

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Loveland Farms

Personal Experience

O.H. 1905

FLORENCE AEPPLI

Interviewed

by

Jessica Trickett

on

February 19, 1998

T: This is an interview with Florence Aeppli for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on Loveland Farms by Jessica Trickett, on February 19, 1998, at Ms. Aeppli's home, at 2:30 pm.

The first question is, when did you first move into the Loveland Farms neighborhood?

A: March 1925.

T: Your husband worked at Sheet and Tube. What was his job there?

A: He was a foreman in the electric shop.

T: And what influenced you to move into this neighborhood?

A: He wanted to be the first one down in the mill on the job if there was a breakdown. That is exactly why I am here.

T: Did he want to further his career by being close to the plant?

A: No. He really took care of his job. I always said that he had two lives, me and his job at the Sheet & Tube.

T: How did you hear about this neighborhood? Did you see the ads in the Sheet & Tube bulletins?

A: No, he already lived on a farm down by Lowelville just over the Pennsylvania line. He lived on a farm down there. His first work was at the Sheet & Tube so he was already located here, living here. I knew the family that he boarded with so I had to come from New Castle over to here.

T: So he boarded with a family before he moved here then?

A: He did. I came directly from New Castle from my home.

T: Now was this house moved in before you lived here?

A: Yes. One family.

T: Do you know who that family was?

A: Driscal.

T: And do you know why they moved out?

A: No, I do not. Driscal's and Bryants', because that is who we bought it from, Mr.

Bryant.

T: And they worked at Sheet & Tube also?

A: Yes, Mr. Bryant worked at the Sheet & Tube and Mr. Bryant was in his 70's and they let him go.

T: So that is why they moved out?

A: So they house went up for sale and my husband grabbed it. He came home and told me he bought a house. So I moved with him.

T: So these houses could only be occupied by Sheet & Tube employees?

A: No, there was no nothing like that, no restriction like that. It just happened that way.

T: Was Bryant also a foreman?

A: No, he was just on the staff there, on the crew down there, on the force.

T: And you said your husband was the foreman of the electric shop?

A: Yes.

T: And you said you also had a son that worked there?

A: Let that one go, I cannot remember.

T: What kind of role did Sheet & Tube play in like the neighborhood itself? I was reading in some of the bulletins that there were different clubs set up like the Garden Club that you had talked about. And then there was a Loveland Club. Did the company start those?

A: I did not really know anything about the Loveland Club. It more of a community joining. Pride in your house and in your yard and things like that. If someone went out to rake or cut the grass, all of these eight houses got taken care of. There was that harmony here. Now the answer you get is, "God brought it down. Let God take it away." It is an asinine way of keeping the property value. We do not see that now.

T: The people that live here, are there a lot of people left from Sheet & Tube or have most of them moved away or passed away?

A: The greater part are gone. I could name the original people in every house on the hill; I do not know anyone now. And they do not want to know you. Great

changes. A gradual drifting away. I can be in this house for five or six days and not see anyone. It used to be they would come over and bring you something to eat and talk to you. Now we did not have all this entertainment that we have now. You really needed one another for conversation. People go home more.

T: What kinds of social gatherings and things did you have? Did you spend a lot of time together?

A: The PTA. The PTA was the big thing.

T: So you were a member of the PTA?

A: Oh yes, heavenly days, yes.

T: Now that was for the Buckeye School?

A: Buckeye School.

T: How many children did you have that went through the Buckeye School?

A: All four of them went there. They got a good education.

T: Was that all grades there, like up through twelfth?

A: Up to seventh. Eighth grade was up at the Woodrow Wilson. That is when your children started to mix with everybody. [Laughter]

T: How about how the neighborhood changed? You said that a lot of the original people left. Anything about the houses that have changed, or the neighborhood in general? Like you were talking about the upkeep and that kind of thing.

A: Well, there is a little house right here in back of me, and the one next door. There was a man in there; a single man, handsome. He had about an eighty thousand dollar limousine and no visible means of making a living. He was dope dealing. I have to be careful saying that. And he moved out. He was here four years. He moved out last November. Now there is another young man over there next door, the lot the land was on until four thirty in the morning. I have not seen a car, no woman or anything. Now they have this little bungalow back here.

Valerie was 36 years old. Valerie was in the throes of a divorce, had two little children. Her father bought this house from the government. It was a government loan and it back, they lost the loan and then got it back from the government, the FHA, I think it was. He bought it and there was no up-keep on it. She had the children part of the time and then the husband had them. Finally, she got the children. Well, her father put her in this house over here and she does not have a job. The father and the mother are divorced. The mother

has a beautiful home and drives a Cadillac. And the father, he makes no move towards being neighborly. After the divorce, she got the house out in Austintown but she would have to assume the payments on it. She does not work, as I said, and she just up and moved out of there and did not tell her father that she is not in there any more. And the yard looks like somebody had thrown part of Toys R Us. A disgrace; never cut the grass once last summer.

