

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Salem Schools Project

Personal Experience

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FRIEDA PELLEY

Interviewed

by

James McNeal

on

November 22, 1975

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: FRIEDA PELLEY

INTERVIEWER: James McNeal

SUBJECT: Salem Education Association, E.S. Kerr,
Fourth Street School

DATE: November 22, 1975

M: This is an interview with Frieda Pelley for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Salem Schools, by James McNeal, at 1787 Whinnery, Salem, Ohio, on November 22, 1975, at 1:00 p.m.

I would like to start out with some comments from you with regards to personal background. The first question would be how you got involved in education in the first place.

P: Well, that's simple, I just decided I was going to be a teacher, I guess.

I went to college. Well, I graduated from high school in 1930. I went two years at Ohio University. That was right at the worst of the Depression but you don't remember anything about that, of course. Then at that point you automatically you got a two year certificate, having gone two years, for elementary. Jobs were very hard to come by. Anybody that had a job really stuck to it because they were very hard to find.

I ran around--this was in Washington County, my home was in Washington County--all over the county trying to find a job. I finally had one depending on the passage of a levy. It didn't, the school didn't open because the levy had failed. I guess that is no new story nowadays either. Of course, it didn't open until after the election in November. It was a little town, just a tiny little town, named Warner. They had a two-room

school; the first three grades had been in one room, and the fourth, fifth, and sixth in the second room. So, in order to economize, they combined the two rooms, put them all into one. I had forty-four, forty-five youngsters in six grades, to start with, and all jammed into one little room. Potbelly stove, just so close if you got it warm enough for the rest of the room, the children near it were roasted. I had that the first four years of my teaching. That is the only time in the history of that school it ever was like that.

After I left there, the teacher that took over said, "It's just impossible." So they divided it again. I don't know why I couldn't have said that either, but I didn't. (Laughter) It was impossible. I had had no training whatsoever for primary work and started out with a fabulous salary of \$900 a year.

M: You say you had no training for elementary work?

P: For primary, mine was intermediate. I had my practice teaching observational and fifth grade. I had nothing for the primary level. School started in November and I think every kid had a cold. It was wet, cold, nasty weather. They go out running around. I got tonsillitis. I remember about a week or two after school started, the county superintendent came and I think if he would have said one word, I would have given up right there. Because I was just actually too sick to even be working. That was one of those experiences. You live through it. I doubt very much if young teachers today have any idea . . . What would they do in a case like that, most of them? I don't know what they would do. People were desperate for work in those days.

I decided that I was going to try and get a little more money someplace, some way. So, I joined a teachers agency. I don't remember the name of it. It was out of Columbus. I got a notification late in the summer. We had no contracts by the way. We worked on faith, that was all there was to it, just in hopes you would get the money eventually. We did, but it took awhile sometimes. Really, the fact that the levy passed didn't mean that the taxes were being paid on time or anything like that. Because people just didn't have the money to do what they might have done. I had no contract to meet or anything.

I got word, a call, to come to Damascus. The salary was to be \$1,200 a year. Which was really \$300, when you are talking \$900, that is a twenty-five percent increase right there. Depending on which way you figure. So I came to Damascus and taught in Damascus three years at \$1,200 a year. I had first and second

grade at Beloit for three years. I really got into primary work whether I liked it or not. There again I had a great big group of children, about forty to forty-five first and second graders all in one room.

So, then that took me up until 1940. Then I got married. When you married then you were just automatically out of a job and that was all there was to it--for a woman. They had a test case on a Sebring case a few years later and she was reinstated. That didn't affect me because it came too late.

So, I was out a couple of years, did a little bit of substituting. Then in that period of time World War II came along, and they were getting a little hard up for teachers at that point. I was approached by a board member to come to Westville; that was in Smiths Township, in Mahoning County. It was a one room school. It has been made into a residence now. You would never know it was one room brick school. I had eight grades in there, but a very small enrollment. That was probably the easiest teaching experience I have ever had in my life. They were nice kids, and there was only about eighteen children in eight grades, and very good support from the board, and the families, and all of that. You could combine your classes and work things out to suit yourself pretty much.

