and that. If an Indian went to the hospital he usually died because he wouldn't go unless he had to. So they had an awful time to get the Indians to go when they first got sick because the Indians thought they were going to die anyway. Edgar Smith said that at one time the Indians got some disease in their cattle and they were all supposed to come in and bring their cattle, but they came in and left them and went home. They said they had an awful time getting them to come back and get their cattle. Reverend Smith said running the reservation was just like any other government business. The people that were there didn't know what they were doing. He said it was terrible.

B: Did you have any unusual Indian foods?

S: No, we did our own cooking in the trailer. We just missed the rodeo by a few days. We saw people going to the rodeo. They had two poles on their horses that hung back and then they had a crossbar on these poles to carry their provisions. We went up into Canada. Reverend Smith had three churches: one in Browning, one at Starr, and I can't think of the other name. We stayed there with him for a week.

This Fowler must have been there sometime when I wasn't there because I don't remember him. He was there for three years, by looking at your list. But, Stephens, I remember him and some of the others. Don Silliman, of course, everyone liked him. He was a go-getter. He went around although he was a common everyday fellow, to see everyone. Jones was quite a man. He was a well-read man. He was a good preacher. Dean McElroy, the first night he came into town he stayed with us on a Saturday night; I don't know whether they had their little girl yet or not. Anyway, when morning came they weren't getting ready and church was at 10:00 o'clock. We asked them if they were going to get ready. Well, they said they weren't in any hurry. We were late for church when my wife and I had been up two or three hours before church. He was the same way. He never got excited. Jim and he worked down in the same territory, our Jim. Jim says he's just the same as he always was. He still never gets excited.

B: What was your opinion of having a Korean minister come into our church, Reverend Won?

S: Well, I didn't think too much of it at the start because we couldn't understand him, but I think it was a good idea. I liked him after I got to know him. The trouble is that we form our opinions before we know what we're

doing. I think he was smarter than the rest of us because he was well-read and had a good education. He was under disadvantages going to a new territory. I don't know how he ever stood it.

B: He wasn't married until later and he was isolated most of the time?

S: Yes, but he did a wonderful job.

B: I remember he went over some financial matters on the Lutheran Church with my dad. He had a suit on and was showing my little sister how to do cartwheels. He was very athletic.

What is your honest opinion about having a woman minister in our church?

S: Well, a woman can do just as good a job as a man, but if you're a little hard of hearing it isn't so good. A woman's voice isn't as coarse as a man's voice and it doesn't carry very well. Now, I can hear pretty well, but Bessie can't hear any of it. Just once in a while can she pick things up. She's a nice person and she's doing the best she can, which is good enough. But if you can't hear, you just can't hear. I think she's all right. Well, as far as that is concerned, the preacher whether he is good or bad, shouldn't have any influence on you anyway because that isn't what you go to church for. You go to church for religious purposes, not to hear the preacher. You don't have to agree or disagree with him either. You go to church to pick up some extra things that might do you some good.

As far as liking the preacher, I could go to church if I didn't like the preacher. I'd listen to what he says. I can't think of anyone I don't like, as far as that is concerned. I think she's doing a good job. This one preacher here, this Reverend Briggs, when he came to town the first day Bessie and I went up to him and shook hands. I said to him, "We're the Spencers and we're the ones that cause all the trouble." He never forgot that. I'd like to see him today, because he said he'd never forget that. "We're the ones that caused all the trouble." If there's something that happens you never forget a conversation if it's just a little bit out of the ordinary. That's what I've learned in my lifetime; that's the way you remember anything.

B: What has been your opinion of how the church has interacted with the community from what you've been able to see in your lifetime?

