

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Education - Salem, Ohio

Personal Experience

O H 957

LAURA WHINNERY

Interviewed

by

James McNeal

on

October 30, 1975

M. This is an interview with Laura Whinnery for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Salem Schools Project, by James McNeal, at 1508 North Ellsworth, Salem, Ohio, on October 30, 1975, at 3 15 p m.

First of all, Mrs. Whinnery, have you lived in Salem all of your life?

W Yes, I have lived there all but three years of my life I was born in West Virginia and then moved back to Salem

M You spent your public school years in Salem?

W: Yes. I attended Fourth Street School and the Junior High which was up one street I then attended Salem Senior High over on North Lincoln.

M Do you have any recollections of the grade school and your grad school years? The building is gone now and a lot of younger people, children and so forth, did not know that it got torn down last year and they had no recollection of that building or anything about it Do you remember anything specific about it? I know you would have been quite young

W· Yes. We lived right behind the school. In fact, even after school was over the kids and I gathered over and played on the playground. It was always a very fine school for our way of thinking and I am sure it was in those days. The big wide stairs going to the second floor were very impressive to the younger kids on the first floor Of course, some of my favorite teachers were there. They are all very good friends. I had a mark, I would guess, in making friends with the teachers. I really admired the teachers I cannot think of one that I did not admire and tried to emulate.

M: Do you have recollections of some particular teachers that stood out in the years?

W: Betsy Cameron was great. I had one fifth grade teacher, Miss Heston, who was really my idol, I guess There was another one, Miss Alice Weir, my third grade teacher. All of the kids worshiped her. She was really great. She was a lot of fun, but she was strict, too. So you worked, buckled down, and you did your work She was great for little plays and things which I enjoyed. If you got your work all done, then you could do a little play and play act sometimes during the day.

M This would be in the room then?

W· Yes

M. There were no stage facilities?

W: No, there were no stage facilities They were down by her desk in front of the file

M: When you say play and play acting, what do you mean?

W Well, just little skits like, go into the cloak pile and put it together and do it on the spur of the moment. I suppose today you would call it a charade.

M. Would you tell me more about what a routine day was about in grade school? You said you lived close, just behind the school, but from the time you got up and went to school, what was the general routine?

W Usually, we tried to get to be early so we could get a whack at the seesaw and the swings The athletic equipment was on the playground. You played tag or got together with some of your friends and talked until it was time to go into school. Then you would have your seven periods of restorations scattered about that day until recess. It was out to recess again for a little more play time, then we were back in again. After recess we went home for lunch As soon as you had your lunch down you went right back to school because there would always be somebody there ahead of you. If you could get together with them sometimes it was fun. I think that way you met all of the kids in school, not just the ones in your class It was a good mixer.

M Did you just have one teacher per grade? Did they do any shifting at all?

W: No, not in the first through sixth grade There was no shifting

M: I know today they have gone more toward moving teachers into specialized areas.

W Yes You had the same teacher The only specialized teacher you had was Miss Orr, who was the music teacher She came once a week to each grade. Mrs Sapp, who was the art teacher, came one afternoon a week. You had to study there and do your drawing, painting, writing and so forth with her. She was also the writing teacher. She had a couple of books that we practiced from. We practiced on an extra piece of paper so that we did not get our books messed up because that was a great thing to have, a really nice writing book for Mrs. Sapp.

M: They came to the room?

W Yes, they came to the room.

M: Was there a special day of the week or month?

W: Yes. Every week you had a special day I do not recall how many hours, possibly maybe only one hour or two hours at the most for each grade.

M Frank Hoopes, whose father was custodian there for a good long time, went through that school and he mentioned that Fourth Street had a personality. In the building, you could see from practically anywhere. Most of the people, at least up until the time it was torn down, were familiar with it by having gone there or seen it. There seemed to be a lot of controversy about the building being condemned, first of all, and finally being torn down I just wondered what your feelings are. Do you have any thoughts on the final decision, the actuality of the building being raised?

W I really do not think that I had to be done because it took so much effort to knock this thing down. I do not believe it would have fallen on anyone. I think perhaps it could have been saved if they put a new roof on They could have done something with it rather than just destroying it. I did not think it was really in that bad of shape It was feasible to have a school in the south east and that wind storm came along at an appropriate time

M Was it sort of an expedience?

