

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Niles, Ohio

Personal Experience

O H 1588

MARIE FREDERICKA

Interviewed

by

Marcelle Wilson

on

October 19, 1994

MARIE FREDERICKA

Marie Fredericka was born in Niles on March 13, 1914, to Salavator and Philamina Richards Ragazzo. Her parents were both born in Italy. Philamina Ragazzo came to the United States in 1901 with her family and her father, Salavator, immigrated to the United States when he was 28 years old. Mrs. Fredericka graduated from Niles McKinley High School in 1932 and worked for 35 years as a waitress at the Spot Restaurant in Niles. She married Joseph Fredericka in 1959. She currently enjoys cooking, reading, and watching television. She also attends Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Niles.

-- Marcelle Wilson

W: This is an interview with Marie Fredericka for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Niles Project, by Marcelle Wilson, on October 19, 1994, at 1206 Mason, at 3:00 p m.

What was your community attitude like in the neighborhood you grew up in?

F: Nice. I always had good neighbors. I still have good neighbors up here. I lived down below where the Benyoli Hall is now I lived up here for 60 years

W: What street did you grow up on?

F: Oscot Street, then on Mason

W: How and when did the first members of your family come to Niles?

F: [In] 1901 my mother did. I do not remember my dad. I think he was 28 years old when he came

W: Did you come from Italy?

F: Yes. My mother did, too She was eleven years old when she came

W: Did they have friends or relatives over here? Is that why they came over?

F: No, they just came over to come and see what America was like

W: How many people were in your family when you were growing up?

F: We were five. Four girls and one boy, my mother and my dad My grandmother lived here with us Then my aunt, after her husband died, my aunt lived with us We were about eight or nine

W: What was your house like? How many rooms did you have in your house on Scott Street?

F: My mother, let us see, she got married in 1913 I was born in 1914 I think she had two bedrooms, a kitchen, bathroom, a cellar

W: Where did you go to school at?

F: I went on Cedar Street to Jefferson

W: What did you learn when you were in school?

- F: Well, you go to school to learn everything [laughter]
- W: What did you do for fun after school?
- F: We played. It is not like today. We played with all the kids in the neighborhood. That is all I can remember.
- W: What was your favorite game? Did you play stick ball or tag?
- F: No, hide and seek.
- W: Who were your best friends when you were growing up?
- F: I had a lot of friends that I went to school with. I was a maid of honor when they got married. I had about a half a dozen real good friends. I still have them.
- W: What teachers did you have when you were growing up?
- F: Oh, gosh. I cannot remember the first grade teacher. She was at Cedar Street School. Mrs. Madely was the principal up here. Mr. Durk was the principal at Washington where I went. I could not remember all their names.
- W: How many of your family members completed high school?
- F: Let us see, my brother, my two sisters, four of us.
- W: Did any of your family go to college?
- F: My brother.
- W: Did he go to Youngstown?
- F: No, he went to Western Reserve in Cleveland. He played football for Niles and he played for Western Reserve. He played professional football.
- W: Where did your family go to church?
- F: Mount Carmel.
- W: You have always gone to Mount Carmel?
- F: Yes.
- W: Who was your minister back then?

F When I was born, I was the first baby Father Santury baptized We had Father Oress, Father Pete, Father Nick, that is it.

W Where was the church located?

F It was small. Right in the same place

W How long did your family attend that church?

F All the time.

W All your lives?

F Yes.

W What was your favorite thing to do when you were young?

F When we were kids, what could you do?

W Did you go to the movies, go over to friends houses?

F Oh yes. We went to the movies and it was the Depression Everybody would get together and go on gang night Six for 25 cents.

W Did you play cards or any kind of games at night?

F We used to play Bingo. We played cards

W: What was your least favorite thing to do?

F What do you mean?

W Like chores, any kind of household work.

F I used to help my mom take care of the kids and the cleaning of the house The general routine. That is what we did when we were brought up I am not in the 1990's, honey [laughter]

W I know Did you share a room with any of your brothers or sisters?

F With my sisters, yes

W: Was it all four of you in one room?