- S: Well, they are doing the best they can. They haven't made much success of it. They don't have many that go there. If they could do better there'd be more people there. I don't know what they could do to influence people to go.
- B: Do you have any intelligent guesses about how attendance can be increased?
- S: I guess you've got to start in Sunday School. You've got to have young people come. I think, maybe, the old people have been trying to run it too much. I think that they should forget about it and let the young people run it. I don't know whether that's right or not, but I don't know who's running it. I know I told Bessie that we shouldn't have anything to do with running the church. The young people should have that, with some guidance from the older people, at least at first. I guess one person shouldn't try to run it. But, the way it works, if that one person didn't try to run it there wouldn't be any church sometimes. Then, some people get mad over everything and leave the church. That's no way to do.
- B: What do you think has been the relationship between the two churches here in town?
- S: I think it's been pretty good. Gee, it's been good with us because we help them out a little bit and they always bring us Christmas baskets. They really shouldn't but anyway they do. I think having Vacation Bible School together helps out a lot.
- B: They influence the children to work and cooperate together and when they get older, maybe, the two churches can continue that tradition.
- S: I think they still should have the two churches because they wouldn't have any more now that if they didn't. I think the two churches are necessary. I like to see the Baptist get along just like I'd like to see the Methodists get along. I don't know what difference it makes whether you're a Baptist or a Methodist. When you get to heaven they probably won't separate us anyway.
- B: As long as you've known our church, has there always been a financial hardship within the church?
- S: Yes, and that's normal. It's the same as the school. The school is always broke, but they have to pay. But the church, there are just a few people that pay into the church. Of course, some of them can't afford it and they shouldn't pay, but they've always had trouble and they've always made it. So I guess that's good.

When they built the new church I think they did a remarkable job.

B: Do you mean about the Sunday School?

S: Yes, that's all paid for. I think that's good. I think they've done wonderfully.

B: When you were younger did you think that tithing was more prevalent than it is today?

S: I think it probably was because then if you gave even a small amount of money it was more than a tenth of what you made. It was because you didn't make much. A dollar then would be like ten dollars now, or twenty. I think that's the reason. I know that we used to put in a dollar a sermon for each one of us. That would be three dollars a week, when we were kids. That'd be a lot of money, we thought it was; it was more than a tenth of what we had.

B: Do you remember when you first moved here to Dorset any special men's groups or Sunday School class for men that the church had?

S: No, our class was the Fellowship Class. That was a big class with Art Brotzman, superintendent, but I don't remember much about it.

B: Do you remember any special activities that they held?

S: No.

B: What do you think of the development of the music program of our church?

S: Oh, I think that's good. That song they sang last Sunday was really something. I think it's good for the community. They learn a lot from Wilda too. She is the choir director and is a perfectionist. I don't know how she does it, but she's always on time.

B: Do you think music is an important addition to the church service?

S: I think that without music there wouldn't be much to the service. We've stopped at a lot of places along the road and there was one church that didn't have any music, they sang. It was the Church of God, or something. They have a choir and everything, but no music at all, no organ or piano. We listened to that and it sounded good too, but the choir has to be good to do that. I think we've probably been in every denomination

church because we've traveled in every state but Alaska. On Sundays we always go to church somewhere, but we haven't traveled much for the last six or eight years. We go by a church and just stop and go in. But, in this one church in particular they had an awfully good choir. They had a little thing that the choir director pitched the note on to start them out on. Gee, they went right to town.

B: I always wanted to go to Alaska.

S: I've never been to Alaska, but I've been within 150 miles of the Arctic Circle up in Sweden. I was up there for three weeks and that's getting up there pretty close. We were in the woods up there for three weeks.

B: Could you go there by car?

S: No. We went there with a group called The Connecticut River Lumber Association. We went to this big lumber company and they had three million acres. Up there, there is no grass, only moss. They took us in busses. We went all around to the works and saw what they did, and their mills. It was wonderful and those Swedes ate all the time. They'd get us up before daylight and we'd have a big breakfast. At ten o'clock we had to have another meal. At twelve o'clock, we had to have one, then at two and suppertime we ate. Then, before we went to bed we had another one. I never saw anyone eat like we did.

B: Are they all fat?

S: No, they're not all fat. Maybe it's the climate. They were nice people.

B: Where else have you been?

S: I've been to Europe. I went to Germany and went to the October Festival. I've been to Switzerland up in the Alps. I've been to France and to Buckingham Palace, and I saw Big Ben. I went to Glasgow, Scotland and Edinburgh. This was all one trip over there. It was really nice.

B: What were some of your impressions of the other countries?

S: Well, we were supposed to pick up some information on some sawmill machinery. This was a business trip. We were supposed to observe how they did things. Well, I watched them for a little bit and I just kept my mouth shut because they were a lot better than we were. I did not ask many questions, but you could see that they weren't wasteful; they saved everything. We throw every-

thing away and they didn't. When we got it all summed up, the Swedes are really misers when it comes to saving. They are very efficient. We also went to some of the lumber colleges.

B: What are they?

S: Well, they are like a regular college, but you'd go to one of the lumber men if you want to cut logs and drive tractors.

