

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Niles Police Department

Personal Experience

O. H. 510

JAMES HOLLOWAY

Interviewed

by

Stephen Papalas

on

July 1, 1982

JAMES L. HOLLOWAY

James L. Holloway was born in Warren, Ohio on December 12, 1919 to Mary Louise and James C. Holloway.

Jim graduated from Niles McKinley High School and immediately joined the United States Army Air Corps and served in World War II from 1941 to 1945. After the war, he attended the Cleveland School of Embalming until 1947. From 1947 to 1948, he attended Western Reserve University. Upon graduation, he worked as a funeral director at the Shriver Allison Funeral Home in Youngstown. From 1970 to 1973, he worked with the Wellor Funeral Home in Youngstown, and from 1976 to the present he has been employed by the McClurkin Funeral Home in Girard.

Together with his wife, Regina Marado Holloway, James lives on N. Bentley Avenue in Niles. They have eight children, James L. Jr., age 28, Charles 26, Donald 25, Thomas 24, Mary Grace 22, Dennis 20, John 16, and Bruce 13.

James received several medals as a result of the action he saw in World war II. He is a member of the Niles First Christian Church and enjoys hunting. He is also active in the American Legion and Mahoning Lodge #394.

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INTERVIEWEE: JAMES HOLLOWAY

INTERVIEWER: Stephen Papalas

SUBJECT: Childhood, School Years, Mayor Holloway, Niles  
Police Officers

DATE: July 1, 1982

P: This is an interview with Mr. Jim Holloway for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on the History of the Niles Police Department by Stephen G. Papalas at Mr. Holloway's home at 812 North Bentley Avenue. This interview is taking place at 8:10 p.m. on July 1, 1982.

Mr. Holloway, the main purpose for the interview is to discover some things about your grandfather and other family members who participated in the government here in Niles. Before that I want to ask you some things before your adulthood. For example, I want to know where you were born and raised.

H: I was born in Warren, Ohio on December 12, 1919. I was raised in Niles all of my life. Most of the time I was down on Robbins Avenue, at 353 Robbins Avenue, where Macali's Market is now, across from St. Luke's Church.

P: What school did you go to?

H: I went to Lincoln School, Washington Junior High School, and I graduated from McKinley High School in 1937.

P: What do you remember from high school? For example, how many students graduated with you?

H: I think that there were 213 students who graduated in our class, which was a pretty big class at that time.

P: Who were some of your friends?

H: Fred Sutter, Bill McConnell, Harry Berline, Ray Cleal, Bob Martz, Howdy Morris, Rusty Palmer, and Dick Flannigan. We

all ran around together in school and they called us the "Little Giants". We were all small. Most of us were small and we were pretty good athletes. We played baseball, basketball, football. We had a real good baseball team.

P: Who were some of your favorite teachers? Do you remember any?

H: A. I. Smith was one of my favorites. I liked A. I. Smith. Valor Shurrager taught English; I liked her. Anna Campana taught history up at Washington Junior High School. Ida Madde, Mary Madden . . . Aliven Hanson taught me algebra. He was tough, but he was a good teacher. He would act with students at that time. N. C. Davis taught history down at Niles McKinley. I had Walter Habedell for physics and Eleanor Galster for geometry; she was a good teacher. O. B. Smith was the principal down there at Niles McKinley High School when I graduated. He was a big fellow. That is about all I can remember.

P: What were your favorite subjects?

H: I liked history and English. I wasn't too good in math. I liked math though at McKinely High. I liked Latin. I had French. Miss L. Sayers was the French teacher. Alice Johnson . . .

P: I want to go back now to a time before that. Before you, as a matter of fact, to try to establish some sort of a family tree. I understand that you had quite a family.

H: My granddad was one of the first mayors in Niles. My dad was in politics and ran for sheriff a couple of times. He didn't make it, but he was safety director of Niles. He also served as a councilman. My dad was James Holloway. My uncle was Burt Holloway. He has another son, Leon or Len Holloway.