F: Yes, and my grandmother.

W: What chores did you and your siblings do?

F: We all had little chores to do. I did the dishes, cleaned up, helped around My father had a grocery store and we used to help, and we sold chickens and helped feed them. We would go to the Youngstown Market twice a week.

W: Was the grocery store attached to your house?

F: No.

W: Was it in town?

F: No, the house was here and the store was here.

W: What was the store called?

F: I think they called it the Niles store, I cannot remember that

W: Did you have running water?

F: Oh, yes A bathroom, everything

W: A lady I spoke to yesterday lived in company houses and they did not have indoor plumbing.

F: Oh, we had that Thank God for that

W: Did anyone in your family belong to a local social club or fraternity?

F: Well, my brother did, and my father belonged to the Sons of Italy

W: Did they go to the meetings often?

F: Oh yes Towards the end he was the president

W: Your father was a grocer. Did he do anything else for a living?

F: Yes Before he got married he was a blacksmith

W: What was a typical family meal like for you as you were growing up?

F: Well, we always got together What do you mean a family meal?

- W Did you have a special meal all the time?
- F We had dinner all the time
- W Was it always meat and potatoes?
- F Macaroni.
- W: A lot of spaghetti?
- F Yes, spaghetti.
- W Who was present when you had your meals? Did everybody have to come to dinner?
- F Yes, all of us.
- W: What did your family do to celebrate a birthday?
- F We would have cake and ice cream
- W Just like today
- F Yes. Today they have more They have a buffet.
- W What about on holidays? What do you remember about those?
- F We always got together Up to today, now my mother and father are dead Every Sunday my sisters come They are all married and have children, they all come every Sunday. I cook and we all get together over here We have got a big table We get together, we gab We have our dinner spaghetti and meat ball, salad My niece makes a cake, that is it My mother and father, that is what they wanted, for us to always get together On the holidays, they all come here on Christmas Eve Being now that I am a widow and by myself, my nephew invites me up there for the holidays
- W That sounds nice. What were the gifts that you and your brothers and sisters received when you were growing up?
- F We did not get that much We would get maybe a doll and cookies, a pair of shoes, a dress
- W Were your gifts wrapped?
- F They were wrapped

- W When my grandparents were growing up they never got wrapped gifts
- F. Some of them were, some were not.
- W Did you have any kind of special family traditions?
- F Oh yes, on Christmas Eve we fast We have a night course meal that is all fish and macaroni with clam sauce
- W Did you go to mass every Christmas?
- F We did not go on Christmas Eve midnight mass We would go on the next day.
- W. What happened when a family member died when you were growing up?
- F My mother died first They did not used to go to funeral homes then We had her upstairs in the dining room Italian people, they bring stuff over to eat That was it. Now when my dad died, we went to a funeral home. Then my aunt too, everything was at the funeral home Then we would come home All the neighbors would bring cake or coffee or stuff to eat, sandwiches. We would get together and that would be it That is a tradition for Italian people
- W I just wondered if it was in the house. What did things cost when you were growing up?
- F It is not like it is today At the time, I remember pork chops was 25 cents a pound Not now Then, when I was working I was not making the money like they do now When I was working I got 75 dollars a week That was it. Then my boss was good He would not even take out for social security. He would pay it for me which was nice He would pay like the union, but we did not have to much of a union.
- W How much would a meal cost back then?
- F. You could buy a corned beef sandwich for 45 cents Now it is four dollars
- W. How about milk? How much was a gallon of milk?
- F It was cheap, 59 or 69 cents Not like now
- W Yes, three and four dollars How about a gallon of gasoline?
- F It was cheap. I do not know how much it was then My dad had a truck and then he had a car It was not like it is today I do not know at the time 80 years ago,

honey.

W How much was a loaf of bread?

F My mother baked bread I think it was 25 or 30 cents then

W How much was candy when you were growing up?

F It was cheap, five cents, ten cents. You got a carton of ice cream for a nickel

W: Where would you go and get ice cream?