B: Was this like a two year course?

S: I think it was probably a one year course. They had a tractor and they had to run it by remote control. They pick up the logs and put them on wagons. It was all automatic. They were good.

B: What year was this?

S: This was in 1962. We went into Stockholm and we stayed there over Sunday. I think we were there for two days and they gave us a special bus and told the driver where to go. They said, "Now you try to hunt up some slums in Stockholm." You know, you couldn't find any. That was the cleanest city I have ever been in. It's the city of bridges. I think there are fifty-seven bridges there or something. There's a lot of water there.

We left Stockholm at about nine o'clock at night and headed for Selefteia. That's about 150 miles from the Arctic Circle, about five or six hundred miles from Stockholm. They stopped along the road and picked up freight cars and they picked up this and that. We were on the train for about twelve hours. We got into Selefteia about morning. We had just had our breakfast and went straight out into the woods. We were there until night, went to the hotel to get our dinner. Then they said, "Now, we're going to have a meeting with one of the foremen." They took us four at a time. I went over to the foreman's house and we had moose meat. We had a great time. At twelve o'clock, I told the host that I thought we should go back to the hotel. We had been up for thirty-six hours. Oh, he said, no we've got to eat. We went out and they had the table full of stuff. Over there, if you didn't eat anything you insulted your host. So, I ate two full plates. The next morning we got home about two o'clock and there was a sign there for us that said, "Be Up at Six O'clock." So, I didn't eat anything all that day. But, it was a wonderful trip. It was over fifteen thousand miles that we had traveled.

B: Do you remember any of the unusual foods that you had over there?



- S: Everyday you had fish and veal. You had pickled fish, fried fish, and you had baked fish. Those fish were good because they were out of that cold water. I don't know how they happened to have so much veal. That was your main dish and it'd be like that you'd have to pay about \$5.00 or \$6.00 here for it. They pass it around in plates. You go out to these camps and they were even heated by electricity, the houses where the workers lived, because they had a lot of water power. But, you'd go out to these camps and they'd have the same thing to eat and it was wonderful eating. There weren't any of them over there that were fat. I was the fattest one over there. We had fish and chips.
- B: I think they fry everything in the same oil because everything tasted like fish when I visited England.
- S: I guess it's a good thing we traveled then because now I wouldn't be able to do it. Bessie and I have been all over. We went to Hawaii I think, four years ago. I was down in Dallas this summer to a lumber convention. It was on the parking lot of the Cotton Bowl. It was 103 degrees in the shade. Don wanted to see where Kennedy was shot, the Kennedy Memorial, so we went over there. It was quite an experience. We got a reservation in the hotel. When we got to the airport you'd press a certain button and you'd call this certain hotel, you don't have to ring anyone and they were about eight miles away. You could see the big crowd, there were thousands there. So, when the fellow came after us, I gave him a \$5.00 tip and he said, "If you want to go anywhere you just call for me, I'll take you anywhere you want to go and it won't cost you anything." So, we went all over. When we went to the Kennedy Memorial he came with us and it was six or seven miles away. That was a Holiday Inn, but he was their driver. So, as long as you get on the good side of one another you're all right. We drove around Dallas, because he said he would take us anywhere we wanted to go, and we had a good time.
- B: I heard that you said that you think you've lived in the most interesting, the best time in history.
- S: Oh yes. I've always enjoyed myself. I never had a job I didn't like. Even now, the only reason I keep working is because I like it. I like to get out. Two weeks ago we went to Scranton, Pennsylvania. We were gone for three days and we had fun, but there are people that I know all over because we have sold sawmills for twenty-seven years. I know a lot of these people and we still sell to them. We sold three mills in Kentucky last month. So, you can get around a lot. If you like to drive it's nice work.