W Yes, I think so. A little help from providence

M: You went to junior high on Fourth Street, so that means that you just moved upstairs.

W. We just moved upstairs and that is when you started to change classes. Each class that you had would be with a different teacher You had a homeroom and then you moved out to the other rooms.

M: From there, high school held freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors which is where I teach now, at 230 North Lincoln. Do you have any thoughts or remembrances about high school from 1926 to 1930?

W. Well, of course, I was quite active and so was my husband. We ended up as president and vice-president of my class. He was a captain for the last undefeated football team Salem had in 1929. We were very active and got around a lot. We did things like that. I ran the concession stand every week during my senior year It was my duty to run or head the concession stand to help make money for our class treasury Our main project in those days was to make a lot of money so that we could make healthy donations to the Salem High school Scholarship Fund. That custom was thrown by the way side, and I am really sorry about that. That scholarship bill is one of my pets. I have had the honor to serve on the committees, as I have had for some years It is a really good feeling when you go to the alumni banquet and see all of these kids receiving the scholarships because you know how hard it was to make this money.

M: In terms of the present, they are not making as much as there used to be in the last few years.

- W No One year we got nothing at all and it was from the biggest class that graduated from Salem They spent all of their money on prom They did not bother with the scholarship fund. I am very proud of the fact that our class, even though we were going to school during the depression, we were able to make enough money and we still hold the all-time record of giving the most to the association at the time of graduation We had \$1,125.00 to donate to the scholarship fund
- M That is a lot of money
- W There has not been another class that has come up to the \$1,000 00 mark
- M It was not only a lot of money, but it was a lot of money for that time
- W. At that time, it was an extreme amount of money
- M Do you have any other recollections of your High school years?
- W We had parties and so forth and had a lot of good teachers that were friends One particular teacher, the French teacher, whom I took a couple of years of French with, dated a friend of mine. We used to go out on double dates, which at that time was not allowed Today, nothing would probably be said We had a lot of fun doing that. There were just a lot of teachers who are still my good friends
- M: From 1926 to 1930, there had to be a difference in the attitudes of students and teachers What were their respected roles in the school compared to 40 or 50 years ago?
- W At that time, we respected the teachers If the teacher told us to do something we did it There were very few students who rebelled, maybe one or two bad boys, or once in a while a girl would do something and get sent to the principal's office We did not have the commotion that they have today If a kid got punished at school, he also got punished when he got home. Today, the parents would come up and jump down the teachers' throat and carry on because he hit poor little Johnny or Susie Maybe if they did swat a few around, they would be a lot better off, in my opinion
- M Were social clubs active then?
- W Yes. We had a few. We had the dramatic club, the High Fry, the Spanish club, and the Latin club. We did not have as nearly as many as we have now. We did form an association with Mr. Hildongorf, who was the father of that idea. That was the first association. Tickets were sold, and kids buy them today. For a few dollars, you got your Quaker and all the games, which was quite a thing, especially during the Depression That started at the time that we were in high school

M I am curious about one thing, too, that I cannot get enough information on Mr. Gardner was too sick to be interviewed and to be a part of this program, which I really am sorry for because I had him on my initial list of teachers because of his work in the debate area. Was debate popular then?

W Yes. Mr. Gardner was in high school He came about the time I went into high school I had him for both public speaking and history He did have some good debate teams, but there was debate long before we got to school Mr. Vivian Ronbaugh, I think, was the one who coached the debate team before They had debate teams back as far as 1925 Debate was not new It was one of the earliest clubs they had.

M: Were you involved in that in any way or just familiar with it?

W No I was not on the debate team. I was too busy doing other things, I guess

M What transpired after high school, before married life and settling down?

W Of course, we were married right out of high school. I worked at the printing shop and my husband went on to school at the Ohio State University When he came home from Ohio State in 1934, I did not work for a number of years, but while I was in high school I first became interested in the school history thing Mrs Harris had given me a 1915 annual and from that I copied a listing of all the people who graduated from Salem up until that time. I copied all those into a book It had some married people who were married For the men, I would find out who they married and put that in parenthesis. I never realized how much good it would do for me in later years because it aided a number of people in finding relatives or someone they were looking for for class reunions. I started that and one day Mrs. Berdmore and I discussed the scholarship to be awarded and she wanted me to see if I could find out who all had received scholarships up until this time and what they were doing now I did that and it turned out to be so interesting that I never ceased doing it. It has really been an excellent hobby I never tried to guess how many hours I put into it. I know it would be astounding. It has more than paid the price over in pleasure

M Labor of love.