F: We had Isley's there when we went to the show We had Butler Soda Grill We would go there. We had an Isley's Well now they moved everything around Do you know Niles very well?

W No

F Do you live in Girard?

W: Yes

F: My two sisters live in Girard. One lives on Hazel and one lives on Highland

W I live near there. What music did you listen to when you were growing up?

F We were the first ones to get radio and everybody would come to our place I like Guy Lombardo, not like today.

W Did you listen to old radio shows?

F Oh yes

W Who were your favorites?

F Bob Hope and what is his name He used to have a program every Sunday Do you remember?

W Jack Benney.

F No, the other one He died He used to have all the comedians on and everything

W I am thinking of George Allen

F George Burns. Oh, gee, it is at the tip of my tongue and I cannot remember. He used to be on every Sunday night at 8 00 Is that not funny? I will remember later on.

W Do you remember any favorite songs from back then?

F A lot of songs, but I cannot think of them right now. Carolina Moo, there was a lot of nice songs Soft songs, not like today.

W What did you do during the Depression How did your family get through? Did your brother work all the time?

F Yes. We had a store. We took care of all the neighbors. They never paid If everybody would have paid we would have been okay That was okay

W Did your father give credit to his neighbors?

F Oh yes They said they were going to pay the poor guy and they could not My father marked it paid.

W Did your family ever go on relief?

F No. We had a store. That was one thing We never had to go to a soup line or anything like that.

W Did you and your brothers and sisters work during the Depression?

F At home, where were you going to get a job? There were no jobs Not like it is today. We helped at home We did chores at home.

W Did you have a garden when you were growing up?

F Yes We had a nice big garden We ate from the garden

W Tomatoes?

F Peppers Not like they have all this bologna stuff Do you know what I mean? I think it causes cancer, all the preservatives and stuff

W What did you do during World War II? Did you volunteer, did you do anything?

F No, I had moved up here then My brother was in the service He was a Chief Petty Officer. He was in the Navy We sold chickens My father and my mom, he would go out to a farm and buy the chickens and bring them here We would feed them and every Wednesday we would help him put them on the truck and

they would go to Youngstown to the Pyatt Street Market and sell them and come home at 12:00 at night They do that every Wednesday and Friday

W And you helped out with that?

F We all helped out

W Were you working at that time?

F No

W How did you meet your husband?

F A girlfriend of mine, we worked together They used to come into the restaurant and eat. That is how we met Of course, he lived right down here on Mason.

W So you grew up with him?

F Not exactly, no.

W Was he older than you?

F Six years

W Did you ever see him in school?

F Oh no I never saw him in school I met him with another buddy. They would come in and my girlfriend, we were working together We had a couple double dates We had a double wedding

W Oh, that is interesting Was that popular back when you got married?

F No, us two did I was in my forties when I got married I was in my early forties

W Did you have a big wedding?

F No, I went to church We had a nice church wedding and I had a brunch right after that. They I went on my honeymoon about 4 00 to New York Not like today. I do not like all that

W Did you get married at Mount Carmel?

F Mount Carmel church

W Where did you have your reception?

F Right at the church, in the basement of the school.

W And your husband was a truck driver?

F. Yes.

W What was his business called?

F Central Trucking.

W. Did you do the books for him?

F: No He was in with somebody else

W How long did he do that?

F. He did that all the time.

W Were you in any church functions? Did you volunteer at the church?

F Once in a while

W: What did you do for the church?

F A lot of times they needed something I usually used to donate because I would work and if they wanted you to go at a certain time, I could not be there I would donate whatever they wanted or give them anything

W Do you know anyone else I could talk to about growing up in Niles?

F No, all of them are younger than me so they do not know too much A couple of them are dead There is nobody I know of I talked to my nieces and nephews, a lot of them were not even born Now they got everything out Before used to be a nice little town They used to call it the Doughnut We had a bus station, we had three shows. We had two dress shops We had a place where they used to make candy I tell them where everything is at, but now it is all together different. The malls ruined everything The television for the young kids Where I go get my paper, her boss shot himself He was on drugs He should not have done that That is the style with these young kids, so you might as well go along with it "This is the 1990's, Aunt Marie " I know it is, but I will take the 1950's, honey

W. Did you walk around a lot?

F Oh yes we did We did not have a car, we did not have any buses Finally we

got a bus and that did not last very long. We walked everywhere. We walked to school, walked to church. When I moved up here I was always late for church because I could not time myself to get there. Then, finally we did

W: Was it safe when you were growing up?