- B: What, to you, are some of the most interesting changes that you've seen in your lifetime?
- S: Well, the machinery that they have. When they were building Pymatuning Causeway that was done with little machines, and they had ton and a half trucks. It took them forever to do that. Now, they have great big machines and down in Dallas they had one lift shovel that you could lift twenty-four yards. It was a mammoth thing.
- B: How much did that weigh?
- S: It would probably weigh about fifteen tons. It cost about \$200,000 just for this one shovel. They had enormous machinery. The sawmills used to be all hand power, but now all you do is push buttons on the modern machinery. You push a button and it'll do anything you want it to do, if it's working right.
- B: What do you think of the transition from horse and buggy to going to the moon?
- S: Well, I deal a lot with Amish. I just wonder if we're better off than they are. The Amish seem to be contented with their horse and buggy, no electricity, no telephone. Of course they can have a pay telephone in their yard but they can't have it in their house. I think we have it too easy. Of all the lumber that we ever made, we never loaded anything by machinery. We quit that in 1950, but now you can't get anyone to load lumber by hand. You've got to have a fifteen or twenty thousand dollar lift. It's an improvement. But, you keep putting people out of work. If you can do anything and like it, I think, you're all right. But I'd hate to work at a job I didn't like. I wouldn't do it unless I was starving to death. If you like a job, I don't think it's hard on you.
- B: Can you tell me anything special about Dorset; some of the things that you remember since you've moved here? I know it used to be a lot bigger and more booming than it is today.
- S: Oh yes, it was a boom town. The Rosie brothers had this big mill up here. It employed forty or fifty men, maybe more. I remember my dad used to sell them their building lumber. They didn't have a sawmill; they had a hoop mill.
- B: What's that?
- S: To make barrels. Then, they had a tram road that ran back over on the Tower Road, back over in what we call the Place

Farm. They had a horse and they'd hook it up, put a load of logs on that, and bring it in. Then, after they got done, I know on the farm we'd see a big smoke over there, and we'd say that the Cooperage Woods is on fire. That was all burnt off.

I went to school up to the eighth grade; I went to Dorset. There was no road through here and my folks wanted a roll of roofing which weighed about eighty pounds. Hugh Moses and I walked up to the hardware store and we brought it back on our backs because we had our horses down in Mellinger's barn where the Gulf gas station is. You couldn't get up through there with a horse because of the mud. It was an awful place.

B: There's no highway 193?

S: Oh no, there was dirt and mud.

B: Was it like a path?

S: Yes, and up by McConnell's place there was an awful hole. There was a hotel and the mercantile. Ben James had a store over by the station and they had the hardware. The meat market was up by the firehall. The corner store was run by Burgett and then Taft. My sister worked for Taft on Saturdays when she wasn't teaching school. One time I remember she said they took in \$100.00 that Saturday. That was an awful lot of money then. That was a big day. It isn't nearly anywhere near as big as it used to be in Dorset. Our milk plant used to be the biggest one in the country. I think at one time they shipped over three carloads of milk. That's how the Finns and Swedes came to Dorset. They came to work in the woods. Of course at one time people who worked in the mill, in the lumber mill in fact, liked their liquor. They'd go over to Ashtabula and get drunk. So, they always put them off at Dorset whether they wanted to get off at Dorset or not. On the railroad they'd say, "Put them off at Dorset, no matter if that's where they belonged or not."

B: Do you remember the Finns coming in?

S: Yes. They were a good class of people that came. The Finns and Swedes were hard workers and honest. So, they did well. The town did good by them coming and staying. When the mill left they just stayed.

B: In one or two words could you describe what has been your relationship with this town?

S: Well, I never worked in Dorset. We hauled coal at one time, but all of our main work has been outside.

- B: You never had any dealings with the town?
- S: No, I really don't have a customer in Dorset, unless it's Bill and I sell to him wholesale. I've always enjoyed it and if anybody doesn't like it they never say so. If they did, I'd let it be up to them. I've always liked Dorset and I think it's a nice place to live.
- B: What would you describe as your impression of our church as a whole?
- S: Well, I think it's just about like any church in a town this size. I think it's a normal church. It's a good church. I don't know what they can do to make it any better, but it could be a lot worse. I think they are doing the best they can. It's a typical, normal, small community church.
- B: Do you have a favorite hymn?
- S: No, I like all of them.
- B: Do you have a favorite sermon that has meant a lot to you?
- S: No, I listen to every sermon and one is about the same as the other. If you listen to them I can't see much difference.
- B: Do you think, if you listen to it, you can get ideas and impressions?
- S: Yes, if you make up your mind to get all that's there you'll come out all right.
- B: You you think that the church has become a lot more lenient in regards to your childhood, concerning drinking and card playing?
- S: Yes.
- B: Do you remember not being allowed to do something?
- S: I know that down at Sentinel Church, if a woman smoked she got kicked out. As far as drinking was concerned, there wasn't any drinking either around at these parties. Now, I guess that's what they go to parties for. They didn't allow that kind of thing. There's a lot of difference.
- B: Do you think that change is good or bad?
- S: I think the change is bad that they're doing it now. I don't know what it's coming to. I think smoking might

