

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Education in Youngstown

Personal Experience

O H 1080

KATHRYN LUEBBEN

Interviewed

by

Jeanne Ontko

on

April 28, 1981

## KATHRYN LUEBBEN

Kathryn Luebben was born on September 27, 1911 in Youngstown, Ohio, the daughter of Albert and Dorothy Luebben. She graduated from South High School and received a BA degree from Denison University in 1933. After further education at Case Western Reserve University and Kent State University, Miss Luebben received a Master of Arts in 1967. Her teaching career began at Jackson Elementary School. From 1938 until 1969, she taught a variety of subjects such as Mathematics, English, Business Practice and Spanish at Wilson High School. In the 1960's, Miss Luebben began to work on a library degree and was librarian at Wilson and subsequently joined the Boardman School System as a librarian from 1969 to 1974. Although retiring from teaching in 1974, Miss Luebben is presently working as a tour guide in the Arm's Museum. She has been a member of Youngstown PanHellenic, Delta Kappa Gamma, National Retired Teachers Association, Ohio Retired Teachers Association. Miss Luebben is an active member of the Boardman United Methodist Church and enjoys reading and traveling.

- O. This is an interview with Miss Kathryn Luebben for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Education in Youngstown, by Jeanne Ontko, at 5025 Forest Park Drive, on April 28, 1981, at 7 15 p m

Can you tell me something about your background, your family life, where you were born, your education, a little biography about yourself?

- L. I was born right here in Youngstown on the South Side. My father worked at Republic Steel and my mother was an accountant. Unfortunately, I was an only child. It was not planned that way, but that is the way things happened. But I was very fortunate in having cousins who were very close to me, especially one family of five. There was always one living at our house, or I was always over their house, so I really did not grow up alone. I attended the local schools here in town. I went to South High, and graduated from South High. I was interested in that time with elocution and speech, more of the back stage work.

I went to Denison University and I was planning to stay just two years because I was going to follow my mother and be an accountant. But I learned from my mother's experience and from interviews that I had, that in most cases, you would be back stage. You would never be out actually doing work; it would be run by the men. This is what was true in those days.

I stayed out at Denison University. I was always very, very much interested in English and had many, many hours of it. But I was taking math because I enjoyed math and wanted to teach it. I was told at that particular time down there, that I had come around when it was teaching time, that as long as there was a man in the building I probably would not get math, so I should do my practice teaching in English. But being a little bit on the stubborn side, I held out and did it in math. But I found out that what they told me down there was true. I very rarely got to teach math, only as a reward more or less.

- O. What grade school did you go to?

- L. I went to Monroe and Memorial, and Grafton and I was born on Carol Street.

- O. What made you decide to become a teacher? You said you liked English and Elocution.

- L. I really had no intentions of being a teacher. I was talked into it at the university, and, of course, you appreciate the difference in time. When I was there, I was really interested in being an accountant. My mother was, but mother always worked for small companies around, she never was connected with a large

organization in any way at all. I suppose I picked up the interest from her, but in my sophomore year, during the summer between my sophomore and junior year, I was inquiring around, and I went to two or three companies in town to see what possibilities there were. This is what I was told, because I was a woman, I would stay in the office. This did not particularly appeal to me.

O: Did you work while you were in college?

L: Yes. I worked here every summer, secretarial work for a real estate man, Mr Cort. Down at college I had small jobs in the dormitories and so on and so forth, and I worked in the library.

O: So you got a degree then in teaching right from Denison?

L: A Bachelor of Arts Degree. Denison is what is called a Christian College of Liberal Arts. This is exactly what it is because you have an all-around education. There are things you have to take which is sort of. This would never happen today. But when I graduated, you had to have so many hours of language, you had to have so many hours of science, you had to have so many hours of history, and so on and so forth. As a result, my certification looked as though I could teach anything. Because to teach in Ohio, the minimum is just sixteen hours. I do not know if this has changed or not.

O: I think it has.

L: Has it changed?

O: I think so.

L: I hope, because this is not good. For instance, I had sixteen hours in science. I had a four-hour course in astronomy. I had a four-hour course in botany and I had a four-hour course in geology. Believe it or not, I taught general science with that background. This is what I mean.

O: It is different now. You have to take more hours, like in history, you would have to take more hours of history.

L: A maximum, of course was only 24 hours in those days. I had majored in social science, history, English, and math. Of course, I had lots and lots of hours in math and English because I enjoyed them.

O When did you first begin teaching?

L I got out of Denison during the Depression and there were not very many jobs and so I did secretarial work. Then I started teaching. I graduated in 1933, and I started teaching in 1936.

O That was here in Youngstown?

L Yes

O What school was that?