F: Oh, my god, yes. We would leave the door open. Now I keep the door locked all the time. When we had the store down there, they used to have that place where they put the brooms and the mops and all that. We used to leave it outside and never even locked the door. Today, I would be afraid.

W: What did the store look like?

F: No meats. It was just like canned goods and we sold chicken. We did not have ham or meat or anything like that. Everything in a can. Like Provolone cheese, that is what they sold there.

W: Did you sell any vegetables from your garden?

F: No, we ate that ourselves.

W: Did you know much about the Bagnole Sons of Italy?

F: Well, I knew about the sons of Italy. My father belonged there. Now Bagnole took it over. I would give them a picture, give them a flag. My father and I gave, they used to wear those Italian flags and they would put it around their neck. What would you call it?

W: Like a medal or something?

F: Yes. It would say, "President," or "Vice President." My brother used to call them the Lion Tamers because they had a picture of a lion. Outside of that, they used to be 200 or 300. Then toward the end when my father was the president, I think they were fifteen or twenty.

W: What was the cause of declining membership?

F: All of them died, or they could not get around, could not walk. That was it.

W: They did not get any new members?

F: No, then it just went away.

W: What did they do when they were in that group?

- F They had meetings Then they would have like a picnic at a certain time Towards the end they used to have dances I lived right across the street and I was not allowed to go unless my mother came
- W You were not allowed to go to the dances?
- F. No, we were not allowed to go Then my mother would chaperon and she would come
- W Were your parents strict?
- F. No, not too bad. I had an uncle that was stricter than my father He was my god father He did not think you should do this and do that. You were not allowed to put nail polish on That bad girls put the nail polish on
- W Watching out for you, huh?
- F Yes
- W Was there much crime as you were growing up?
- F. No. Now we do not have that many colored people. My sister got married and she lived about three blocks down. We would have our supper and everything. Her husband was working and had her place of business. She would be there by herself. It would be 9 00 [p m] and I would walk there We would listen to the radio We would buzz a little bit Then I would come home [at] 12.30, 1 00 all by myself. I would not be scared or anything Everybody would be sitting on the porch. You cannot do that today I keep my door locked all the time I just opened it because I heard the car Princess got near the door
- W Were you real friendly with all your neighbors?
- F Oh, yes I still have two bachelor boys here. They know that I am here by myself and they tell me,"Just put the garbage out," and they carry the garbage If they do not see me they think I am sick They come take the dog for a walk.
- W Oh, that is nice I am trying to think of anything else. You already gave stuff to Martha
- F Oh yes I gave it to Mike Patrone Mike Patrone must have called Martha up and told her it is down there A big banner with her name on it Today when I passed it was not there. I wonder why they took it off?
- W. I do not know

F: I wonder if she knows?

W: I am going to see her tomorrow.

F: You are going to see her tomorrow?

W: Yes.

F: Well, she teaches at Youngstown State

W: Yes, that is where I know her from I go down there

F: Anything else you want to know?

W: I cannot think of anything else

F: I was trying to think of that guy on Sunday night. It is at the tip of my tongue I am going to call my sister up to see if she remembers I got this phone because my mother could not walk She had arthritis real bad I had one that was 50 years old [SHE TALKS ON THE PHONE] It was 1944 when the first television came when we got it That was my younger sister She was 67, Monday It was Major Bowes, Arthur Godfrey. We used to hear all of them on the radio We were the first ones to get the radio down there All the kids we went to school with, there was a bunch of kids there, all come sit on the porch and listen I will never forget the radio with Atwater. When they got the television we did not get one right away because my father did not want the antenna He did not like to have the antenna on the roof. Then, finally I said, "Gee, papa, everyone has a television We want to have one, too " Finally they put it up. We had like Ideal, The Men's Shop, we had Hauffman We had Rubin Stein She used to have all the dolls Woolworth