W That is right. You hear from people all over the United States who wanting information about other people. Of course, in the last fifteen years I have been doing a class reunion bit. One year they were having trouble with the alumni banquet, it was becoming almost non-existent. In 1964 I asked President Corjoseph to let me see if I could get the 1950 class together I got out my one ledger and found out who graduated in the years before I wrote letters and sent them out It was our first 50 year reunion alumni banquet. It so happened that it was Judge Sharp's class. We did not have very many people out at that time, but each year it has gotten to be a bigger thing. Now it takes two or three tables at

our alumni banquet to accommodate the people that come to the 50 year class each year.

M: They help spread the word

W I have had two or three already in the office, some from out of town who came in to see when I was going to send out their letters for their 50th next year. It is fun to run down all those people and I could do this out of my own pocket, every hobby costs something anyway, and I do not mind I send out the invitations and get back the reply I have a big amount of letters from people who write before they come to the reunion Then I make up a souvenir booklet on my own. It had their class program and a list of their teachers they had that year Then it had a listing of all their classmates, addresses, and the ones that are deceased I try to say what year they passed away Of course, a good many of them have not seen these people for a good fifty years. There have been several reunions that have been really heart warming and worth all the effort that I have put in every year. Seeing two girls meet who have not seen one another for fifty years, falling into arms and crying like school kids, is what makes my job worthwhile. Then to discover that the one couple lived in Canton and the other in Florida, but the Canton couple went to Florida in winter and stayed ten miles from the other one They did not even know they were there. There were two other women who were widows in California who, when they had their fifty year reunion, found that they lived only five miles apart and neither knew the other was there Now they meet once a week for lunch Every once in a while I get a letter from them to thank me for the effort that I put forth to find them and let them find each other because they were both lonely

M That is marvelous! It is another thing that often happens with hobbies, no personal contact, collecting items, and so forth You really had a chance to work with actual people, dates, figures, and a list of names to go on. To go back to something you mentioned, about a Miss or Mrs Harris?

W Mrs. Harris.

M Mrs Harris gave you a 1915 annual?

W: Right. She was a teacher at McKinley School for many years She was Salem's first visiting teacher, they called her at that time. They did not have special classes for children who were slow learners or children who might have a broken leg and were unable to go to school, but they sent Mrs Harris to that child's home for one hour a day, five days a week. In that time, each day she used to help that child from getting behind in class at school, so that he or she was able to go back to school In a couple cases that I recall, the children never did get to school because they were slow learners. They did however manage to get some education that way That as Salem's first effort in teaching these children.

- M There are special classes now in all of the buildings, and at the senior high. That has come along way, then?
- W Yes I think she started that in about 1928. She was a very lovely person, I think one of the nicest people I have every met She was like a second mother to me. I could not say enough for her She was lovely person
- M It was through her that you got the first touch of history Was it a gift or did she know that you were interested?
- W: She knew I was interested in the school and the history Her and her husband's family were early settlers and they were quite historically minded I worked at their house after school because they needed someone to come in and help with the evening meals and so forth I went in after school and helped her with her housework The first day I went in, I had worked for another teacher from Junior High Of course, there, I ate in the kitchen and I served Mr. and Mrs. Miller in the dining room. When I went to Harris's, I put my plate on the kitchen table. She said, "What is that?" I said, "It is my plate." She said, "Oh, no " She picked it up and put it in the dining room and moved the other plates where two boys and she and her husband sat She moved around the table and said, "Now this is your plate." That was my place until the day that women died.
- M You belonged to the family?
- W: I belonged to the family from the first day I went there.
- M I can understand your previous comment about Mrs. Harris, then. I do not know whether someone told me this or I remember you telling me, but I understood that you have all the annuals?
- W: That is right All that were very published. The first one was in 1893 and it was called the Quaker City Bijou. They did not have another annual until 1915 when they published the annual as we knew them. They had a little publication called the Quaker from 1900 on. I have one set of those which are pretty special. A woman told me that she had a 1908 annual, but she was crazy because there was no such thing. One day she brought it in to me, was just a little booklet and it said, Commencement Number: The Quaker 1908.~ Perhaps it was 30 pages or so. There were not any pictures of individuals like we know them. There is a picture of the class, I believe, and pictures of the teachers perhaps, and then some little stories and things. The thing that attracted my attention the most was that the cover was drawn by Charles Bruchfield, who is a graduate of Salem High school and one of Salem's noted artists. In fact, one of America's noted artists I asked her if I might keep it for the weekend so that I could look it over and she said, "Honey, I am going to give that to you because I have two of them " I was so elated that I did not know what to do The next Monday, another woman who works at McCulla's store, came in

