

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

YSU Salem Schools Project

Personal experience

O. H. 1050

FREDERICK COPE

Interviewed

by

James L. McNeal

on

October 13, 1975

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INTERVIEWEE: FREDERICK COPE

INTERVIEWER: James L. McNeal

SUBJECT: personal experience, teachers and admin-
istration, coaching track

DATE: October 13, 1975

M: This is an interview with Frederick Cope for the Youngs-
town State University Oral History Program, on Salem
Schools, by James McNeal, at 575 N. Howard, Salem, Ohio,
on October 13, 1975, at 3:30 p.m.

First of all, F.E., I would like to ask you how and why
you decided to go into education.

C: I decided previously to take up premedicine when I went
to Mount Union, but since I liked track so well I didn't
have time for the classes. Although I did take all the
labs required, I got so interested in track and thought
I would like to continue with it. If I were in medicine
I couldn't continue in track and with coaching that
seemed to be the only outlet to continually do the thing
that I liked so well. The question of money came up
also at the end of my premedical days, that I needed
\$10,000. That was shortly before the crash and \$10,000
in those days looked like \$100,000 today.

So I decided on education in the last minute and crammed
a lot of courses down my throat, took my practice teach-
ing, and applied for a job as soon as I graduated from
Mount Union. I had several offers. I would have liked
to come to Salem right then, but there was not an open-
ing. The principal at that time, Mr. Wilbur Springer,
said that he would certainly give me the first opportu-
nity that came open. Mr. E.S. Kerr, the superintendent
of the schools, promised me the same thing. My father
was very well acquainted with the president of the board

of education. The president of the board of education was very anxious that I get into Salem and not get too far away where I wouldn't want to return. So my heart was in two things; coaching and getting back to Salem as soon as I could because their success in athletics had been so great over the years, especially in track and field.

M: So you took most of your academic training at Mount Union. Strictly at Mount Union?

C: No, I went on from Mount Union after I got my first teaching job and decided that there are no jobs in the summer. It was the summer of 1930 and so I decided to enroll at Ohio State and work on my master's degree. So in 1930 I entered Ohio State on June 15, and got out of there just before school started again at Bucyrus where I got my first teaching appointment. I took preliminary courses first in physical education and then aimed for a master's degree in physical education, with a major in coaching and physical education, a minor in school administration; just in case I liked the administrative end better than the coaching end. But the administrative end came in good because athletic director is an administrative job and that helped very much when I did decide to take the administrative job as my minor.

I had a very interesting professor at Ohio State by the name of Dr. Delbert Oberteuffer who was the head of the physical education and health in the state department. The money became scarce at Ohio State so they let him go and he caught on at Ohio State University as head of the department of Health and Physical Education. He was my master's advisor, and he was fresh out of Columbia University. Another real break I had was having him for an advisor.

M: You say you did student teaching, where did you do that?

C: I did my student teaching at Alliance High School when I went to Mount Union, my last year. I taught a course in English. English has always been my favorite subject outside of the athletic end of it. So I got along very well in English. I had a whole semester of practice teaching with my professor visiting me about every day and, consequently, I got along fine on that. That was the time I decided I liked teaching right then, even though it was just English, I knew I would like teaching if I could get into the sports end of it because I even liked to teach English. Of course, I started out at Salem here with seven classes a day. I did my faculty manager work. Do you want to get into that right now?

M: Yes, go ahead.

C: After three years of Bucyrus High School, I finally got in at Salem when a gentleman by the name of Frankie Lewis left for the West. I came in Salem as faculty manager, and track coach, and seven classes a day with four different preparations. To look back on it now, it would be impossible to do that today. To teach seven classes and then take the athletic head on top of that, but having only three or four sports in those days, to what we have today, it was a lot easier to teach all day and then do your athletics jobs after school.

After a few years of that the athletic things multiplied, more sports, more people involved. So my academic classes were taken away from me and I was put into the physical education end, teaching Physical Education classes six periods a day, then I had the last two periods open for athletics. That gave me a little more time because there is very little preparation in physical education, but it made one tired at the end of the day because of the tremendous amount of students, seventy to eighty per class, and only one gymnasium. The junior high had to use it also, and the girls had to use it. So that was a small gym floor, but everybody else had the same situation, so it wasn't troublesome at that time.