W: All downtown

F: She was the youngest one Me, my girlfriend, and my other two sisters, we would get all dressed up on Saturdays It was a big night for us. We would go out about 6.00 and we would go downtown We would go to the Five and Ten and look around If we wanted to buy something, [with] a couple dollars you could buy a lot of little things Then we would go have an ice cream or a hot fudge sundae and then we would come home That was our Saturday night If there was a good movie, we would go We had to go early We could not come home late We had to go early Then, that was it. We were just talking about that the other day My grandnephew came and he said, "I want to know something. When you had the store " I said, "Oh yes, Shaker was on one corner Then we had a Belmont lunch that used to have the best hot dogs. We had Bomb Brothers Bakery and another place where they sold chickens. My

father would sell them the chickens We had three banks, three shows. We had the McKinley, we had the Butler, and we had the Warren theater, and the Stafford."

W Oh wow, four movie theaters.

F Then, the McKinley theater, you would go every Friday night and you went to the show and you got a cup. We made a set of dishes That is what they used to do. They did not have playgrounds and all that stuff. We had playgrounds later on, but when I was a little girl they did not have it. My mother was born in Italy You would not even know she was born in Italy because she went to Catholic school in Youngstown She was eleven years old She talked real good English When I went to school her mother used to live with us. I was five years old when I went to school I could not say one word in American. I was born and raised here They was always talking Italian

W How much was a movie when you went to see them?

F. Twenty-five cents, 30 cents We would go there and you would buy an ice cream cone, a nickel

W Did you see double features?

F Oh yes. We would stay and see it two times For that price, would you not? We would stay and see it two times My mom loved Lawrence Welks She could not wait on Saturday nights Her and her two sisters just loved him You could not talk to them or say a word because they had to hear all the music We walked, we did not have a car When we went to school we did not have a cafeteria and you could not carry your lunch. We walked all over Now, everybody has a car. They are sixteen years old, they cannot wait until they are sixteen so they could drive, right?

W Yes

F I have got a grandnephew and he is going to be sixteen and he cannot wait until he gets his license There is too many kids driving and too many accidents They are not careful Some are I would not say all of them Some are and some are not I told him, "When we were a kid there were a lot of things we did not do " When we lived down below we did not even have a furnace. We had one of those big coal stoves Our bedrooms were upstairs and we had it in the dining room, a register When it was real cold there would be that much ice around the base board When we moved up here we could not regulate the furnace We all had colds for a while I tell the kids, "See how easy you have it? You better appreciate what you have Half of the things, we never got that " One thing [about] my mother and dad, we never had to worry about eating We

always had food on the table. We did not have to go to the soup line or anything. We had clothes, but not like today, honey. We had a couple pairs of shoes; one to play in and one to go out in. We had cloths. My aunt that lived with us, she was a dress maker. She made us a lot of clothes. You buy material for a dollar. She would make a skirt, make a blouse. Everybody would say, "Boy, how nice you look." My aunt used to sew them and they would cost us nothing, just the material.

W: Really? That was nice.

F: She was a good sewer. She would knit quilts, too. How old are you?

W: Twenty-six.

F: Well you are young yet [laughter]. Are you the only child?

W: No, I have a brother.

F: That is all?

W: Yes.

F: Oh, we were four sisters and one brother. My brother, like I say, he just passed away the third of this month. He played football, he was a boxer. He had a beautiful write up in the paper. His picture was in the paper. It was in the Warren paper and the Vindicator. You do not read too much paper, huh?

W: No.

F: Well, if you are busy.

W: I listen to the news.

F: I do, too. I listen to the news. I am down the cellar. We sold chickens. They would bring them in the house here. My mother had bad legs. She could not go up and down so we fixed the kitchen over here. When we all got together upstairs, we never could up there. There was a table right behind that couch there. We would put it up for the holiday. We sit about 30. Now the families are getting bigger. They got little ones. The bigger ones, they are not married. Well, I have a wedding coming on the fifth and I have another grand-nephew that is getting married in April.