Then my husband began working at the Electric Furnace. I had been there three years, because I came to Salem in the fall of 1943. I was having to go in one direction to work and he was having. . . We lived in Damascus. And he another. We decided if I could get some work in Salem we would move to Salem, because we had a chance to get an apartment. So, I came in and I . . . The young man, I don't recall his name, never met him, was in the service so I took over the job he had at the junior high. It was health and science. That was in 1943. I have been in Salem ever since, until I retired.

As far as . . . Warren was principal at that time. In this town, I tell you, sometimes I think it doesn't pay to be so willing to fall in line with what somebody asks of you. I taught math, and I taught science, and I taught art. The last five years I was at Riley in elementary.

Starting to teach art was rather a strange situation. Another teacher had been teaching in elementary with secondary certification. The law changed and she . . . Years ago it used to be that if you were a high school teacher it didn't make any difference as long as you were a high school teacher, you were supposed to be allowed to do anything in preference to . . . An ele-

mentary teacher couldn't do the high school work. So, she had secondary certification and I had elementary. I was approached with this idea which was . . . Oh, the art teacher had gone. Well, Ethel Headrick had been the art teacher for years. You probably don't remember her and she died. Then he another lady for a couple of years and she left. So, Warren came to me and wanted to know if I would teacher her. Teach her to teach art now and carry a full class on myself which was pretty preposterous. I said, "Well, why don't I take the art and let her take the science." The art wasn't a full-time thing. Take some of the science and she could take study hall. I had a lot of material lined up that she could get started on the science with, if she wanted to use any of them. So, he said that suited him. He didn't know if I would want to do the science. I had always introduced art into anything I taught. It didn't make any difference what it was there was always plenty of room for that. So, I started to teach art. Well, in the meantime, anytime I went back to summer school I took a course of art just because I wanted to more or less. That is the way I started in with the art work. Eventually it built up until it was just a full-time thing. I guess I must have spent about, let's see, probably from the beginning about ten years with the art. Then I came to the new place, the junior high now. I couldn't see this program. Of course, I had ninth grade art along with the seventh and eighth until they moved the ninth graders to the high school. They introduced the business of rotation where you just had these children for art for a short period of time, then they switched to something else. You got new ones again. Is that still?

M: Yes, we still have that in effect.

P: Well, to me that just seemed like a whole lot of nothing because these kids wouldn't have a chance to get even half-way going until they were switched over to something else. You got somebody else in there. I was kind of disillusioned with that. There was math and so I taught that.

In meantime I was going on. I had transferred to Kent and I was going on to school every . . . Well, I guess, most every summer. I had also worked into . . . Working toward a major in English. I taught that until the last five years of my teaching. That is still a sore spot with me. I think the way that was handled, while it might have been legal and all of that, was handled very poorly because I didn't know, wasn't informed. I don't mind mentioning his name because I think I'll never have any liking or respect for the man in my life. That is Paul Smith who was superintendent at that time. He had a lot of other people in this town

who feel about the same way about it. The first thing that I knew that I was to go to Riley was that I got the notice in the fall just before school started. No forewarning of it whatsoever and he knew quite well that I was supposed to take over eighth grade English that year. We had talked about it. I had gone and gotten the books and the seventh grade for background. I had made out a whole series of lesson plans, so I would start off well. I was furious. I don't mind telling anybody I was furious. It was so moronic and I told him so. I told him politely that I would be here after he was gone from this town, and I was.

I was fortunate in . . . When I went through Riley, Earl B. Smith--I don't know if you remember him or not--about the finest principal there ever was. He had got about the same treatment when he was switched to Riley from junior high. He set up junior high. He set up that junior high when it was moved into, including the ninth grade and all of that. That is the thanks he got from it from Paul Smith. Anyway, he was principal over at Riley and I got a beautiful class of celebrated children, fourth grade. I hadn't had anything to do with elementary work in all those years but these kids were wonderful. I had them . . . Took them from the fourth grade through the fifth grade. A delegation of mothers came to me and wanted to know if I would take them through the sixth grade. I felt that I was getting to attached to them and they to me. They were going to have to go to junior high and they had better find out there was somebody that did things differently than I did before they hit junior high. Because then they would be hit with several teachers. So, I declined to do that. My situation at Riley was very pleasant. Riley is a nice school, always has been. That is about it, that is how I arrived in Salem.

M: If we could maybe back up and hit some of these items you have mentioned specifically. You mentioned when you were in Sebring, which was just prior to coming to Salem . . .