Then after years of faculty manager and teaching classes, the board decided to make me athletic director and take my classes all away from me and put me as a physical education supervisor in all the grades. But that did not go through at the time because it was quite uncommon to have a man in high school supervising grades and also high school athletics. So instead of getting that physical education job in grades, I was returned to study hall teaching where I supervised four study halls a day, and I had three periods to do athletics. At the same time we were increasing athletics to cross county, and then we picked up wrestling, and then we picked up baseball. Of course, later on it got busier than ever because we took up girls sports. Girls sports are just about a double of boys, except one doesn't have the same number of them, but it takes the same amount of work for a girls' sport as it does for a boys' sport.

So, all in all, it was a great first five years. It might be interesting to know that I was in charge of all athletics. Being faculty manager at that time was being in charge of all the games, scheduling the games, hiring officials, taking charge of the gate, getting the field ready, and liming it and everything like that. So it was just a one man job. But in those days we had only one ticket seller, and one ticket taker. Instead of the seven and four, we have to pay eleven gate people. It was quite easy to get them to work for a small pay. We only needed one policeman in those days because the

Depression was on. The crowds were small, the prices were \$.25 for students and \$.50 for adults, no reserved seats at all.

Then we played games for charity also at the end of the season. Then we would always play a charity game in Alliance and that would go for the needy, the proceeds for that important game. One time we had ten regular games and two games at the end of the season for charity. Of course, the proceeds for them went to the needy at that time when there were many people out of work because that was in the heart of the Depression, 1933, 1934, 1935, and 1936. But we got along and made our ends meet.

At the end of the season we would check our budgets and see what we had left over for next year and buy some equipment. We never had to tap any other place for these. The Salem people paid at the gate all these years and likewise a fine Boosters' club helped.

It also might be interesting that, as I say, we had no reserved seats, so we couldn't charge too much. When we went to reserved seats first we charged \$.75 and then a person could reserve a seat for only \$.25 more than the general admission. So an awful lot of people gave up their general admission tickets to sit in those seats there. Pretty soon we had too many people in the reserved seats so we had to raise it to \$1 and there was quite a cry around town about that price. \$1 for a ticket was outlandish and how could they afford to pay it. It worked out all right. Then we went into season tickets and things of that nature.

At this time we had one of the best basketball floors. It was built in 1918 and was one of the best floors in this part of the country. It was one of the best gymnasiums because it had a little track around it and that was very rare because we could have indoor running and we had indoor track meets. They were very well attended. Later on, when these other schools, got a little bit larger gyms they began looking down on our gym. We reminded them of the many times that we played in their smaller gyms with their potbelly stoves in the corner to keep warm, and where the rafters were so low you ball would hit the rafter if you shot one too high. That way we were able to make a schedule and still stay with it because we didn't get our new gym until 1958, and some of these others got them shortly after the WPA put them in.

So the gymnasium was sold out long before the season ever started. Several years when we had a boy by the name of Bob Payer, six foot seven, tallest boy in the state at that time. We would just sell the tickets

ahead of the season and then close the doors and let people in only with tickets. Of course, that caused a lot of stir. On the other hand, we got by with 365 reserved seats and we packed 1,100 around the track about seven deep. We always worried about the fire marshal coming up, but he knew what kind of situation we were in. We even put chairs under the basket where the fellows would shoot a basket and it would fall into people's laps at the ends of the gym. In order to get enough people in to pay our bills and also satisfy the people who wanted in to see our championship team we did everything to increase the capacity. Because we would win sixteen and seventeen games a year, even twenty-two one year when we were allowed to play twenty-two games. Later that was cut down to twenty games, and now down to eighteen plus tournaments.

M: You mentioned that Wilbur Springer and E. S. Kerr were after you to come to Salem. What year did you first come to Salem?