W: Keeps you busy, huh?

F: I enjoy it. They know I am a widow and they all call me, "How are you doing?"

What are you going to have for supper?" This one sister that called me, she said, "What are you going to have for supper? Are you getting it ready?" She said, "Do not cook." I said, "What do you have?" She said, "I am bringing you something." It is still hot and I wait until they come and I eat it.

W That is nice.

F That is what I do to my neighbors, too. If I have something and I am doing some cooking and I call my neighbor and say, "Teddy, come over here. Do you want to eat with me or do you want to take it home?" He does here. He takes it home and I make extra spaghetti. How can you cook for one person? I want to cut down, but I always have enough for my two sisters. There is a lot of things they like but they do not cook because the kids do not like it. I cook it. I make like beans and macaroni, stuff like that. Everybody gets a jar. Now, the grandnephew comes in now.

When they were younger they never wanted any hot peppers. They did not want it. Now they eat everything. They cannot wait for Christmas Eve because we have the night course. They like macaroni with clam sauce. We had an orange salad. We had broccoli. We have shrimp cocktail, we have fried shrimp, nuts, and all the deserts and everything. They cannot wait until Christmas Eve. They say, "Are we coming down?" I tell them, "No, I am not going to cook." They say, "Oh, I know your kidding." I say, "Yes, you are coming down." My sister died and my brother-in-law comes. It is his kids, but they are all big now. They graduated, went to college. They are big. There is just one, we have a little one now. She is two years old. She is the youngest one so far. Who knows now what is going to happen? I went for blood work today and then I had to go to the eye doctor. I have glaucoma in the one eye. Then I had the shingles. Do you know what the shingles are?

W No.

F You usually do not get them on your face. I got them on the one side of my face when my husband died. Their nerve endings. It's a virus, chicken pox is a virus and I had chicken pox when I was a little girl, three times. This one day my sister came and I was rolling meat balls and she looked at me. I had gone to church in the morning because we had a mass for my sister. I just had a little mark over here and I thought it was my tooth. I think it is my eye tooth. I better go to the dentist. At night she came and looked at me and said, "Did you look at yourself in the mirror?" I said, "No, why?" She said, "What's on your face?" I looked and I had all these pimples and it was the chicken pox.

My sister-in-law was a nurse who just lost her husband. I called her up and said, "Gee Catherine, you better come down here. I have something on my face. My face is all red and everything." She came down and said "Oh." I said, "Do you think I should go to emergency?" She said, "No, wait until tomorrow morning. Let us wait and see. Do not touch it and do not do nothing." I said,

"Okay " So we got up in the morning and she came down. She said, "You better go to emergency " My other sister took me Lucky I did go. I went at 9 00 If I went the night before I would have been there all night That is how many people were in emergency.

Then she said, "You know Marie, I hate to tell you, but I think you have the shingles." I said, "How the hell did I get those?" She said, "I do not know " We went out to Trumbull and the woman got on the computer and wanted to know my name and address and everything. The nurse said to me, "What did you come here for?" I said, "See my face?" She said, "What happened?" I said, "I don't know. I think I have the shingles," but she would not say yes or no She put me in the room and the doctor came. The doctor said, "This girl, guess what she had?" I said, "You know doctor, I had them when I was a little girl. I had them three times and a good dose." He said, "Well, those are nerve endings " He gave me medication and I had one right near my eye and right near my mouth. I could not open my mouth and I could not eat. My eye was a sight for sore eyes. It was swollen and I was not allowed to touch it I was not contagious to you, but it was contagious to me I had to watch, I could not use one wash rag for the day. When my nephew saw me he said, "Oh my god, what happened?" I said, "I got the shingles " Usually they say you get the shingles around here, but I got them on the face He must have called me twenty times today saying, "Are you all right, are you okay?" I said, "Yes, I am Dickey They pinch, they burn, miserable " I could not eat I must have lost ten pounds. I do not mind losing the weight, but I do not want to lose it like that

Then when I went to the doctor that Sunday he said, "I have an appointment with the doctor on Tuesday " He said, "Oh no, you are not waiting " He called the doctor on Sunday and I had to go right to the doctor's office right then and there That is how I got that That year, my girlfriend died in March, my husband died in August, her husband died in September. My best girlfriend that I grew up with died December 2 My sister-in-law died the eleventh of September and my brother-in-law died the twenty first. All in that one year That was a lot.