be all right, but I can't see it. I used to smoke when I did a lot of traveling on the train. I started smoking cigars. Lester Spencer and I, before I was married, were up at Jefferson standing on the street and I was waiting for him to come back. He finally came back and said, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm smoking." He asked me if I liked it and I told him no. "Well," he said, "why don't you quit?" I said that no one ever told me to. He said, "Throw that thing down!" I threw that down and I haven't smoked a cigar since. I never smoked a cigarette in my life. I didn't like it anyway. But this drinking, I can't see.

- B: Do you remember as a teenager any of the parties that you went to for church or otherwise?
- S: Yes, but there wasn't any drinking there.
- B: What were the activities?
- S: Well, we played games. They had all kinds of games.
- B: Do you remember any of them?
- S: I remember one. They used to put you and a girl in the closet. The name of it was "Post Office."
- B: Would you comment on the paintings that Mrs. Moses donated to the church?
- S: She was a real painter. Hugh Moses was a friend of mine until he died. So was she.
- B: Do you remember why she painted them?
- S: No, I don't. They were down in Florida for quite a while but I don't know if she painted them when she was down in Florida or not. She did have lots of time down there and maybe that's when she painted them. Hugh was a mail carrier in Ashtabula. I think he carried mail here, too.
- B: Was this her hobby?
- S: Yes, she did lots of paintings.
- B: For other people too?
- S: Yes, of course she had to a lot or she couldn't be that good.
- B: Do you know who she dedicated the paintings in the church to?

- S: No, but I would say to her husband's parents because Hugh wasn't much of a church man, but his parents, I think they were. He worked in the mercantile store for a good many years and he was nice to everyone and everyone liked him, so I'd imagine that would be true.
- B: Do you remember the church that used to be in the mercantile building?
- S: Yes.
- B: Can you remember what denomination it was?
- S: No, but I think it was one that Will Spencer started. That's Lester's father. They had quite a little church up there for a while. They had church over there where the old railroad station is in that house across from Kaisar's. There was a church right there on that corner just a few years ago.
- B: Did a family just start a church in their house?
- S: Yes, or a group bought it. There have been several started, but when they start a church like that it usually doesn't take away from the other church because people that go to them wouldn't be going to the other one anyway.
- B: Do you remember when we used to have three or four churches to a charge? Do you remember the ministers having to take care of three or four churches?
- S: Well, they had Dorset, Richmond, Padanarum, and Cherry Valley. I think it was probably Reverend Mayhew who had those.
- B: Do you remember our minister having to take care of all those churches?
- S: No, I don't remember that. Jim had three churches down where he was for a while. It just kept him busy. He has just one church now.
- B: Do you remember when the churches joined, the United Church and the Methodist? Have you noticed any changes?
- S: Yes, I remember, but I haven't noticed any changes.
- B: Next year is our 100th birthday, do you have any suggestions on how we can celebrate it?
- S: No.
- B: What do you see as some of the problems that have existed in our church?

- S: Well, I don't know if these are problems I see, but I guess it has to be just let two or three run it sometimes. I don't know how you could do it any other way, because the rest of them aren't going to. If the people don't take an interest in it, why, somebody has got to do it. They don't want to have to take the responsibility.
- B: Are there any programs that you would like to see our church start?
- S: Well, you can't start much of a program until you get people there in the church. You'd have a small turnout with the way we are now.
- B: Well, I was thinking of something like supporting missionaries or something like that?
- S: I never thought too much about this missionaries business.
- B: Why is that?
- S: It's all right to support them, but I think they could do more at home. We have people here that need things just as well as they do over in Africa.
- B: Do you remember some of the special celebrations they used to have in Dorset, such as Fall festivals?
- S: They had a celebration over at the schoolhouse one time and they had a band. I remember the band played and there was a public official from Columbus present. They has a big crowd over at the schoolhouse. They had a merry-go-round and other things. After it was over they didn't pick up the merry-go-round until the next day. So, I hired the fellow to keep the merry-go-round opened up all the time for the kids.
- Then, at one time, they had another doing. They had a dance pavillion built up at the mercantile. There was a big crowd up there one holiday. There were a lot of people from all over. This fellow was running for governor and he was here and made a speech. I don't remember his name.
- B: Do you remember when the high school had the super basketball team and nobody could beat them?
- S: Oh yes, I remember Bobby Spencer was the high scorer on it.
- B: Was he related to you?