C: I came to Salem the fall of 1933. There were two jobs open, 150 applicants, and Herb Brown just out of Ohio State got the basketball job and I got the faculty manager job. We were very, very happy to get that. It started out at \$1,100 and advanced quickly next year to \$1,500. The jobs were so scarce then it was just that I would work for almost nothing just to get into Salem at that time. Salem schools never laid off any teachers on account of the Depression or anything like that. The place where I taught before, two of the banks had closed and we weren't to get paid the next year. So we would just come back on our own. So I transferred to Salem and Wilbur Springer was my guiding light. He was the one that coached me in high school and got me started in track. Coached me to a new county mile record and encouraged me to go to Mount Union where he was a star graduate.

It was an interesting thing, when it came up to September Mount Union was closed in enrollment. They took only 500 students. So I told Mr. Springer and my father that I would wait another year. I happened to be working at Cope Brothers Nursery. My father grabbed me by the seat of the pants and jerked me across the field. He told me I had to get on the streetcar and go to Alliance with Springer to get me in to Mount Union. I did. We got up there and the dean said enrollment was closed. Springer said he was a good backer at Mount Union and he would never bring another good athlete up there again if they didn't let me in. So they let me in. I was number 501. I went on, of course, and ran cross country and track up there. As I say, that's what my great interests were even though I did take premedical courses.

I had to work my way through. I cleaned wallpaper for \$.60 an hour, I waited on tables in restaurants, I worked at private homes and kept furnaces going in the town. Where I could pick up a job, I would do it and be glad of it because I had to have some help. My father just left the nursery at that time and things were pretty tough at home. I did manage to work and got into a fraternity, Sigma Nu Fraternity. Where Springer was a member, and Rib Allen, and Bob Cope, and some of these other great stars that went to Mount Union and made All-Ohio. At the end of my senior year, as I said before, \$10,000 seemed like too much to go to medical school, so I applied at several places to get a job. Bucyrus needed a track coach. I went up there and found out that they didn't even have a track, so we spent the whole first year putting a track in. Ever since that day, Bucyrus had a respectable track team, held meets there, and other places there in the northern Ohio league.

All the time I was at Bucyrus I kept my eye on Salem because Salem, under the guidance of Wilbur Springer, put lights in at Riley Stadium. The fall of 1929 they played the second football game in America, under the lights. New Castle had the first game under lights, but they had car lights on the field so they didn't put the flood lights up. Thousands of people turned up for that first game, we played Warren and beat them fourteen to seven under the lights in the first night game in the state of Ohio. That wasn't the only fame for the Salem floodlights; the first night track meet in America was held in the spring in 1930. It was the Salem night relays, and that was really a novelty. We do have that credit of having the first night relays in America under the lights. From that stemmed a great meet on the first Saturday in May, and forty-four to fifty leading teams came here from all over the state. The state champion was here twelve times, Toledo Scott Lakewood's was in here also. Great runners like Jesse Owens and Dave Albritton and Olympic stars came for running exhibitions. In fact, we had a star every year come in to run our exhibition. Wilbur J. Springer started that meet and it was very successful right off the bat.

I had an unusual experience. When I broke into this business, I broke in in a hard way of running those night relays. Mr. Springer had taken his wife and two children to Florida during the April recess, and his two boys got sick down there, and it was two weeks before the night relays. He sent a telegram to me saying that I would have to take over, that he was not allowed to move his children from Florida to come back up here. So Mr. Kerr installed me in the principal's office. I went to work, and believe me, that was the hardest job and

the most difficult for me in my life because I did not have any experience in managing. I had to check all the records to find out where all the medals were at the time, how much help had been hired, how many schools had been written to, how many of this and that and the other thing. I found out that Wilbur Springer had a very good organization as I unfolded the things in the next two weeks.

We finally got everything arranged and ran those night relays in 1936. The sixth year of its existence. But, as I say, a track meet is very complicated to run, especially when it was bringing in forty-four to fifty schools, and 500 to 600 athletes, like jumping in a frying pan. I felt very proud that I was able to do it and from then on I loved to run track meets. So after coaching thirteen years, I liked the managing of meets which I took over after Wilbur Springer left to sell insurance. We had the Big Ten meet here; that was ten schools. We had the county meet here every year because no other track was available in the county. We had the A and B district meets here, and we had the night relays. So four big meets in a row on this little, dirt track down here, but it was one of the fastest tracks in America at that time because it was built very good, but it was never wide enough.