Then, when I went to Social Security, I made six dollars more than my husband and I could not collect nothing on him. They do not pay anything Do you know how much they give you now? Ten dollars, and you do not get it every month twice a year. So my sister came with me and told the fellow he was doing his job. "If the government needs it, tell them to keep it." It only came to a hundred and some dollars I get it in June and December. I used to get \$991 00. Now they raised it ten dollars The fellow says, "I have good new for you." I said, "What?" He said, "You got a raise." I said, "I did How much?" He said, "Ten dollars." I said, "What kind of a raise is that, ten cents?" I said, "I know Mike, you are doing your job After all, I am not blaming you." What else could you do? Nothing. That is terrible, my husband got hurt there After he died he was getting a disability When he died I did not get anything else You do not get nothing. Then he was self employed. I made only six dollars more Can you imagine? Would you like to have a cold drink?

W. No thank you.

F I have tea and lemonade

W Maybe a little bit of lemonade

F You want some lemonade?

W Sure.

F. But you know what, outside of that, that is terrible. Everybody said my husband left me a rich widow. He did not leave me no rich widow. He left me holding the bag. Thank God I got good help. I got a little bit of arthritis, but that's okay. Everybody has got that now. That is life. You know what I say, "One day at a time." That is what I do, one day at a time. You cannot leave for the day. You have to keep on going, but you never forget them. Do you have anybody in your family that was close that died?

W Grandparents.

F Grandparents are first, then my mother, then my father, then my husband. Now my brother that is real close. In between there was a lot of other ones, but the ones real close to you. This morning I had to get blood work and I went on an empty stomach.

W I hate that

F Outside of that everything is fine. Do you know what I mean?

W Yes.

F Everything has changed. Like these kids, I said, "You know what, just appreciate what you do and have some respect for your elders." I have about eight or ten grand-nephews. I have eight nephews, but the grand-nephews are all in their twenties. So far we tap on wood. None of them was in no accident, none of them were arrested, and they are not on dope. That is a blessing. Just like the one that shot himself the other day. He was just buried this morning. I felt sorry for him and I felt sorry for the mother and the father.

W Yes, that is tough.

F Twenty-four years old. He is not going to be the first one and he is not going to be the last one. If he had the girl and they were going to get married, why would he do that? I think you have to have a lot of nerve to shoot yourself. He shot

himself in the head and they had to have a closed casket.

W That is so sad

F So what are you going to do? There is nothing you can do. I suppose that is life. Now years ago the kids did not do like the things they are doing today You know, with that television now These little kids, five, six years old. They talk about sex. I wonder what they think It is all together different They tell me, "Aunt Mim, this is the 1990's " A lot of the kids, my first two nephews, they were small. They were the first two. They could not say, "Marie," so they say, "Aunt Mim." They say, "This is the 1990's," and I say, "I know, this is the 1990's You can have it " They kid me, you know what I mean? I kid them, too. I say, "I will have the 1940's and the 1950's "

W What would happen when you were young and you would be sick? Would you go to the doctors? Would the doctor come to you?

F. Oh, yes. Well, before they used to come at the house. They do not come now

W Do you remember what they charge for a house call?

F: It was very cheap I think ten dollars When you had a baby before it only used to be fifty dollars Not now.

End of Interview

one who I recall that stayed in for many years.

H: But did she stay in one school for many years?

F: She stayed in that little school up there at the edge of Salem for a good many years. I expect she might have been up there twenty years. I don't know. She went back and forth on the old streetcars that are gone.

H: Is there anything that you would like to see changed about the schools?

F: Oh, I'm too old to decide that, I guess.