L My first year was at North Jackson. I had elementary arithmetic from fifth grade to eighth grade. I was not certified to be in elementary school. I was certified for high school. But because they had set this up and departmentalized the departments over there, I qualified. It was just for one year, they could not leave me there. Then I was transferred to Wilson my second year.

O How long did you teach at Wilson?

L That would be from 1937 through 1969 when I went out to Boardman.

O When you first started teaching, what kind of techniques did you use? What would a typical day be like? How would you start the day? What subject would you start first?

L In the high school, of course, I was in one field. This is why I say things are so different today fortunately, in this way. I do not think the teachers have too great appreciation of this, of what our life was like and what their life is like today. Do not misunderstand me. I am very grateful I taught when I did because I enjoyed my teaching from beginning to end. I was very, very fortunate being put at Wilson High School because of the principal, George Vasko. He was way ahead of his time. It sort of tickles us today because all of these new renovations come up. The only thing that is different from what we were doing in those days was terminology.

While I was there, we taught what we called the core. There were about six or eight, I am not quite sure about that, there might have been more. High schools throughout Ohio were doing this. What we were doing was correlating subjects. There was a group of us working together. Today they call it can teaching. It is the same idea. Mr. Vasko was the type of person to whom you

could never say no. But you did things you did not believe you could do. I have always said, this is sort of funny, I suppose that I taught when nobody else wanted to teach at Wilson because Wilson just switched from      I had my dates wrong. I did not go to Wilson until 1938. They were just switching from a junior high to a high school.

The school opened, I think I am right, in 1929. I am not quite sure because I know that some of my classmates in the high school themselves paid for Wilson. So I am pretty sure it was there when I was in high school. But the teachers who were in there were all young teachers just out of college. It was a very young group because they were all new teachers. There were some I suppose that were much, much older.

Things have changed so drastically down through the years in teaching, I have no appreciation for their age when I think about it because they were outstanding teachers, and I enjoyed knowing them legally, and they gave me so much. Mr. Vasko would call you in and would say with a smile on his face, and say would you do this. This is how I got my math classes. He would say, "If you take this, I will give you a math class." I did not care what I did not think I could do.

The very first year I was there he called me in and he said that we were going to have to have a senior play that year. He asked me if I would like to take it. And I said, "No," he said, "Fine, you are going to." This is just the way he was, and as I say, you went along with him because he really was an unusual person, just an outstanding person. At the end of my first year, he called me in Monday and said, "I have a fellowship for you up at Western Reserve in May." This is what he did to tell me all the time.

When I first started to teach at Wilson, I went over there to teach business practice. I was called in by the superintendent, remember I was in the elementary school and was not certified for elementary. He called me in and said to me, "Fine you are going to learn to teach it." But actually it was not bad. I remember that there was a shorthand teacher there, and there were people of this type that were specialized who were teachers. What I did was Business, English, Business Math, Business Law, and all these things. Of course, I suppose my background gave me this.

I had to work awfully hard. We use to run into very long homeroom periods at Wilson at that particular time. I really do not know why. For a while, Wilson was just nine through twelve, then it was eight through twelve and then seven through twelve and it would switch back and forth all the time. You would get a homeroom in eighth grade, and you would keep them until they graduated as seniors. By the time they were seniors, you knew them very well, you knew their families. They knew you very well too. It was a very homey atmosphere.

You could not help but feeling that it was much, much better than this idea of guidance counselors today because the young people would go talk with the guidance counselor and felt a little strange, and they do not tell all

Usually they would come into homeroom and tell you everything. You knew and you could advise them so much better, so we had those long homeroom periods. Then you would go into your classes. As I said, I had different fields down through the years, so I do not know where you want me tell about

O You use to go to Wilson High School then. When you started, homeroom would be from what time? Do you recall?

L I cannot give you an exact time because I do not remember. But it seemed to me that ordinarily it would be about fifteen minutes from 8:00 to 8:15, but for some reason or other you would run into long periods. If there were assemblies or something special, you would run forty-five minutes.

O How many kids would you have?

L In homeroom? Our classes were never too large, but homerooms could be larger. You could have around forty, but not always. It was anywhere from thirty-five to forty. During that period the announcements came over the P.A. (Public Address System) from the office; more or less you would set up the day. Then you would go into your first period.

O Would you actually move to another classroom?

L No, I was very fortunate. I stayed where I was. My classes came to me. When I was able to, I would move. Very few of the teachers over at Wilson had to move around. Later on as the school grew then there was more of that. I was always very fortunate. At the time I went there, the school was not that large. So I got a room of my own. By the time it came to move around I was very fortunate to be one of the older teachers. So I never had to move. I taught English, Spanish, Science, Math and core.