S: No, they were no relation to me. Bill, Kline and I are the only Spencers that are related. They always wanted to beat Jefferson.

When you mention Jefferson around here, for years and years that was the rival. Jefferson was always mad at Dorset and Dorset was always mad at Jefferson. They used to have some basketball games. When they had the old town hall they used to play there.

B: What are your memories of the Depression?

S: We were cutting timber over in Pennsylvania. We took this job for a company and I had three kids and they gave me three dollars a week besides paying our gas and oil and for repairs on the mill. They gave my brother five dollars a week because he had five kids. We worked for a year and a half that way, sawing lumber for them. Then if they made any money they were to pay us the full amount. If it hadn't been for that we would have had to go on WPA. But, we cut the rafters for this town hall. That just put us on easy street as far as that was concerned. We worked a year and a half and then they paid us all that they were supposed to, but they were under no obligation to do it. So, now that doesn't seem reasonable, three dollars a week and Bessie and I had three kids. We had plenty because you could get four pounds of meat for a quarter. We had all we wanted. If it hadn't been for this town hall we would have been in bad shape.

B: What are some of your hobbies?

S: Well, I like to travel. We do a lot of fishing. We've fished in the Pacific Ocean, fished in the Gulf and in the Atlantic. We've also fished in Minnesota and in Michigan. We went up forty miles beyond Newberry, Michigan, I rented a boat for a week. We went out on Lake Superior. We thought we would go out this one afternoon and do a little fishing. It was early in the Spring and there was only one other trailer there. So, we went out and caught fish. We caught six or eight big northern pike and brought them home. This other fellow didn't want any fish and we couldn't use them. We ate what we could and then went back fishing again. I don't like to fish and throw the stuff away. So, this other fellow and I went and we decided to take a ride around the country. So, there's a river up there, the Takomanon River. It's way back and we took a boat. We took a train to get to this logging road to get to this river and then we took the boat. We were gone all day. We went down this river and there were about forty of us in the boat. That finished our fishing. That's all the fishing we did.



- B: Do you have any hobbies here at home that you like to do?
- S: Woodwork, when I'm not doing anything. I do woodwork. I made all those clocks. I made four grandfather clocks. William, Jim, and Mary all have one. I've got one out here.
- B: Do you make them out of special pieces of wood that you really like?
- S: Yes, but mostly cherry. In our house it's all paneled with lumber we cut. I like anything that's wood. I like to get back from a trip and go out to the shop and work for about two or three hours. It's better than going and laying down; I can rest better.
- B: What is your advice on burning wood.
- S: Burning wood is a lot better than anything else for the fireplace.
- B: What's the best kind of wood for heat?
- S: I suppose that hickory and oak or some hard wood is better, but elm is good wood, too. Most of the elm is dry around here.
- B: We've had a terrible time with weeping willow.
- S: That's mostly water. You have to let it dry out, but any kind of hard wood will burn good.
- B: Who would you suggest that I should interview for this project?
- S: Well, you've talked to almost everyone and I think those are the main ones.
- B: Is there anything else that you would like to add?
- S: Well, talking about Haskell. His father was killed up on the railroad tracks here with a horse and buggy. He'd been out all night. The doctors would go when you called them no matter what or no matter what time of day it was. Well, he'd been out all night and this horse would go home by himself. So he'd drop off to sleep in the buggy because he had to get his sleep sometime, and the train hit him. The horse went on the railroad tracks and dragged him clear up here to the station. But anytime you called him, he'd go.
- B: Do you remember when Dr. Keep was in the quartet that sang at church?

S: Yes, but I don't remember who else was in it. We had a fellow working for us who had an awful toothache on a Sunday so we went up to his house. His wife said go down and get him down to the church. So, I went in and got him and brought him out. He told the doctor that he had a toothache and the doc said, "I'll fix that." He got his pliers from his bag, opened up his mouth, and didn't put anything in and he pulled it right out. I guess it didn't hurt any more than when they put stuff in that hurts. He was tall, he wasn't fat, and he weighed a couple hundred pounds, but he was great. He was a big man. Fenton was Thora's husband, he was like his father. Haskell is her brother-in-law.

END OF INTERVIEW