P: No, I wasn't in Sebring. Beloit.

M: Beloit, prior to coming to Salem, there was still this business about married women either not teaching or if you married while you were teaching you were just to assume that you wouldn't have a job anymore. How did women feel about that? Did they just accept it?

P: I think it made a lot of old maids out of a lot of teachers, for awhile at least. I mean if you couldn't afford to quit, why, you just didn't get married. Beyond that the teachers were easily come by. There were probably more teachers than jobs and you didn't

have a whole lot of choice. I don't think people liked it, I'm sure I didn't. Not only that but if you married secretly they had a claim on your money. Supposed you taught three or four months and it was discovered you were married.

M: Forfeited.

P: Yes, forfeit what ever you had already made, and supposedly refund it. I don't know how they would go about getting it if you didn't have it, but that was the way it was. I don't know, I don't think women teachers liked it. There just was no way around it because teachers weren't in any kind of a bargaining position in those times, really. If there was a case where a woman had an ailing husband, or some hardship, or something like that, perhaps she might be allowed to teach. It was a rare thing.

M: Generally not acceptable?

P: Oh yes, every place. Not only just here in this area but everywhere, this was the thing. As far as I know.

M: You mentioned that your husband then got a job with the Electric Furnace here in Salem, which made it expedient for you, if possible, to get a job in this area. Even though that was the case, did you know any staff members or administration prior to that or you just come on as cold?

P: I just came and saw Mr. Kerr and he said, "Go. You can get a job at junior high report to Loren Early." And I did.

M: Was it that easy? You walked in and got a job?

P: Yes, because it just happened to be open. A young man was called to service. It was in the summer, during the summer. I don't recall exactly how long before school began.

M: You mentioned 1943. Of course that was the year I was born. That would be thirty-two years ago. The war then precipitated a lot of things, number one the acceptance of married women and also a chance for you to almost walk in off the street so to speak.

P: Well, of course I really was not a stranger to Salem as far as that part of it was concerned because I had been . . . I really knew nobody in the teaching area here in Salem, or board members or anything else, it was just a question of . . . There were married women on the teaching staff at junior high at that point. Now Salem, apparently, wasn't or hadn't been that

strict about it because I know that there were several. Two or three, at least I can think of, married women teaching at junior high at that time. I'm not sure how many were there. Margaret Baker for one, and Mrs. Ross but she was a widow. Mrs. McCarthy but she was a widow or a divorcee. Most the rest of them were single women that were women teachers. However, Effie Cameron and Ann Connors I think had spent their lifetime teaching in junior high. Do you remember them?

M: I remember the names. Holland's sister.

P: She taught over fifty years. She is a very, very lovely person.

M: I had a long chat on one tape with Laura Mae Whinnery and she went at length about Effie Cameron. Some other people have very fond memories of her.

P: She was a very . . . She was a delightful person to work with. A marvelous influence on the kids. She was gentile, of course, you know, she has quaker background. She was a very nice person. She and I were next door to each other in homerooms for quite a long time.

M: You mentioned when you applied for a job in 1943 that you naturally had to go through the superintendent at that time, E.S. Kerr. Everybody that I have talked to now, in the ten or eleven tapes that I have done, somehow or other brings that name up. Would you care to make some comments, any thoughts or feelings?

P: He was never anything but kind to me. He really was a very nice person. I used to enjoy seeing him . . . Of course, I would be up in the back room with the art classes. I would look up and here would be Mr. Kerr wandering around watching what the kids were doing. I wouldn't even know he was in the room sometimes until I happened to notice him. He was a different sort of person than you might think of as a superintendent. He was . . . I guess you would call him paternalistic. He just looked after his teachers and us to the best of his ability. I always felt that if I had a problem and I wanted to talk to Mr. Kerr about it, I could go talk to Mr. Kerr. There would be no question about it. I think as far the school board at that point was concerned any teacher situations they left up to him pretty much. That was about the sum of it. I don't recall what year he did retire. I always liked him very much.

M: It seems as though the general feeling is that there hadn't been any like him in before or since.

P: I don't suppose there ever was anyplace really.

M: One of a kind.