It was an interesting thing that the superintendent who was here at the time, Mr. Allen, did not like baseball. So when they built the new stadium, he had the stadium moved in close enough so that they couldn't play baseball inside the football field. So that was why the track was so narrow. We could never expand that because it was just enough to get the football field in there because of his dislike of baseball.

M: In the early 1930's, you have mentioned a few things, but could you tell me more about the status of high school sports at that time?

C: High school sports at that time were never as important to the public. The win and loss idea wasn't nearly as strong. In fact, the coaches didn't get paid any more than regular teachers in most of the cases, very little more if they did. Coaches didn't get too much time off from their classes. They did not have more than one assistant. They had no freshman team, no reserve team, all varsity teams, until Paul Brown, of Massillon fame, came along. We were in the same league that he was. We were in the Big Ten league with Massillon, Alliance, Canton McKinley, Warren Harding, Ravenna, New Philadelphia, Salem, and two or three other schools in that tough Big Ten league. Nobody worried too much. Well, if you win okay, if not okay. Very little pressure on the coaches. When the season was over, you forgot

things and went on, hoping for a better season next year.

But when Paul Brown came and instilled his system at Massillon, where he hired more coaches, and had a reserve team, and had a freshman team, and really made a science out of football; why the other schools began looking around and saying, "If Paul Brown can do that, we have got to have more assistants here. We can't play Massillon. We have got to have more uniforms, we have got to have more equipment, we have got to have better facilities, we have got to have more of everything." He started that trend with his efficiency at Massillon, and then gradually other schools added more assistants. Of course, with more assistants, and raising the prices, and more interest, and more intensity on winning, then the fans got a little bit tougher too. Because they wanted a winner here and a winner there, because Massillon could win and this other team could win, why can't Salem win. So about seven or eight coaches in my tenure here were fired at Salem, due to the fact that they didn't have the material at that time. They were playing big schedules and things of that nature.

Basketball didn't take as many boys. Our school was one of the smallest in the Big Ten. It only takes five boys to start a basketball team, and very few injuries, so we could stay with them in basketball. Salem has been to Columbus three times with teams. In fact, they lost the--when Wilbur Springer was coach--state semi-finals by one point. Then Mr. John Cabas took them down there and they lost in the finals by twenty points to East Tech. Herb Brown, a coach in Salem during the 1930's, took a team down there and we lost to Bridgeport in the semi-finals. So we won a lot of district titles in basketball, many county titles when we had the county meets. So basketball was much more successful in Salem.

Although, Salem has had great football teams when Earl Bruce was here, and Ben Barrett, and Lou Smith. In fact, we never had a bad coach here, because all the good material wasn't there at the time. Of course, the fans get restless if you had more than a year or two losing and then they want to change coaches. Of course, very few coaches were fired here, they resigned some of them. To my recollection, we never had a track coach or a basketball coach fired in Salem. Salem has been a hub for good track because of Wilbur Springer, because the people have always thought of coming to Salem because it had so many meets here. If you will notice even today, we have dual meets at night; at least six to eight a year here. They come over here because they get treated right, the track has always been prepared for them, and officials have always been good, and people have attended these meets here.

But in the early 1930's, they always say, "The good old times," but the good old times were lacking. We used to lack equipment, didn't have enough shoes. We bought seven pair of track shoes a year maybe. Maybe the high jumper would have to take his shoes off to give them to the miler, so that he could run his race and give them back to the high jumper. Today, equipment is plentiful, and you might have two pair of shoes now because you run on hard tracks and you run on soft tracks. In those days you had one pair of shoes and one pair of pants, and if you had a sweatsuit you were in luxury and you may have bought your own.

As I say, those times have all changed. We always think the good old days are the ones that were the best, but I wouldn't trade them for anything I've ever had, but I do think that today the kids do have a better chance. They have better coaching, better equipment, better tracks to run on, and much more interest. I don't think the boys are any better today. I think the boys of the past would have been just as good if they had had the same situations. . . I might give you an instance of Johnny Weismiller who was a world champion swimmer many years ago. His record has been broken by girl swimmers today. So everything gets better. We wonder how far these records will go.