P: Leon, Len, Holloway was the mayor at the turn of the century. Burt is his son?

H: Right. He was the oldest.

P: Burt the oldest son became the . . .

H: Superintendent of the water and light department in Niles instead of the water department.

P: He actually established himself. I understand that he acquired the knowledge for that through correspondence courses.

H: That and he also served as a stationary engineer. He was in the Navy. He has fought in three wars in the Navy. He was in the Spanish-American War, World War I, and they wouldn't take him in World War II, but he went into the Merchant Marines.

P: Your father served under which mayor as safety director?

H: George Marshall.

P: That is Burt's brother, Jim?

H: Yes.

P: That is also Mayor Leon Holloway's son?

H: Yes.

P: Do you have any other relatives that served on the city government in Niles?

H: My brother was on the council. Leonard was the service director. He was under Mayor Thorpe.

P: From 1972 to 1976?

H: Something like that. It hasn't been too long ago.

P: Where did your father come from? Where was he born?

H: He was born in Niles. I think he was the first child born in Niles. I am not sure about this. My granddad worked on the railroad in those days. When he moved to Niles, he worked on the Erie. They used to live up on Summit Street. Then they lived downtown by the old high school on Arlington Avenue.

P: Do you remember anything about your grandfather and where he came from?

H: My grandfather came from Lisbon and worked on the railroad. He first started in Niles in a furniture store. Then he went into undertaking. He was the first undertaker in Niles.

P: Have you ever heard any of your family members discuss your great-grandfather?

H: No.

P: Do you know anything else about your family living here?

H: All I know is that they settled here and came from Virginia. I remember my dad saying one time that his dad, Glen Holloway, sent him down to . . . dad's grandmother down to Lisbon. He rode his pony all the way down to Lisbon from Niles. He stayed there because my grandmother and my great-grandfather were sick. My dad went down there on his pony and stayed.

P: Could you tell me what you heard about your grandfather? It was around 1896 that he became the mayor.

- H: I don't know much except for what my dad has told me. I remember going over there on Thanksgiving and Christmas when I was a little kid. I remember him as a short, stocky guy with white hair. He ate his peas on a knife. I can remember that just so plain sitting at the table. I remember my dad telling a story about my uncle Burt saying to my granddad. When they all would come home, they would all get around the supper table and Burt would say, "Hey dad, I know where you can swipe a good dog." My granddad would bite and my Uncle Burt would say, "Across the butt". Another thing I can remember is him leading the parade on Memorial Day. They always had a big parade on Memorial Day. He always led the parades.
- P: In World War I when the boys were leaving town to go, he lead the parade then on a big, white stallion?
- H: Yes.
- P: In uniform.
- H: He always had a white horse. He always lead the parades on a white horse.
- P: What other stories have you heard about him?
- H: I could tell you the one I remember the best about him. I was just a little kid. They took me downtown to get a haircut. When I came back into the office in the funeral parlor, my grandfather was sitting there at a big roll-top desk. He was sitting in a swivel chair. He leaned back in his chair and said, "Come over here and let me smell you." I went over and he put this gunk in my hair and he said, "God, that smells like cat piss." That is the best story I can remember about my grandfather. I was about five years old going on six when he died in 1925.
- P: Your grandfather was a Civil War veteran?
- H: Yes.
- P: Do you remember any stories about that?
- H: No. As far as I know, my dad never . . .
- P: How old was he when he went in?
- H: Sixteen.
- P: Sixteen years old?
- H: He went in as a drummer boy.

P: I was talking to your cousin Ruth and she mentioned that a horse fell on him.

H: I never heard that story.

P: She said it fell on him and broke his leg. They thought that it was so bad that they would have to take it off there. They didn't have time to be messing around with it. He refused to have it taken off and instead wanted it set. They set it there in the field and he was all right; it healed.