P: Yes, he was a stately, kindly little gentleman. He was all right. I recall he came over and walked into the room one day--second year I taught here in Salem--and he said, "Well, I'm going to recommend to the board tonight that you be put on continuing contract. I said I don't think there will be any question what you'll be given, continuing contract. I thought I had better tell you before you saw it in the paper." I never dreamed of it because it wasn't really . . . I hadn't been here long enough that it was mandatory. It was just his idea and that was all there was to it. He said continuing contract so . . .

M: That was it. Other teachers, other individuals, have told me that with regard to contracts, that negotiations did exist, but it was always you and the superintendent.

P: Pretty much. I think you could scarcely call it negotiation. I think it was just depending on . . . If I thought I had something I wanted to talk to him about I did it on a personal basis. There was no group thing going that I was aware of. We had teachers association but there wasn't all that much involvement as far as any formal negotiation was concerned. That didn't come until after we organized SEA. Now, Mary will be able to tell you but it was not . . . I have been retired six years and it wasn't until after I was over at Riley, at least the second year after I was over at Riley, that this came about and I was there five years. So, that would make ten years ago. I'm not sure it was within that second year or not, but it could have been, that we began working. Mary was . . . Was she president of SEA then? I guess so, that year. No, it wasn't SEA. We changed the name from Salem Teacher Association. So, I was building representative from Riley. I was elected the second year I was there and I continued as a building representative as long as I was there then for a total of four years. Harriet Percival was from Buckeye, she was a building representative and she put us on legislation, on the legislative committee. So, we were the ones that worked away at the idea of organizing a new . . . They had to revise the whole constitution in order to incorporate a negotiating policy, which is pretty involved. It would be acceptable to the board and to the teachers as well. This was a very new thing in the state, as far as that was concerned, and very little of that had come about as long ago as that. We got help from OEA and I think there was some activity in Michigan at that point. We were able to get a few things together that would give

us some insight into it. We worked hours, and hours, and hours after school getting this thing together. Reading what we had to read, you know, and then we had to present it to the membership. It had to be presented to the board and I think one of the . . . About the only thing that we had that really caused any controversy, as far as the teachers were concerned, was how to elect or how to come about with members for the negotiating committee. Some of the people felt that they should be appointed entirely by the president. Others felt that they should all be elected by the membership at large. So, we compromised. I forget the proportion now but some are directly appointed and some are elected. I don't know how it stands now but that was a workable situation. It wasn't very long thereafter until there was an occasion for this negotiating committee to work with the board on salary increases and a salary schedule.

M: All the rest of it.

P: This was a neat thing because I know Mary was approached by other school systems as to how ours was all about. It was kind of something of a model I guess.

M: I would like to expand on this particular area, development of the SEA and your part in it, but just to back up one second now. Since basically individuals conferred with the superintendent with regard to all problems, certainly with regard to salary, did you find or do you remember any cases where individuals next year perhaps got more money, other teachers didn't? There had to have been some evaluation system in the superintendents mind to be able to give one person more money and maybe some other guy not get it.

P: Well, of course there was no salary schedule. There was no way of knowing what somebody else got unless they told you. You didn't know what your friend was making or anybody else. One teacher might come into the system be hired for a certain sum and somebody else might be hired for more or less. There was nothing to go on really.

M: It was somewhat of a merit system then. Only superintendent Kerr was the one who doled out the decision.

P: Whatever he, and your principal, public seemed to think of you or whatever. I came here for \$1,400. No, \$200 increase. Then things began to pick up slowly but it wasn't until after SEA really got going that thing really began to look appreciably better. I think there was a salary schedule of sorts, I'm sure there was, before that. I think that there was . . . I don't recall specifically but there had to have been before

then. It wasn't adequate but then it was a period of time there you just didn't know. The only way you would know it would be if you just happened by the information, what somebody else was making. If they were smart and they were making more then they figured somebody else was, just keep their mouth shut. They were better off because they didn't stir up any controversy.

M: That was my next point, perhaps that was the superintendents way of maintaining morale. It was sort of a secrecy type of thing, so nobody really knew what the situation was?

P: I don't think that you would have been excluded. I mean, of course, anything like this, any public expenditures, is a matter of public record and if you wanted to find out you could have.

M: It was available.

P: There was no you could have been kept away from this. Public expense is public record and they are subject, always were subject, to school examiners.