T: So the attitudes of people have sort of gone downhill around here?

A: There is no attitude. They have that attitude because they have lost respect for themselves. And when you cannot respect yourself, there is none to share with anyone else.

T: There is no kind of community activity or involvement?

A: It is sad. I look over there -- and the woman that lived in that house had five children. That is the only reason they sold it, because they got a boy and there were not enough bedrooms. She would be out 6:30 in the morning with her broom sweeping the graphite off the front sidewalk. They liked their homes and took care of them. You wonder anymore whether it is a plate and a mattress and a place to park.

T: Was there any kind of programming set up when you moved here? Do you know of anything being set up like the Garden Club. Were involved with that when you first moved here?

A: No, no, no. I did not get involved with that until I was about 35. The neighbors around here used to say you could set your clock at night by the time the Aepli's went to bed.

T: Was there any kind of intervention, like if somebody saw somebody was having trouble maintaining things, do the neighbors sort of help to intervene?

A: Well, I went to the Fox Funeral Home last summer. John Breshnehan was laid out. There was hardly a place to park. The funeral home was just a throng of people. Finally we got a seat out in the hall on the long low davenport. The first thing I heard was "Hello, Mrs. Aepli, how are you?" in this funeral home. There was three of them. Mike Clarity, Dillard Bore, the boy up the street, I cannot remember the third. Anyway, they got talking. We was a little reunion right there in the funeral home. My neighbor has only lived here about 35 years, they started to tell her what I was like. "We remember Mrs. Aepli. We are never going to forget Mrs. Aepli. We never got into any trouble. Not if Mrs. Aepli was around, we did not dare do it." They said, "We would be afraid of our mothers'." Everybody heard him say that.

There was a common denominator among people then. Nowadays, it is "Not my kid." In fact, I have a great-grandson, I am sending him a letter about

his bedroom. I am sending him a letter right out in Poland. I am going to make a deal with him. He is in the band, and he wants to go to Florida in May. I will give him fifty dollars if he starts his bedroom and gets it into order and keeps it that way, otherwise I would not give him a penny. It is a different way of handling people. Everybody seemed to have the same aim, the same feeling of wanting to get along together. We have lost it.

T: Did the company make sure that everything was going well in the neighborhood?

A: No. When we bought the house, we got a loan from the Dollar Bank down in Struthers.

T: So, you did not buy it through Buckeye Land Company?

A: Yes, it went back to the Buckeye Land Company. We got the loan and paid the Buckeye. Then we made our payments to the bank. There were people that made them monthly. Buckeye Land was in existence for a long time, many years after that.

T: So, you were in the Garden Club. Were you involved in any other social groups just within the neighborhood?

A: No, no, no. Only through the PTA. We have many special days in the PTA Program, Founder's Day, things like that. We had a yearly casserole dinner. I never missed a meeting.

T: This is one of the issues they listed when the homes in Loveland Farms were first made, they listed peoples names who had bought homes. Do you recognize any of those? That is from the Sheet & Tube Bulletin from 1919.

A: I remember Adams, Barnell, Bennies, Brookes, Burtners, Carbaughs, Carney, Childers, Conklins, Cooks, Covingtons, Dunbars, Edwards, Fleming, Freezes, Gowers, Hartys, Havens, Howrens, Hultgrens, Irons, Johnson. Johnson was right next door. Keeners are down in Florida now. Kemble, Doris is dead now. Kerrs, up there in the upper part. Malaricks, right down there, they live in a house like mine. Merwins, Millards, McManus, Nestors, Nixons, Pope, Pyles, Rearich, Scott, Seamans, are right across the street. Smith, Steele, Sugut, right on the corner. Uber, over here on this corner. Von Dykmans, three or four houses down. Walkers are up on top of the hill.

T: So, basically, you were pretty close knit around here, you knew everybody.

A: Yes, I knew more than I did not know.

T: How did you ever get to know everybody like that? Did you get together?

A: I think it was the man in the middle. I think we got to know one another through

PTA. The PTA has died a terrible death. I used to tell my children, the teacher is like a mother to you, she has you eight hours. "Now you listen to her and you obey. Do not come home and bring any trouble on the family name." You taught your child to get along. They have so many pictures of the class when they were in different grades over here. They all have them now. It was a tightness there that just knit around everybody. Everybody was doing it. We were doing anything. It was a happy, pleasant way. We do not have that now here. There are people in here that I have never spoken to.