I am hoping very much this school levy will pass so Salem can get a few better facilities besides; number one, needing a new Prospect school and needing a new McKinley school, a new elementary school, we still need a refurbishing of Reilly Stadium to keep it going. Because it hasn't had much done to it since 1929, and it has been a good one. So, that is as far as the concrete stands are concerned, they are not in as good of shape as they should be. The track is still good and hard, as narrow as it is, and the football field handles seven varsity games a year, and four to six reserve and freshmen games. So the only things that are needed down there are perhaps more seats, a widened track, and larger dressing rooms and lavatories. In 1989 the future track additions to grade schools and upgrading the dressing rooms, et cetera, are very much in the offing if the levy in May passes.

I would personally think that maybe these voters will go for the levy. When you talk about the 1930's and the old days, even the 1920's when I was in high school, we went out for track in high school then and they had just enough for twelve or fifteen men on the track team. You had two men for both half and the mile, you had the 100 yard dash, two men for the 100 and 220. You would get along with twelve men. Today with all these expanded events like the two mile, and the 330 intermediate hur-

dles, and sixty and eighty boys on a track team, you can give a lot more boys a chance to run. A lot more chances to compete, and that's what it is all about. That's why I always liked dual meets, you can get forty and sixty boys in a dual meet. In a large meet, you can only two in each event because it's more selective and much better boys in that big meet. That big meet is not for a mediocre man, the dual meet is for the mediocre man. After all, he is coming out and he has that right to participate, but it didn't work out that way in the big meets. You would have to be good, to qualify for a trip to Columbus anymore, you have got to qualify a certain time and a place. There is no five minute mile in Columbus anymore. If you won a district, first or second, you could take your whole team down. Now, you take only the specialists; the first two or three men in each event from every district and you get the cream of the crop down there. Of course, the fans like that type of meet. But again, it cuts out the mediocre man. He can no longer make it to Columbus.

M: You mentioned working out of the athletic office and becoming athletic director, you would have spent most of your time then in, what is now, the junior high on North Lincoln, and then the new high school.

C: Yes, I had a little office down there in the gym of the junior high, which was then the high school. That's where I started. I used to have a classroom when I started out as faculty manager on the third floor, and did all my business up there; kept the tickets and all the organization. Then I got a little office down in the junior high. I mean down in the junior high where the old high school is. I had that entirely for my physical education classes and the athletic department there. I had a phone. In my first several years I had to use the principal's office phone. Then I got a phone of my own and I could do a lot more work and be right close to the gym classes where I was and I could still do my athletic work without confusion and running around using someone else's phone.

Then we moved up to the high school and I had a small office for every year but two years, and they moved into the old Quaker office. Now there is sufficient room there for storing equipment for the number of sports they're involved in today. So they needed more space and they have it today, and it's a much more efficient organization.

M: Let's concentrate on the high school then, the building that you spent a good number of years in, in that little office in Salem Senior High on Sixth Street. From the minute you walked in the door in the morning, what was a routine day like for F.E. Cope?

C: A routine day in that little office there, which I call the ex-broom closet, was first I wouldn't get in there one minute until some coach would be calling because we didn't have all the coaches congregate in one building. It wasn't good, but that's the only way you can do it. You can't put all the coaches in one building. There would be a call from a coach in another building, and I would answer his call. Then to try to get back to him when you're not permitted to take coaches out of classes in the elementary, which is a good idea because they would be running in and out all the time, you meet them again at the end of the day.

Then about the second call or third call you would get would be about tickets. They wanted to buy a ticket here or there. About the third thing, you would hear a knock on the door and here would be the equipment salesman in there. It used to be he would come just in the spring, and now salesmen come year round. I have had as high as forty in one year from various companies. Maybe some are the same ones that repeat over and over again. Then you would go down to your study hall and get called out of your study hall several times. Fortunately, there is always another teacher in there to keep order. You would get back up to your office there and somebody would call up and say that they had a sad boy. Some booster member would call and say, "Why didn't this boy get to play this last week?" We have got to answer that question, or "Why did the coach take his uniform away from him?" Problems like that.