M: I wonder whether teachers ever did that. I imagine some of them probably did.

P: It may be they did, I never did. I can't be positive when this occurred but there was an effort before this period I am speaking of when SEA . . . The big step that we attained there was not only a salary schedule but negotiations. It was at that point we had . . . Everything was organized, there was impasse, and arbitration. That was all in the picture. I don't know if this system, if these teachers, have ever come to impasse. I don't believe I have ever heard of.

M: Just last year.

P: Oh did they?

M: Yes, just last year. We had a big meeting just this week, Wednesday night, about this equal yield money. Believe me that's as close to a union meeting as I have ever come since I left the A & P, the butcher's union which I was in for several years. I am amazed in my ten years, knowing that teachers went to Mr. Kerr more or less on a merit type community, principal, superintendent area you got more money to a situation now where teachers in Salem talk strike. It is interesting.

P: Well, I think it is kind of sad when you have to be pushed to the point where you are talking strike.

However, if that is the situation. If it is a reasonable demand. I don't feel . . . Of course, this Furgerson Act is so outmoded it is ridiculous. If teachers are pushed to the point where a strike is the answer then they should be entitled to strike, just like anybody else. If the public doesn't want that then they should see to it their teachers are treated as professionals; act like professionals, get treated like professionals. I mean you don't go around telling the bar association or the American Medical Association and so forth how to conduct their business. I think it's too bad.

One thing I do think though, it really appalled me, the fact that this levy failed, just can't figure it. Because to me it seems like any administration, and any board of education can propose what they had in mind, two new elementary buildings plus numerous other things, without any particular increase in taxation whatsoever. What until one thing is paid for and then start another and then have it turned down. It is a shame.

M: There were a lot of other things, factors. I think the strike here in town that has extended and some other things sometimes act as catalysts. Also tax payers look for reasons to vote against and they can use these things whether they really have any effect or bearing or not. I hear this talk all around town. Times are bad and the extended strike and what not.

P: I doubt very much if the increase in tax on this property, my home here, would have been more than maybe \$5 a year or so. What's that?

M: Yes right, I understand.

P: I think that people are very shortsighted when they don't keep their school system . . . Even though they are property owners. When they don't keep their school system up today and as good as they can possibly can make it. It is going to reflect on property value right away. Can't last long. I have often wondered if teachers as individuals realize what a political clout they could have if they just stick together.

M: Well, this is basically what it arrived at last Wednesday night. The OEA man said to them, "Look here is the money that has come in. Your teacher's salary represent fifty-nine percent of the total budget and you have got this \$700,000 or \$800,000 coming in. Fair share should be fifty-nine or sixty percent of that distributed among the teachers." It ended up being somewhere in the neighborhood of about \$15,000 to \$20,000. A \$300 raise on the base. Like I say in the

ten years I have taught, from 1966 until this current year, I have seen a drastic change. This is why I am so interested in how things were . . . Not before there was a teacher's organization. Teachers today that I work with can't imagine going to a superintendent, and going into his office, closing the door, coming out either with the same money or more money, or another teacher coming and closing the door and coming out and not getting any more money. That's not all that long ago.

P: I think that . . . I know I got some raises and I never even . . . They were little but those were the times when . . . I didn't ask for them, it just came. I am sure we had some sort of a salary schedule established before SEA. The major gain there was the bargaining instrument that we instigated. Then, of course, salary began to pick up. They have a long way to go yet. I thought, "Well gee, if teachers would all get together, their husbands, their wives, their fathers, their mothers, their children, their close friends." You wouldn't even have to worry about close friends. A lot of people have children that are voting age, especially since it is eighteen. They could swing any election in this town they wanted to.

M: Is it now the nationally the second largest union of--we use the phrase, they use the term union--in the United States?

P: Well, I suppose if you put the union affiliated people as well as the NEA you would probably have the largest, most people in the . . . I still think the NEA and OEA can do an awful lot for teachers and they do.

M: It is still difficult for me, again looking only at ten years teaching, I started at \$4900. I still have my contract at home. It was only ten years ago. Of course out with my masters degree in this coming spring, with no pay increase, I will be making an excess of \$13,000. I don't want to talk about . . .