T: What were the positive aspects when you first moved in here, before everything changed, before your neighbors left?

A: It was when the old neighbors started to leave. Some of them went into apartments. Some of them went into smaller homes in other neighborhoods. Gradually that happened. I do not know the people around here. Over there on the corner of Mount Vernon, that has changed so many times, I do not know who does it. There was more permanency to everything. I do believe the people who have come here and bought the place said it was better than anything they ever came to. Take the city, my son got mad at me because I walked down two blocks to the beauty parlor, believe it or not. Three residents are down there. There is not one block of pavement. Right down to the dirt. That is a downer for people that like nice things coming into a neighborhood. That is a downer. I am sick and tired of all the 70 years I have paid taxes, and I patch my own sidewalk out there. It cost me \$140. We do not have any money for sidewalks. Now this neighborhood is as old as out there at Kirk Road, but Kirk Road got a new sewer system.

T: What about the Clubs? You said you heard about the Loveland Club?

A: No, I never heard about that.

T: What kind of entertainment was there in the neighborhood? Were there any kind of get-togethers?

A: Yes, there were get togethers. A Mother's Club would put on an operetta. The Dad's Club put on a fantastic minstrel show.

T: Where was that at?

A: Over at the school. The school had an auditorium, stage. It has all been torn out. The church has it now.

T: How about a typical summer evening, did you sit out on the porch and talk?

A: My porch looked like a first class room. Awnings, porch rug, the glider is still out in Poland, all kinds of wicker chairs and tables. A great big flower box on the

length of the banister. Everybody did it. We did not have these hanging baskets like they do now. There is more of the base of this and the base of that. Everyday you had to go out with the graphite and you had to dust and clean your porch.

T: That was from the mills?

A: Yes. That was the machine, too. We used to call it black diamonds.

T: I do not know how you guys kept everything so clean with that happening all of the time.

A: I will tell you. We were more attached to our homes. I do not iron now. I have seen the time where I would take the white shirts and put them in the freezer on Tuesday so I was not too tired to do them. If I did the shirts first, then I had to finish the ironing on Wednesday. I do not iron anymore. It is a different routine. You move along with change, if you do not, you are left behind. Change for change sake.

T: You were talking about the school and the PTA. That was something that brought the neighbors close together, was the school?

A: Absolutely, yes. We had good times. Card parties. I told my husband one time, I was in charge of a card party. I had told him how good I had made out on it. He said, "Well, it is not any wonder, I think you gave everybody in the PTA job, that had to come."

T: Anything like events or people that stand out to you from when you first came here?

A: I enjoyed living here. I lived a different way. There was always conversation. There was always a wave or something else like that. Your routine was different and everything. Everybody washed on Monday. Now, I go down at 9:00 at night and put a load in and hang them on the line. I do not stay much on the cement at all because of my legs. I hang them down there. It is Monday night I have to go take the things off the line. I never lived like that. More room changed. I definitely have changed with the years. My children and grandchildren just fit right into this era now. We learn from them.

T: How about anything that went on at Sheet & Tube?

A: We always used to go up to the Stambaugh Auditorium to Sheet & Tube night.

T: What was that?

A: Beautiful shows there. Esther Hamilton used to be with all of her Candy

Butchers. Beautiful loaded backs would be here, money backs.

T: Was that every month?

A: No, once a year. There was always a lunch afterwards downstairs. That auditorium was jammed. Every year for years and years.

T: Was the neighborhood ever affected by any of the strikes that went on?

A: Yes. The letter in the mail that was left here. Four little children, they had to bring the troops in one time.

T: When was that?

A: They were quartered over here at Buckeye School. They were parading all around and that. It gave me the willies.

T: They were here to keep the peace, or what were they here to do?

A: There was the strikers. There was a bit to do up at stop five. There was shooting up there. One of my neighbors worked up there at Republic, he and his wife got shot in the fannie. There were work outbreaks.

T: Was your husband ever a part of a strike?

A: He was in the mill. He stayed in the mill. I was here by myself.

T: Did any of the strikers say anything because your husband stayed?

A: No, not to me. I cannot say that. Of course, you stayed at home. You did not leave your property. You did not want to get involved. You made sure that you did not. I would go on for six weeks.

T: What year were the troops called in?

A: No, I do remember that.

T: Would you mind me asking what you paid for the house?

A: I do not mind. \$4500.

T: You said you got a loan through Dollar Bank?

A: Dollar Bank in Struthers.