H: He was a tough, old bird. I do remember that. He was short. He must have only been about 5'5" or 5'6". I remember my dad saying to him, "Pop, why don't you get a bicycle and ride to work on a bicycle?" He used to walk to work on Summit Street all of the time. My granddad would say, "That is the same as walking sitting down." He would never go for that.

P: Where was his place of business at?

H: It was down on State Street right across from where the church apartments are now right across from the park. There used to be a park in there. They had an entrance on what they called Pine Alley. They put a big garage in there later. Emery Powers had a garage in there during World War II.

P: Is this where the bank is today?

H: No.

P: Across the street from where the car dealer is?

H: Do you know where Sammy's Service Station was across from King's Newsstand on the corner of the alley there?

P: Yes.

H: They had a livery stable there.

P: That is Park Avenue, isn't it?

H: That is the corner of Park Avenue and Pine Alley. That is where their livery stable was.

P: Where the gas station was?

H: Yes, where the gas station was.

P: That is where the United Cigar Store is today in the parking lot?

H: Just in front of that. They had a big garage that my dad built. I think this might have been after my grandfather died. They

built a big garage there. The funeral home, the parlor . . . They didn't have much of a home then. The office was down, a little building, in front of it.

P: Was there a fire there at one time?

H: They had a fire in the livery stable. I forget. Some of the horses burnt up in there. I remember my dad saying that.

P: Were you ever in that funeral parlor?

H: Oh, yes. When I was a kid I can remember going in there.

P: If you were walking into the front door, what would it look like? What were the floors made of? Wood, probably?

H: Wood floors. It was just like a big office. He had a big desk there. I can't tell you much about the back end where they stored the caskets and did the embalming. I can't tell you much about that.

P: During the 1920's as you were growing up in Niles, who were some of the businessmen that you can remember and some of the businesses that were there in Niles?

H: Hoffman's had a store there on Main Street. It was H. H. Hoffman. Pritchard and Kayes had a clothing store there almost next to Hoffman's if I remember right. Bolten Drabkins had a furniture business. I think that was up on Main Street too. Rawley Morgan had a dairy up there. It was an Isaly Dairy. Where the Antler Motel is, there used to be a hotel in there called the Allison House. They were good friends of my dad. Flannigan's had a dry cleaning shop up on Main Street. Tom Anderson had a grocery store across from the Niles McKinley Memorial on Main Street. That would be about where Sonny Carmello's store is now. There used to be a confectionery store up on the corner of Church and Main Street where the Home Federal Savings and Loan Bank is now. Before they built the viaduct . . . going down the hill to go across the old bridge to go over to the south side. There was some kind of a factory or something right across the river there as soon as you went across the bridge, but I can't tell you that name.

P: Was it Grinell Chemical Works?

H: No, I don't think so. This kid that I ran around with when I was in second grade; his mom worked over there. Davis was his name. He lived up over on Woodland Avenue when I lived on Woodland Avenue. I was in second grade as I remember.

P: Do you remember anything about the policemen at that time when you were growing up? Do you remember any policemen at all?



H: I know he used to scare my younger brother Bob. Dickey Neiss was a policeman. We always told my brother that if he didn't behave we would send Dickey Neiss after him. He was one of the policemen. There was Charlie Berline, Nick Warsaw, and Dickey Neiss.

P: What do you remember about Dickey Neiss?

H: He was a really nice fellow. I do remember that. That is all I can remember about him.

P: What did he look like?

H: He was husky. He wasn't too big, but he was pretty heavy set. He wasn't big like Charlie Berline. Nick Warsaw was a little husky but wasn't as big as Dickey Neiss. He was about 5'7" or 5'8".

P: Charlie Berline, is he a relative of the later Mayor Berline?

H: Not the mayor. He was the Chief of Police.

P: That is right. He became the Chief of Police then?

H: Yes.

P: Is he related to Harry Berline?

H: That is his dad. That is Harry's dad. Harry, Jim and Russ and Paul.

P: Do you remember anything about the experiences that the policemen might have had then?