P: Oh, that is fabulous. If you would get a \$200 or \$300 raise . . . Maybe you can get a \$200 or \$300 raise across the board. That was good back over the years. Your cost of living has advanced so rapidly. Well, you can't go out and buy a home today. It is hard to buy a home today if that is the only income you got with \$13,000 a year and pay for it, and the interest. Besides all the other things that you need, prices of food and everything else. I really don't think it is so much more than you have anymore than those of us who were working for \$5,000 a few years back.

M: Years ago. Among your experiences, speaking now

strictly in Salem--coming here in 1943 and teaching at the old Fourth Street building, and where I am now, and Lincoln Avenue, and Riley, and so forth--I would like to pick out of there the years that you spent at Fourth Street and ask you, first of all, what feelings and thoughts you have about the building itself? Certainly everybody you talk to now that the building is gone, that went there as a student, or taught there as a teacher, has some thought or other.

P: Well, it had character. I would say that. I mean it was an interesting building. It was a fire trap to say the least. When you considered that it had nothing but wood floors and they had been oil soaked for umpteen years. It had this circle stairway, which would have been just a beautiful flue, from basement to roof--if I had ever gotten gone in it. It had nothing but outside fire escapes which I have seen icy as it can be when there was freezing rain. That would have been kind of bad in case there had been a fire.

It was a pleasant building to teach in. Of course when I first came here this was a combination of the grade school and junior high. Junior high occupied the second floor. Well, it never was any other way while junior high was at Fourth Street. Then whatever rooms in the basement were available. The gym was built on after I came here.

M: On the north side?

P: Yes, and it was a nice little gym. Prior to that for all basketball we went to Memorial Building. Intramural sports were a great thing at that point. So, we had to go to Memorial Building for that. Very little coaching, the kids just played against, more or less. Back over the years it has been your homeroom teacher--your homeroom was very important to a kid--your homeroom teacher. Those were your kids. You stuck by them and you would better them in every way you could; their interests. You were the one that they turned to more so than anybody else. If you can inspire those kids for getting out there and doing something, then do it. I always enjoyed a homeroom. You will somehow remember your homerooms more inside you than you do the other classes that you have throughout the day. If you work with them.

We had in Fourth Street, back in the days of World War II, we had paper drives. Those kids lugged in tons and tons and tons of paper. We baled it up and that was picked up by truck. We had door stamp drives. First year I was there I was put in charge of that, just like that. I organized it on a homeroom basis and the room that brought in most money on any given weekend got a

little American Flag stuck outside their door until somebody else won it. Kids brought in quite a lot of money. The stamp they stick on a little book until they had enough to get a bond. Those were all extra-curricular things.

Then I was assigned eighth grade girls club. They had a club system, you probably remember that. On alternate weeks you had boys club or girls club and the other week you had a hobby club of some description; stamp collecting and whatever it was. I had the eighth grade girls club, all girls in the eighth grade. I didn't know what they might want or be interested in. So, it was more or less a discussion group. You know there wasn't any thing for program, no money available. You couldn't hire anybody else to come in or anything like that. They had their other clubs on the other Friday afternoon for any particular interest field they might have had. So, I put out this question box and the girls were to drop in questions about what they wanted to talk about. I had a pretty good idea of what it probably would be but I know I hardly didn't believe it. They didn't know anything about sex. If they did they were so misinformed it was ridiculous. They didn't know anything about their own bodies. Scared to death when it came to menstruation, some of those girls would just be petrified. Of course, it came about two or three years to late but better late then never. I said, "Well, if that is what the girls want to talk about that is what we will talk about."

Anyway, then it went into . . . These kids have the idea. They want to try their wings but they really don't want to do all the things they say they do sometimes. They want to be told what is what once in awhile. Different parents just realized it. So, we talked about those things. I run into girls today . . . Well, they are not girls anymore, they are young women and have families of their own. Not all just little tykes either. That is one thing they seem to remember more about junior high then about any class I ever had, was that eighth grade girls club.

M: Somebody took the time to relate these things to them. They do have what they call a project "Growing Up." I don't call it a program. Mr. Cope and a couple of counselors, I think for about a week, go out through the sixth grades. Then one unit of just a couple weeks or so in the science classes cover that sort of thing. It seems to be sort of, "Here it is, let's look at it, study it for a week, and forget about it." It is such a cold presentation.