with a little package and said, ~My son found these in the old Boyle property over on Columbia Street. HE did not want them so he threw them in the wastebasket I thought I heard somebody was collecting them so I gathered them to and asked around and somebody said, "You are the one who collects Quakers." I said, "yes " She said, ~You might was to add these to your collection " There were the other four 1908 booklets that made the entire publication for 1907 I really thought that was fate

M Oh, my. I know what it is to have a set of books for example, and have volumes one, two, four , and five, and do everything you can to get volume three and just to have it fall on you is amazing

W I had quite a time getting my first 1893, too The Harris`s had one and they said that when they were finished with it, I was to have it, but I never looked forward to getting anything like that Anyhow, the oldest son wanted it when his folks passed on One day, Mary Bush, who lived on Cardinal Street and was a teacher for many years came in to pay her water bill and she said to me, "I understand that you are collecting annuals " I said, "Yes, I am " She said, ~Do you happen to have a Bijou?" I said, ~No, I do not " She said that she had lived with Miss Horne, who as another long time Salem teacher and principal at Columbia Street, and when she died she left me her property and all the personal effects. She said that there were a couple of Bijou's there and that she would give me one She brought me in one and it took me 32 years from the time I started to look for that thing before I finally got one. Since then, I have received six more.

M: Do you know of anyone else at all who is interested in that same hobby of yours?

W Collecting Quakers?

M Collecting these

W: Vice Kendall who is president of the school board is trying his hand at it. I saw him last night and he wanted to know if I had some extra ones I said, "Yes," and that I had a whole cupboard full of the ones. He was short some and would like to have them fill in where I could for him. So I promised him I would do so. I keep two complete sets for myself, no there are a couple that I do not have, too I do not have two of the 1908 things. I guess that is the only thing that I do not have two of I keep two in my bookcase because they are invaluable to a lot of people Just today I got one back from the Federal boys. They were looking for someone from Salem who was involved in a lot of crimes. The police came over and asked if I had an annual with so, and what was in it I said, "Yes, I am sure I do " They asked me to go home and get it. I came home and got three or four of them and took them back They took the one and after they were gone with it, I realized that I only had on 1973. I was a little perturbed until I got it back today. I want to try and find another 1973 because I try to keep two in case I lend one and I do not get it back. My collection is not ruined. Many times the police, the local police or

some out of town police have somebody to verify They come and borrow my annuals to look at their pictures when they were in High school

M If they would Xerox, if they only needed one picture or something.

W They could Xerox that, but the federal men wanted the book So they took it and they returned it.

M While we are on the subject, do you have any other stories about how certain ones came along that were difficult to find?