I suppose one of the worst things of late was the fact that some referee had called you and said that he was hurt in the game before, he had a sprained ankle; or he was working somewhere and he just couldn't get out of his job, his boss was sending him out of town and he couldn't get back. The worst thing that some of them used to do, and they don't do it anymore, is to say they had a college job and they wanted out of the high school games. So they take this college job. So you let them out in those days and started immediately trying to find another one. You would have to call the school and find out if they would okay another man, then call this man and find out if he was open. If he wasn't open and you couldn't find a suitable replacement, call the secretary of officials organization and try to get him to get you some names. Then you would have to call back and say you got the names. It took a lot of your time just putting these officials back in, which they don't allow them to get out of these games now. Because once you accept a game, if you report them, then they will black ball you. You are either fined or taken out for a year from the organization.

Then, towards the afternoon, some of the kids would come in and want something. The cheerleaders may come in and they want to get new uniforms. That comes to us three times a year, that wouldn't come everyday, but you would go along with that a while. Then some grade school would call up and say they are out of tickets. You thought you had plenty of them, but you are glad you sold them all. So you would go through the day like that. Then you had reports to make out for every game. A financial report of how many tickets were sold, and if it were a percentage gate you had to figure out the percentage and get that ready for the other school. Of course, we prepared that for the secretary and she would come in after school and write that up.

Then you are always busy making a schedule. Since Salem was independent, not in a league, it was a lot tougher to make a schedule. Everybody says, "Why don't we get into a league?" Well, the leagues in football usually play home and home. We are independent and it is just right for us because we are either too large for some of the leagues or too small for some of them. Just like this Big Eight basketball league, we are by far the smallest school in there but we do well in there, as I say. But in football, people would inquire about a league. I would say, "Don't you like seven home games? If we weren't independent, you would have five and five, perhaps." I try to always get seven games at home in football. You find very, very few schools can do that if they are in a league because, as I say, they play home and home.

In basketball, who plays twelve games at home and six away? Salem, even though we are in a league. But people like to come in there, we can afford to pay them the money for coming in. We had as high as fourteen games out of eighteen in my tenure there in basketball. As I say, we have had the state champion there fourteen different times. Teams like East Tech, and Lindon McKinley in Columbus, and Columbus North, and Akron North, just to name a few. That was John Cabas's idea. He came to me when he first came to Salem and said, "Now, I think Salem can be playing better opponents, bigger opponents, than some of these we are playing. I know they are tough." Columbiana is always tough for us, Sebring was tough for us, Lisbon was always a good game, good crowds and stuff like that. But he thought maybe since we were getting a new gym that we could maybe up grade our schedule. I thought he was wrong but I went along with him and he certainly was right. We have had great teams here and drew great crowds.

If it weren't for basketball and all those great crowds, we probably couldn't have met all of our bills because football equipment is so high, and it takes so much of

it, that football does pay for itself but it can't help the other sports too much. Basketball has to help pay the others way. So we have always had a very, very tough basketball schedule. Sometimes too tough for the team we had, but we stayed right with it. When some of them were perhaps thinking about joining another league, we would have to drop out of the Big Eight, we saw how the fans rose up and said, "No! No!" So we did not join the other league. So, we stayed with the basketball.

We are still working on a football league which will come about someday, but it will destroy our incentive for seven games at home in football because, as I say, we cannot do that in a league. That has been our fortune. I have worked on that football schedule from one year to the next, and even in the middle of the summer did not have my schedule finished yet, but I always managed to finish it. Only once did we ever go with nine games when we couldn't find another opponent.

We have had other problems like polio. We had been undefeated so far in football. We were to play the sixth game, when polio struck, and games with Steubenville and Liverpool and Lisbon were cancelled. Three of the biggest games of the schedule and we had to cancel them because of polio. We lost about \$10,000 in football, we didn't recover for years. That was when Ben Barrett was coaching.

M: What year was that?