P: Well, this was one thing and it went all over the entire school year and it developed. Another thing in

the few years that . . . It went on there for a few years. We had joint meetings with the boys club. I don't know what they did in the boys club, not very much along that line. Then the boys and girls both had their points of view. Of course, you got girls in the eighth grade and they are so much farther along physically. They decide they want a boy for a boyfriend, he hardly knows what has hit him. It was good experience for them. It also gave them a chance to express their own opinions about things.

M: You said Laurel Early didn't meet with full agreement on this.

P: I don't think he attacked it but I think he was kind of flabbergasted that here these little darlings wouldn't be thinking about anything like that. Also, I think he was a little scared of the whole thing. You know, what the community might say. I didn't have any repercussions.

M: It wasn't an underground operation?

P: No!

M: You were smart enough not to make a big thing.

P: No, it just happened as it happened and I never labeled it.

M: Sort of a natural outgrowth of kids interests.

P: It was just eighth grade girls club, that was all there was to it. I did get a series . . . I did get about eight I think. It was in the library based on a recommendation on this sort of thing, circulated among the girls. I told them . . . They all had a chance to read it, read a copy of it. I suggested that they take it home, give it to their mothers, and let her read it. Then they would have a taking off point. I don't know why it so hard for parents to talk sense to their kids along this line. It seems to be difficult. They are just as embarrassed about talking to their children, seems to me as the children are to go to them.

M: Which should be the primary source of information.

P: Yes, but if they don't get it there where are they going to get it? Going to get it some place.

M: Right but there seems to be a powerful--as you mentioned earlier--a powerful organized effort to not have it come by way of the schools either. So, it is a good question as to where that leaves it for most kids.

P: Out in limbo, that is just the place for it. Certainly it didn't get taught in church. Only a percentage of kids go to church to start with. I don't know that all parents are adequate to handle it. Some parents are their own children's worst enemies in some sense, you know that as well as I do.

M: While you were at Fourth Street--and I remember coming up there as a seventh grader--you had art at that time at the east end of the main floor.

P: Was I at the end of the hall or the room to the left?

M: That east end was off center I guess. Looking over these Quakerette's, two of which I recognize because they were there . . . They were produced when I was there. They bare your name as being involved with the production of this booklet, the Quakerette. It was about a twenty-five or thirty page, soft bond publication.

P: It grew a little bit as time went on.

M: Can you tell me something about your work with that, and how you got involved in it, what it took to get that thing published?

P: Well, this is not any small thing for kids that age to do. We not only had the Quakerette Annual but we had a Quakerette that was published every six weeks, a little paper. Of course the . . . Lily McCarthy was the head of it. At that time she was the sponsor of it. A little art never hurts, I mean a little illustration. We just gradually . . . I don't know, I was just asked to do it and we did it. That is about the amount of it. If we knew there was an article on . . . Of course you have to have a layout with this business. You have got to . . . Where can you fit this in? How much space are you going to have? It was very little of it. Now this first issue here, I don't know whether this is the first issue of the Quakerette Annual or not. This is the first one I have. I don't think we had them at the very beginning when I came there.

Some of these children are pretty good artists. You have observed that I'm sure. They have a chance to make use of it.

M: Well, this was a very, very important thing to me, I know of other students. So many junior highs didn't have anything. Of course, even today where I teach there is a little paper that comes out through a journalism class but in the ten years I have been there, there have been next to nothing. This more or less developed and then dropped off. I wonder why it

- dropped off. Was it because teachers didn't want to take the time?
- P: Somebody didn't do it or weren't asked to.
- M: It seems students are always willing. As you know very well with 700 or 800 kids you got all the talent in the world for this type of thing.
- P: Why of course! Best writing experience they can have. Then, of course, you had homeroom and you could change those over the year. It didn't have to be the same person. A lot of children could become a part of it. I don't know, either your principal didn't care to pursue it and didn't find somebody else to do the job, or there was no one available, or whatever. I don't know what the answer is.
- M: It was the first quality job. The photography, the pictures, the offset or whatever type of printing was used, and so forth, puts these in a category by themselves. There is nothing equivalent--at least in my teaching experience--to compare with it. So you probably have a lot of fond memories in getting that off the ground and organized.
- P: I use them for reference books--was he in that class or what class was he in--and I'll go back and look at them.
- M: Much like what Laura Mae does with the quaker collection. You have had a lot of years experience. Thirty-five you said teaching, all total. Good many of those in Salem. Most of them in Salem.
- P: Most of them in Salem, all but ten.
- M: As you look back over all those are there any particular thing, or any one thing, that stands out in the years of Salem that particularly satisfies you that you can think of right now, or would you just say that the entire experience was worth it?
- P: Well, certainly it was worth it.
- M: I don't mean financially, I mean satisfying.
- P: If I hadn't felt it was I certainly should have got out of it long, long since. People have such a thing about kids and how bad they are. I suppose Mr. and Mrs. Caveman might have said, "Well, do something about that kid next door," just like they do nowadays. I don't think this is any new thing. The kids are such a bad lot. There has always been a certain amount of bad feeling. I don't think they are any worse now than