W. No, I guess not. I have one kind of cute story, I thought it was kind of cute. There was a sale out on the road this past summer There people were beating on a box of old Quakers One woman said to the other, "Quit bating on that. I want to get those for Laura May " She said, "That is who I am trying to get those for." A little while later, Bob Camp, the move who moved houses and so forth and told me there were three woman bidding on those One of them got the thing All three of them were bidding on that box of Quakers and they all were trying to get them for me. I thought that was rather humorous. I did get it Those Bakers you mentioned, evidentially had them from when she was in school. She called me last summer, a year ago, and asked me if I would like to have the Quakers I said, "Yes. I would.~ She said that they were going to give them to historical society, but they decided that I would do more good with them. The historical society seems to lock up everything they get and nobody sees it. She said that Bill was coming downtown and he would bring them down. Did I have a car? I said, ~Yes " He came in I showed him where my car was. There were forty-some Quakers in boxes I passed those on to other people almost invariably at a reunion. There would be somebody that lost their Quaker and wanted on badly, so if I have an extra one, I will give it to them. I never sell them because so many people have been kind to give me things. I do not want to make money on this deal, but if I can give one to someone who will enjoy it, I will do it I had one special one, the class of 1916. A woman was coming from California and she wrote to the president of the alumni association and asked if he could find her 1916 Quaker He called me and asked me if I had one like that I said I was sure that I did and I would take it to the alumni banquet. That night he introduced me to her and I gave her the annual. She opened it and saw the name of the fly leaf and said, "This is really a coincidence I went to the alumni banquet the year we graduated with this man." It was Fran Williman`s Quaker I had gotten it because my husband`s oldest sister was married to Sam Williman who was the Ohio State coach and Wester Reserve and so on. He was a Big Ten coach He probably was the most successful coach from Salem that we ever had graduate here His brother-in-law had the annuals in his attic. He was teaching at Struthers. I do not know if you ever met him or not

M No.

- W· John taught at Struthers and was moving to California, so he brought me a lot of pictures, Quakers, and tings that had belonged to the Williman's family That is how I got frank's Quaker and passed it on to this woman who dated him at the alumni banquet.
- M You have given some dictation of how extensive this hobby is, if you would, I would like to have you elaborate a little more on the areas that get involved. You mentioned the police, and people wanting Quakers from their particular classes organizing the reunions and so forth What else comes along with your long year of interest in these Quakers?
- W After I collected all of the annuals I decided that things were sort of running out and I might like to have a pre-annual, so I got out my ledgers and I looked to see who the older graduates were--who were around town. I started to call the ones from the years I did not have annuals for and asked them if they had a class picture--a picture of their class--and may I borrow it for reproduction. That was fine. I got the old class pictures and a lot of them said that hey did not have anybody to leave it to and they would like to give it to me for my collection. A lot of them I just borrowed and took them to a man, a photographer here that would reproduce them for me. Then he wold make me a negative which I have a while box of negatives of these old pictures I got the old class pictures finally, but I also got old football and basketball pictures, and pictures of the older teachers and so forth. Then people started to bring me class programs Class programs in the 1800's and early 1900's were out of the world They were done on parchment and that parchment is as good today as when they were made. They are beautiful things Some of them are really bright colors and they are tied with gold ribbon. If the class color happened to be pink, it might be pink and gold. Some of them are cut out almost to look lacy They are so fancy I have an expensive collection of those resulting form this. I also have had a number of pele who called me and said that somebody in their family had passed on and they had class pins They did not have class rings in the early days You just had a class pin. I had quite an extensive collection of class pins. I have some class rings, old class rings. This is a rather humorous thing and it brought a big chuckle to the people that have been on the banquet this year. A couple years ago the water department bought a new sewer cleaning machine. It is a jet type thing that you jet the stream of water through the sewer and it cleans it out just as clean as a whistle. All of the stuff settled in the manhole and they bucket that out with a special type of bucket. When the fellows were doing this, they found a lot of rings. The first one they found was a 1962 ring. They found it up on Atlas Street from the sewer that they were cleaning. They called me and asked me who graduated in 1962 with these initials I came home on my lunch hour and looked in the annuals and found out. They brought me the ring and I called the girl's mother and asked her if her daughter had lost her ring and she said, "Yes. I flushed it down the commode the day after she got it. She had it wrapped in a piece of Kleenex and left it on the table by her bed and I did not realize that there was anything in the Kleenex I just fired the Kleenex in the commode and flushed it She was hear broken. We told her since she was so careless, she could not have another one." I returned the ring to her and she was really tickled to get it It was not pitted or anything. It was just like new. They found some