Let me go back and see if anybody had ever told you stories about these experiences because this is a little bit before your time. The 1913 flood.

H: No, I don't remember anything about that. All I know is my mother was over in Johnstown, Pennsylvania in 1913 when Johnstown had their flood. She told me stories about the flood in Johnstown, but I don't know anything about the flood in Niles.

P: Do you know anything about the incident that occurred one evening when Officer Dickey Neiss was shot?

H: No, I faintly remember hearing about it, but I can't tell you any details about it or anything.

P: What about the Klu Klux Klan riot in 1924?

H: I can remember that. My sister Mary Jane and I were down-

town visiting my dad at his place of business. He took us to some woman's place that was a friend of my mom and dad. Mrs. Doyle was her name. She lived up on the second floor. He took us over there and told us to stay there until he came and got us. I can remember the ambulances going out. There were shooting in town and a lot of excitement going on. I remember that. We stayed up there and just watched the ambulances go out when they would go on a call downtown.

P: Did you see any Klansmen at all?

H: No.

P: You did hear shooting?

H: Yes. You could hear the shots downtown.

P: Do you remember the Army coming in?

H: No.

P: You did live in Niles during the Depression?

H: Right.

P: What do you remember about those years?

H: I just remember things were tough then; that is all. I can remember going to school. Everybody had it tough. Nobody had anything. My kids laugh at me now when I tell them that I put cardboard in my shoes when the soles were worn out. Most all of the kids that I know thought my old man was rich because he was a funeral director and he had a car. It was just tough going. I can remember when I got out of high school it was 1937 and I was only seventeen. I wasn't old enough to have a job; I wasn't eighteen. My Uncle Burt tried to get me in at the Glass Works, but I was too young to work because I wasn't eighteen. Finally my dad got me a job out at Mahoning Valley Steel in 1939. I was making 39¢ an hour. Those guys really worked out at Mahoning Valley Steel because that was one of the old hand-operated mills. It wasn't automated.

P: After 1939, and the war years came about, what happened? What did you do then?

H: I went into the service in 1941. In December of 1941, I went into the service, and I went to flying school. I became an instructor in bombardier school. I instructed for a couple of years out in New Mexico and then I went overseas.

P: Where?

H: I went to England with a bomb [491st] group over. They were B-24's. We flew our thirty missions and came home.

P: You flew over Europe?

H: Over France and Germany. Mostly Germany because they were retreating then after D-Day, of course. We flew to all the big towns in Germany.

P: Did you acquire any medals after the war?

H: During the war because our crew was the lead crew, we got five air medals and the distinguished flying cross.

P: What is the lead crew?

H: You lead the whole airfield. You lead three squadrons usually. You are either a squadron lead or a group lead on your airfield. Then every so often your group takes turns leading the whole wing which is three airfields, three groups. There were three squadrons to a group. You would get either a group lead, wing lead, or once in awhile we got a division lead. I remember once when we went to France, we got a division lead. We had a full colonel flying command pilot with us. Our bombardier got the DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross) for hitting this airfield in southern France [Lyons], the day before they invaded southern France. They did such a good job.

P: When you returned to Niles, you went into what business?

H: I went to embalming school. I wanted to be a funeral director and embalmer. I went to Cleveland in 1946.

P: This is a field that your grandfather had actually gone into first of all?

H: Right.

P: Leon, who was the mayor?

H: Right.

P: Looking back on your previous years in Niles, who do you think was the best mayor since you have been born?

H: Bill Carnie was a pretty good mayor that I know of. When I got old enough to know more about politics, I thought Bill Carnie was a pretty good mayor. Elmer Fisher was a pretty good mayor. They weren't great, but they were pretty good mayors. I think Bill Thorpe was a pretty good mayor. He was honest. I will say that he was as honest as the day is long.

P: Are there any other comments that you would like to make

about your grandfather?

H: Not that I can recall offhand. I can't remember too much about him. I was pretty young then.

P: Thank you very much.

H: Okay, Steve.

END OF INTERVIEW