they ever were. I can't imagine because there is so many good kids. You do hear of some things that kids do they shouldn't do but it has always been the case. I think that there are some things they are exposed to today that isn't good for them. I mean this drug influence has come into the picture. There aren't that many kids that take drugs around this town, I believe. Probably a few but you hear about that.

M: You generally found that it was that one single thing, the students, that made the job worthwhile.

P: Of course, what else.

M: So many people can't understand that.

P: If a teacher can not have fun somewhere along the line with a bunch of kids, they are quit. There ought not to be a day go by that what you have a real good laugh about something, or a real high point of enthusiasm about things.

M: Or maybe even a serious moment.

P: Or a serious, there is room for all of it. I feel that, I always do. The kids come here to play and in and out of here from the time they are toddlers. Even teenagers and afterwards. I have neighbor girl here and her boyfriend come and sit and chat. They are out of school now. I think if you leave yourself open to kids. If you let your kids know you are interested in them, they will respond.

M: Well, I'll tell you one of the things that has come out of this. I would like to have this recorded for whatever it might be worth to somebody, sometime. One of values of this project for me . . . I'm getting credit for it. I could look at it in that expedient way. In talking to teachers with as many years as you have had, and other teachers with other facets of the job, it has been rewarding to me. I have taught ten years but time I have thought, "Gee, maybe I ought to something else," or have a bad day.

P: Oh well.

M: It is refreshing to talk with you. It is beneficial to me to have come on to this particular project and realize that so many people have had so many fine years in the Salem school system.

P: I think that probably Salem is a very nice place to teach. I am sure. It is a nice community to begin with. You have all kinds of people here, nevertheless you have a friendly community. There is no place in

this town that I know that has so many things to do if somebody wants to do them. Of course the town decides. Various activities for grownups as well as . . . Well, there is things for young people to do to. The ones that moan about not having anything to do wouldn't do it if you handed it to them anyway. Most kids find plenty to do, more then enough. It is a nice community to begin with. I never had . . . Well, I wouldn't say . . . That would be a silly remark to make that I never had any problems with any parents. They were very few and far between.

M: Not enough to . . .

P: No, I never had what you would call "discipline problems" per se. I was set to with a kid now and then. If you don't have that you are being walked over sooner or later. I doubt very much if you have ever had any real serious problems dealing with parents of your children, very few of them.

M: Just one or two.

P: You expect that.

M: Yes, right. Generally if it was a continuous thing it got to be a matter of course, rather than the exception, I would have been long gone. That is a rewarding experience. I am very much satisfied. I hate to see some of what looks like potential animosity among the staff now. Getting back to collective bargaining, and power, and politics, and strength, and unity, and so forth, those have there advantageous.

P: Within reason.

M: Within reason. I see the possibility that there may be little less reason then is necessary among the staff right now. Based on your years of experience and your success and the ten short years that I have been teaching in my success, I hope that things can get straightened out and continue as they have in the past.

P: Well, I think that it would be very sad if even the word got about that there was a threat of a strike in this town.

M: It wouldn't be any good for anybody.

P: That is right. It would be any good for any of the teachers, it wouldn't be any good for the schools and the children. I wouldn't be any good for the community as a whole. I think things can be resolved reasonably.

M: Let's end our talk this afternoon on the positive note

of a thirty-five years fond memories and so forth that you have and also my thanks for sharing it with me this afternoon.

P: Well, I hope it has been helpful. It is just chit chat.

END OF INTERVIEW