more rings and they had one that had SHS on it. When I got to examining it with a magnifying glass, it was for sure I wrote to the principal and asked who graduated in 1922 with these initials. A few weeks later I got a letter from some woman over there who said that she understood that I had her class ring I sent it to her, and wrote her a note and asked her how it came to be in the North Ellsworth sewer in Salem, but she never answered it I just sent it back to her We got one from the class of 1925 It was easy to determine whose it was I was going to sent it to her, but thought no, I will just wait to see if she comes to her fiftieth reunion She made reservations and the boys cleaned them up first and then I gave them another cleaning job This one I took to Danny Smith and asked him if he would buff it for me When Danny got through with it, it looked like new. The only thing that was wrong, a little bit of the black enamel on the top had been chipped He put it in a title box for me AT the alumni banquet I asked, "How many of this class do not have their class rings?" There was a show of hands and this girl did not say anything. I said, "One more of you is going to go home with your class ring that came with it." I asked if she would come forward, the poor woman looked so stunned. I did not know quite what to say. She told me that she had scrubbed some outside steps in 1930 and her ring had come off in a bucket of water and the water was so dirty, she did not want to throw it in the sink, so she threw it in the commode and saw her ring go She could not figure how I had her ring to give her on her fiftieth anniversary.

M Another faithful event that you worked in the water department.

W Well, yes They bring me all the rings they find I have some from other schools, but I do not know what to do with them. I do not know how to find who they belong to. That woman was really tickled and her husband came and told me He said, "You will never know how pleased I am that she got that back She has mentioned it for years that it was gone and she wanted it so badly ~ You had mentioned that Freddy Cope told you about playing his first night of football

M· Yes.

W. That was with Warren. I do not know if he told you that

M: No.

W It was with Warren, Ohio, in 1929. We did beat them, we won all eleven games that year. That was our last undefeated season It was in October and it was a beautiful night to have our first game. It seems funny because the ball was white; I do not know what they painted them with, but at that time they painted the balls white. You know, the lights were only hooked up just minutes before the games started. It was really something. That year they had so much of a following and the spirit was so high in Salem, they had those lights paid for before the season was half over.

- M. 1929 Do you have any idea what kind of money that required?
- W: NO, not off the top of my head. I probably could find out The thing that was amusing was the Alliance-Salem game that year They always played it on Thanksgiving Day in those days. Both Alliance and Salem were undefeated. The night before we had a big snow and the roads were terrible. So many people had bought tickets from Alliance to come down when they started down there were forty some cars in the ditch between here and Alliance. The Alliance paper that we had after said that there had been traffic jams, but the Alliance fans will thrill their grandchildren with the story of The Battle Of Blackbird Hill. They had over 6,000 people at that game. They stayed in the cold and watched the kids play in the snow
- M: That is late in the year. The last game this year will be on October 31st.
- M: Yes. But they always played Thanksgiving morning in those days
- M Last week, I think was the biggest crowd this year against East Liverpool It was estimated 5,000 people, I do not know how they put another 1,000 in there.
- W They stood all around the field, every bleacher, on the hill there and everyplace. One of the other aspects of this hobby is when I first started going out to the various class reunions as a speaker Somebody asked me if I would come and tell their class reunion about my hobby They thought it was remarkable because I helped them find names or people that nobody in their class knew where they were. I said that I never did I, built I would give it a try. I came home ad made a thumbnail history of the schools and so forth. I though, that is not going to be very long and they said twenty-five minutes, so I decided to go through their own particular class history. I took wash of their four years and made a trip down memory lane. I did it in rhyme They enjoyed it so much and somebody there that night came and asked me to come to their reunion next week, so I had to hurry and do one for their's next week. Since that time, we have been averaging three to five a year Every summer we go to there to five reunions. Some reunions I have ben to s many as four or five times, some classes I have been to four of their class reunions I went to my son's class of 1948 for the third time and they said, "What are you going to do the next time, mom?~ The next time I am going to say no because I have run out of anything to tell you fellows.
- M: Do not overdue a good thing. Were there any classes who seemed to be more interested or active in their reunions than others?
- W I have been to everything from five years to 50 years and you find the same thing with all of them. The people in town do not respond and the ones from out of town come and wonder where in Sam's Hill are the ones who live here. We had our own this summer. People came from Florida, Phoenix, Arizona, and Albuquerque, New Mexico. There

were possibly twenty people right in town who would not even respond to the invitation

M What do you attribute that to? Do you have any thoughts on that?