C: That was 1950. Then we had a flu that closed a lot of schools here at one time. We lost a couple games that way, we were able to pick another game up. We picked the game up with West Branch and had a very good game then. Another time we lost another game through Wellsville had some sickness one time, so we went out and picked up Brookfield. They had had twenty-four straight victories when Tony Mason was coaching up there, and when Earl Bruce was here. We charged \$1 a head that night and we had 8,000 people pour in there. Salem beat them 21 to 7. So we were able to pick up some games sometimes when they were cancelled. We were always able to get a good home game. Brookfield was tough that year and West Branch was good the year they came in extra. So it took a lot of digging and hustling.

I know some of these schools love leagues because they can make their golf schedules, their girls basketball schedules, everything in that league is just automatic. Where Salem has always been out looking for games. Since Salem is a very likeable place to come into to play, we have always been able fill our schedules without having a league to do it. One advantage of not having a league is people see an awful lot of new faces

coming into Salem that they never get if they were in a league because there is only room for two or three outside teams in most of the leagues that I know. We can change them all the time. With that new face and another new opponent, the fans seem to like it here. I think that over the years they got used to it. There is no particular crowd behind a football league right now, but they do want to stay in the Big Eight, I know that.

M: Now you mentioned in the afternoon just one instance that the phone might ring and it might be somebody from the booster club, or some parent upset. I would like to ask you what some other pressures would have been, say from the public. What was the pressure that they would exert on athletics?

C: The public was very good to me over the years. I had some, once in awhile, a little pressure maybe from somebody wanting to play Alliance all the time in football. We got beat by Alliance many years in a row there and it wasn't bringing in the money. Everybody said you would have a full house. In fact, the last time we played Alliance we split \$250 a piece. So I was kind of against playing out of our class, but an awful lot of people put the pressure on to play Alliance. A lot of them put the pressure on to get in the Steel Valley league, which would be absolutely out of our class playing those teams over there Friday after Friday after Friday. Our enrollment is not even measured with them. By the same example, Girard had to drop out of the Steel Valley, Campbell is dropping out, several of the schools have had to drop out because their enrollments are dropping and the other Steel Valley schools are growing. So they had pressure for changing that a little bit but fairly no pressure in basketball ever.

I had pressure once in a while about staying to our colors in our uniforms. That is very important to some people who have been here all their lives. Red and black. We don't have enough red and black. We went to all white uniforms at one time. I got a little pressure on that.

Never any pressure from the fans on basketball, except that back in those days when the old gym was there, it was just a ticket shortage. They would call you day and night. I had to have my phone taken out and put an unlisted number in because I got called day and night for tickets on games down there in the old gym. It happened a few times in the new gym at the high school before they added the extra 2,000 seats, total 4,000. But the pressures came mainly from things like that and never from school or coaches.

Once in awhile a pressure by a parent calling up and

saying why was his kid not playing. He played regularly for three years and then we changed coaches, and this other coach came in and didn't see that boy the same way. I had several instances of that. I told them that I spent my time in administration, I was not a coach, I wasn't going to change any coach's attitude. If any coach changed his players, I never interfered with whom he played, or how he played, or what he called. They stayed away from my end of it and that's why we got along so beautifully over the years.

M: What about the administration? Did they ever have any qualms about you?

C: The administration was fine. . . I started out with Mr. Kerr, the superintendent, and went for twenty-eight years with him, and with Mr. Springer, the principal, for six years, and then Mr. Ludwig, the new principal, was great for all the years that he was there. I had the greatest cooperation from Kerr and Ludwig. Then we had two or three principals who didn't stay too long. I didn't get too well acquainted with them. One stayed three years, another stayed one. I got along with them excellently though. I didn't know them as well as I did Mr. Kerr and Mr. Ludwig but all were efficient men. Mr. Pond and Mr. Marra came. The cooperation was 100 percent again, great cooperation. Never interfered, gave me good advice, backed you up, and that is the thing I found in Salem so many years, they back you up.

Because one superintendent came here, I don't know if I need to mention his name or not, he came in and wanted to change things around a little bit. He thought athletics was a bit too prominent and interfered a little bit with Mickey McGuire (grade school athletics). He didn't want to cut off Mickey McGuire, it was just misunderstood. I got a little pressure in that. Why was a man tinkering with Mickey McGuire for when that was the basis for future athletes and things like that.