H: Is there anything important that you think we have not covered that you can think of, some experience that you had or a place you taught?

F: Well, I enjoyed my year at Mount Union and I don't suppose that I would have ever been there if I hadn't worked for my board and keep. I kept house for an old lady on crutches. She had six or seven students there in a ten-room house and you know who did the work.

H: You attended Mount Union for a year?

F: Yes.

H: That's when you took the rhetoric and literature?

F: Yes. It provokes me that I can't recall what else I had. What I may have taken I made straight A's in my grades.

H: Now, at the end of the year, did you have a program that you have these souvenir books from?

F: Well, some places we had a picnic on the last day of school and most teachers gave those souvenir booklets at the end of the year. I don't have them for all of my schools.

H: You had them printed up?

F: I got them myself, at my own expense.

H: You say most teachers did this?

F: Yes, in the rural schools.

H: Oh, that's interesting!

F: We were supposed to treat at Christmas time with popcorn balls or oranges or apples or something. Apples were no treat then; they would be now. When I taught the Kensington School

I ordered my treat from the grocer and when I sent a boy after it, he came down with a wooden box with as many pounds of candy as I had ordered. I think I was giving a half pound probably to each child, but I had 55 children. So the grocer should have had it sacked. I don't know whether he didn't know or whether he was saving money. I can't say. But we had to send it back and get sacks and sack that candy there in the schoolroom along with all those youngsters.

H: Oh, that must have been fun.

F: There were a lot of things that were fun that weren't in your curriculum. (Laughter)

H: Did they have any other parties or celebrations through the year?

F: I put on a little entertainment at Kensington in that primary. I don't remember that the teacher upstairs or the pupils upstairs did anything. We just made it up out of nothing, little songs and several children who liked to sing. I remember it must have been Washington's birthday and I didn't have a picture of Washington. Schools didn't have much in the way of extras. But I had a stencil of Washington that I used on a blackboard I suppose. I used to try to do a little of that. I got some wallpaper, used this stencil, and rubbed some ashes through it until I got a marking on it and then crayoned that in with pencil. I bet Washington wouldn't have recognized himself. We needed that in something we were having. You were pretty much on your own in those early schools.

H: Did you ever have help from the parents because you had so many children in one room? Did any of the parents ever come in and help?

F: Oh, that wasn't dreamed of in those days. I had a little race problem once in the Kensington School. There was a lady that was Negro--you can say black now--and she was married to the town barber who was part Indian they said. He was a handsome man and they had cute, little children, just darling. She used to get the feeling that her children were being picked on and she might come over and talk to me a little bit about that. I got along with her well enough. She wasn't finding fault with me, but she didn't like her children to be called names because of their skin [color]. They were handsome, much more so than if they had been straight race, I think. We didn't have any race problem in the schools. In Hanoverton School we had one or two colored boys but they were just accepted along with the class.

H: When the kids did their written work was it done on pencil and paper or did they have to use ink and pen on things that were turned in?

F: There wasn't as much written work required as there is nowadays?

H: But whenever they did something was pencil acceptable?

F: Yes.

H: Did any of them ever turn in any copies of things?

F: Oh, I think sometimes we had to write something maybe. I remember writing a little dissertation one time about physiology--something we were studying in physiology. I did that with pen on what we called "fools cap" paper. Do you remember what that was like?

H: No.

F: Well, it's larger sheets than commercial sheets and it had a blue line down one side of it, I believe, for a margin. there was "fools cap" and "legal cap" and I'm not sure which is which anymore, but you could buy that in separate sheets like you can buy stationery now. We did take tests, but I think lead pencil . . . We just used pencil tablets for the most large sheets.

H: Big lines?

F: Yes.

H: Well, you taught primary most of the time though, didn't you?

F: Yes. I think they went on the principle that anybody could teach little children. That isn't true. I found out after I went to summer schools.

I went to model schools at Wooster. In a separate building, children who were the professor's children were the students mostly. But anyhow, we had model classes that we could observe. I found out a lot of things that I never knew before.

END OF INTERVIEW