W A couple of the girls tried to pass themselves off as ten years younger than the rest of us and I think that is the reason that they do not come I think the others just are not interested

M Maybe they see enough of their class members that they do not think about the ones that have gone away

W: I do not think so. Of course, the majority of these people were not active in the class when they were in school; they did not participate too much I think maybe this is part of it, too. This year, in three weeks time, we went through the class of 1930, the class of 1959, the class of 1960, and they all complained of the same thing. That was quite a span at the time. They were all complaining of the same thing. I also take my collection of pictures of the old football teams and the old class pictures. I put them up on the wall wherever they are having their reunion. They really get a charge out of looking at those Perhaps they can find their parents or their grandparents in those pictures. They all seem very interested in the old football teams and basketball teams and so forth. Salem has been really fortunate. For the city, I think it is an outstanding record that we have sent three basketball teams to the state tournament in Columbus; 1927, 1937, 1959

M Two of those years is when Salem was a lot smaller

W Yes, very much smaller.

M Of course, I was in on that 1959 team. I went up to the new High school that year. The first in that new building; I was not the first to graduate. Of course, they changed that from over three or four years back to three years and now it is back to four again I really do not think that matters whether you were the first in or not because they change it so much.

W We are long overdue for an undefeated football season, I will tell you We have only had two in our history and that was 1926 and 1929

M 1929 is the year my father would have graduated, Fredrick McNeal. I know he knows your husband.

W Yes, I know Fred, too.

M: His dad died when he was a junior in High school and he had a sister and a mother to take care of He quit, I suppose today you would use the term dropout, but he had family

difficulties.

- W. I will tell you, there were a lot of people who had to do that--especially during the Depression years. We had one girl who belonged to our class and she had to quit. She started school when we were seniors. She came the first day and they called her from the Church Budget to go to work. Her mother said that this was it and she would have to go to work because she wanted her younger sister to be able to stay in school. The brother had graduated a couple of years before. Just this last year when we had our reunion she said to me, "You will never know how grateful I am that you asked me to your reunion, to our reunion. I felt so bad when I saw the first one advertised because that was my class, but they will never invite me because I did not graduate." I find with all the classes that they will go back, even as far as their freshman year and if there was somebody who was here their freshman year or had gone to school with them in the grades, but had to move away at that time, they send those people a letter to invite them and they come too. They really turn out better than the ones who have stayed on to graduate sometimes.
- W. Well, we have had a nice session with a great number of stories and tidbits of information as a result of a hobby of yours affiliated with school history. Is there anything at all that you would like to add to the discussion so far?
- W. I think there is one thing that not too many people realize how we got the Riley field. General James Riley was a lawyer and a politician. He lived in Wellsville. He amassed quite a fortune in his lifetime. He was never married and when he died, he left quite an estate. There was not any heirs. The estate went to the state of Ohio for a time and they spent quite a bit of money in liquidation suits of people trying to claim part of the inheritance. There were some relatives or something. Finally, in 1915, I believe, the state decided to apportion the rest of his money to the school system in Columbiana County. Salem got a share of it and bought an independent amusement park. They bought the present Riley field. I always knew it was Riley field, but I did not know that it should be called General Riley Field. They bought that and built wooden bleachers on the corner of Pershing. They put up a wire fence around and made the track and so forth and used it for our athletic field. In 1928, they built the brick wall around it and new concrete bleachers. But because of General Riley's estate we were able to get our first athletic field. It was the first and only part of his money that was spent in a permanent memorial to the man. Therefore, I am very much against them buying or moving the athletic field anywhere else. If they are going to do anything, I hope they enlarge that one and keep the Riley Field.
- M. That was commented on by Superintendent Pohn and other school officials in last night's paper, to be one of the areas of improvement if the bond issue passes.
- W: Well, they have the land there to the west, so they could move the bleachers as it would to make a whole new field. I am sure the people in North Union are very much against

putting an athletic field up there

M I do not know where else they could really put it except the south east, but anywhere they would put it, they would still have the same problems with traffic and parking

W That is right. But people carried on about building that little one out at south east and you cannot blame them. It is a good strategic spot down there

M. I have been raptured by all these things I have gone through the school system and of course, through my father and his years in schools and in my tenth year to teaching now I just want to indicate to you that this has been a delight for me I not only have to thank you, but I am going to have to re-thank Dave Stratton because as I told you, when we gave me a list of people to see, he said to get in touch with Laura May Whinnery and see if she will talk with you. And you have and I think you very much

W. You are quite welcome. I could hold forth all day on this subject. (laughter)

End Of Interview