But, all in all, the administration here at Salem has been supportive. They have stayed many, many years because they are good men and because they knew what to do and they knew how to do it and they knew how to get along with the public. So the administration was my number one backing all the years I was there. I couldn't be happier than that. I have been in a school before I came to Salem where I couldn't say that, but I certainly can say that since I have been in Salem the forty-two years have been pleasant.

The Booster's Club in Salem have been very good to the high school teams. The Booster's Club are unlike the administration in that they change quite often. The president is only in there a year and his directors

maybe two or three years, so you have a different clientele all the time to work with. Some of the Boosters have been excellent and great clubs, and accomplished great things in their time. It was easier to raise money certain times; we had good teams and it was easier to raise money. Then maybe we would have a bad season or two and some Boosters would get in without too much experience and they would get pretty tough on them because the money wasn't coming in like it should have been. Some of our coaches might get a little restless if they weren't getting as much as another coach. This happened several times in the past, not recently because they have it on a real good scale now. But I have always looked at Boosters as taking their time to do something soon for Salem High kids. I could never run down a Booster Club. Most of them, as I say, did an awful lot. As I say, they took their time and energy.

The only criticism I ever have on them, and it's general everywhere, is that a lot of Boosters came to the meetings when their children were in school and playing athletics, and then when their children leave high school they're not as active. But that is natural everywhere. I think I would have probably been the same way. They always had a core there of fifteen to twenty that have stayed throughout the years and they have loved it. As I say, the changes in directors or the changes in presidents or vice presidents they looked at the school athletics in a little bit different way. All in all, the time is spent and things like that. The kids of Salem have certainly benefited from what the Boosters have done. They have taken them on trips, they have provided uniforms that the school couldn't buy at the time, they have cooperated with us on parent's night, and have many a banquet for the kids, and took them to ball games. That all takes time, effort, and money.

A lot of Boosters probably would say that I wasn't the best athletic director in the state of Ohio and that I wasn't efficient at all times. That would be fair appraisal and I would say the same about them; that they were a fine group of backers. I would say mostly good. As I say, at times when under the circumstances we found out we had differences once in a while, but who didn't have differences in any club. I would give them an A plus over the years for what experiences I had in thirty some years that the Booster Club had performed. People downtown say, "Oh, the Booster Club are the worst knockers." Well, I have never heard of a Booster Club ever hiring a coach, but I have heard of them firing a coach. They have their opinions just like anybody else. Our Boosters here have never stuck their noses in and tried to fire a man or hire one; they left that up to the board of education. I know of other towns where it has

been rough that had to have police booster meetings at times to bring order out of chaos when they wanted a coach to leave in that certain town, but not ours.

M: You have indicated that you have a chamber of commerce meeting after this interview.

C: Yes.

M: I would like to finish with just one question, and your response to it. In the many, many years as teacher and particularly the athletic director, the host of experiences and fond memories you have must be almost endless, but of that certain long list what few things, just right off the top of your head, stand out as highlights of the career of Fred Cope at the Salem Schools?

C: Getting to teach at Salem would be number one. Number two. . . The thing that I miss the most are the kids. It is almost unbearable to go up and practice teach up there and think that I am not going to be with those kids again tomorrow. I have never seen kids like Salem kids. I have taught at three other places, but I wouldn't trade them for anything. Of course, I miss the teacher associations the next best and the administration, of course. I am very proud to have been in a town that backed athletics the way they have. We had first, as I say, in floodlighting the field. We have had a memorial building down here that has been good for the kids. We have had administrations that permitted kids to play in the gyms on Saturdays. Our whole entity here is open more or less.

I think the levies have gone over so well in Salem. I think only one went down all the years I have been here, showing the good backing and the solid, conservative community we have here. It has been a pleasure to work for them. Everything I did extra, like lining the track and all those--which I wouldn't have had to do--I felt I was doing it for the Salem kids. That gives me my greatest satisfaction; if I have helped them in any way, shape, or form. When they tell you when you go back up there that they miss you, it's pretty tearjerking.

M: Mr. Cope, thank you very much.

C: Yes sir.

END OF INTERVIEW