T: You paid Buckeye Land Company?

- A: No. We paid it off and made monthly payments to the bank. We made our payments to the bank, not Buckeye Land Company.
- T: Did most people pay through Buckeye Land Company, or did they get bank loans?
- A: Originally, I would say Buckeye Land. Then, as there was any change in the occupants, I think they evidently chose their own way of payment. Another thing, I think I am safe in saying, it came to a point where they [Buckeye Land] did not finance anymore. Then the homes that they did finance, that was the end of the Buckeye Land.
- T: Originally, when Buckeye Land started selling homes here, they had a life insurance policy, I guess that if somebody that worked at the mill was injured or passed away.
- A: Home was paid for.
- T: Did you know anybody that that happened to?
- A: No, I do not know anybody that happened to. I do know this. We had to buy that ourselves with our loan. That became one of the terms the bank took care of, if you were interested in carrying insurance. They picked up and did everything. The Buckeye Land Company did the same features that the bank carried.
- T: Were there any kinds of programs for children in the neighborhood?
- A: Playground. That was where my kids learned to shoot crap.
- T: Were there any scout programs or anything?
- A: Yes. The Bluebirds, I worked with them.
- T: Was that just something that the people in the neighborhood set up or how did that come about, do you know?
- A: It came from the headquarters up town, your scout and that. You get a den mother and a scout leader.
- T: Did the company have anything to do with setting up programs or anything?
- A: No, no, no. Mostly the churches. Mostly the churches, that is all.
- T: You were saying that there are a few people left in the neighborhood from the original neighborhood. Is there anybody else that you think would be willing to talk to me or help our research or anything?

A: Who is left, other than Charlie Capasel? Who is left, who is left, who is left? My, my, my. There is no one down on that end of the street. I hope I am right saying that. Emma Mallard just died. Emma lived in on Mount Vernon in a house just like this. Emma was a secretary over at St. Nick's Church for up-teen years. Any of these names that I read, none of them are here. Most of them have passed on. They are like my children; my children do not want to come back here. I have a daughter that retired a couple years ago from Western Reserve and she said she hopes she never comes back to Ohio. She was a lab technician and I know many a mornings she broke the snow going up Poland Avenue down here to the hospital. She said, "I am so glad I do not have all of that." She is just crazy about Florida. I cannot stand it.

T: [Laughter] I do not like Florida either.

A: I cannot stand it. I like the change of seasons.

T: Is there anything else that I did not ask that you might want to add to the interview?

A: I do not know in what way, except that I do not think that the plat has the appeal as a plat, the whole. I think there is lots of room for improvement in it. And I do not see it coming. This is the undoing of a historical place. This is the undoing. Just like these dumps they have around the city. Why has that been allowed to happen? You have people with that attitude and it is a downfall of many of the neighborhoods, a downfall -- disrespect, laziness. You wonder about the literacy of a lot of people in Youngstown. I hope I said that right. You will never lose the memory of better days. You will never lose the memory of it.

My children do not want to come back here. My children are out in Poland, up in Cleveland, down in Florida, Chicago. They do not bother much now, and I think could forget. They would go along with me and agree that it was good living, especially this house. My one child said, "We did not have a home. We had a youth center." And I was always Mrs. A. That is what these boys called me up in the funeral home. "Mrs. A, Mrs. A." You know.

We have had a couple of Buckeye School reunions and, somehow or the other, they did not get carried on. Oh, that was a glorious time that we had. Nobody seems to want to take it over and they are just all dying off. There is nobody that way or that way, nobody on this street of the original. None of them. I think Charlie was here before me. Charlie worked at the Sheet & Tube. Charlie raised a family up here. The house he lives in was his mother and father's, and that is just around the corner up here. Maybe he would have something to say. Charles Capasel, Mount Vernon.

T: There is one more question I forgot to ask. You said that your husband was a foreman and, from what I have read, the people that occupied the neighborhood were mostly foremen, superintendents, and that kind of thing. Is there anything other than the foremen and the superintendents?

A: You had all the workers that they had in good departments. Yes, yes. Everyone's house was nice. Every neighborhood's was. Everybody knew Buckeye Plant, yes. I kind of resent the tone that is taking on now. I kind of resent it. Like I say, I think literacy has a lot to do with it. And at the same time, that particular person is maybe living better than where they ever came from. I believe that. I do not want to go high brow on you. [Laughter] And not be nice to anyone in the neighborhood. I can do that. I understand. I understand. I think what do we expect? After all, seven from a 100. [Laughter]

T: Well, that is all the questions I have.

A: Well, you call me whenever, you can come down and do that.

End of Interview