O What grades were your favorite to teach?

L Anywhere from nine through twelve.

O Did you see any differences in those? Did you enjoy freshmen better or seniors

better? It is just surprising because sometimes when I talk to teachers, my one girlfriend is a teacher, and she does not like juniors or seniors. She likes freshmen and sophomores better. I talk to others who will not even teach freshmen and sophomores. I just wondered.

L: I never was too fond of eighth graders because at one time I had eighth graders I like seventh graders. There is something about eighth graders that I did not enjoy. Frankly, I like the ninth through twelfth. A good part of my teaching in the last few years was in Spanish. Of course, I had everything from tenth through twelfth. It would be a mixed group.

O: You taught Spanish too?

L: I taught Spanish, yes, before I went into library work. This is what I said. Over at Wilson all of the sudden after the war there was a great demand for Spanish, and there were three teachers, three of us, who had just minors in Spanish. Mr. Vasko kept calling us in and talking with us. The other two were men. I kept saying to the other teachers, "You know who is going to have to teach Spanish?" Sure enough one day he called me down and said that I was it. Again I got a math class because I took it. I got the junior Algebra class which I thoroughly enjoyed.

I think I worked ten times as hard as the students because I did not feel qualified. I had simply sixteen hours of Spanish with no direct methods. I went to Youngstown State University to be tutored. I do not know the name of the man who tutored me, but all he did was have me read for about fifteen minutes. Then he would grunt. Then I would leave. He never corrected me, he never said anything. What I wanted was conversation. Grammar was really no problem at all, but I was worried about conversation. I was not getting it. One of the teachers who taught out at Chaney, who I felt was an outstanding teacher, was a person I knew quite well from the organization that I belonged to. I called her and asked her if she would tutor me. I was very, very grateful because she set me up.

O: Who was that?

L: I will tell you later. I know her so well.

O: Why was there a demand for Spanish after the war?

L: After the war I do not know. Before we always had French; we always had Latin,



but those were the only two languages that we had at Wilson

O Was there German?

L No, no German I think Rayen had German I worked with her all the way through it I worked long and hard on Spanish. I worked every single night I am really thrilled to say that I probably have ten or twelve students who are teaching Spanish today much better than I ever did I really had to work awfully hard Wilson was the type of school that was always in for innovations as I said When the language labs came to town, they sent them out to our school South and Wilson got them They put them in two schools to try them out

What they did was put this language lab in our building and handed us fifty tapes to the French teacher and myself Jane Vanick was the French teacher She was very much qualified to teach French. She was a Latin teacher too We were on our own then That summer we went to two or three different conferences to learn something about it because Youngstown did not know anything about it That was in 1960 That was the year that I moved out here

I know that the landlord who owned this building lived upstairs, and he said that he would never vote down a teacher's levy He said that he never would because teachers work as hard as they do. I had to make my own tapes every night I had to prepare my lessons and grade papers and so on and so forth Then I would have to make one of those tapes which is not the idea, but this is what the administration wanted Of course, it was for my issues This is what they did They handed us these tapes, and if we were going to use that language lab, we had to have them Jane and I set it up so that we would not run into any conflicts in there and so no and so forth

O How about within the classroom? How did you teach Spanish?

L I tried to teach by the direct method, but unfortunately I was teaching Castellán because this is what I used I went to Mexico one summer I was very fortunate to have friends who lived down there The cook down there laughed at my Spanish He laughed and laughed and laughed I was there five weeks, and finally one day she said to me, "Now you speak Spanish " You realize it was not Castellán. I ran into trouble I could understand her if she talked slowly, but after a while I could understand her, but it took me five weeks So you see what I mean when I say I was not prepared to teach Spanish That was why I went into the library

O This was after 1960 then when you went into library work?

L Yes There was a group of us who ate fourth period over there at which there was not a lunch period It was a free lunch period We had classes So we ate together, and we enjoyed each other It was strange because it would be scheduled this way year after year, so we got to know each other quite well. One day the matter of salaries came up I had more hours because no matter what field I was into, I was always in summer school taking courses I practically had a Master's in English when I switched to Spanish So I started taking Spanish and so on and so forth Whenever I was teaching, the next year I would take that to school So I had many hours, but I did not feel that it is all that important in teaching. I am talking about teaching I realize the edge in getting jobs today and so on and so forth, but I still feel that degree is not that important

Anyway, we discovered that two of these men had less hours than I, but they were getting the same salary as if they had a Master's degree. We got to talking about it. We started talking about our hours. We discovered that I had many more hours than they did. They told me to go up and see the superintendent to find out because it would make a difference when I want to retire So I went up to see the superintendent He said to me that I was a woman by myself and that it was not that important to me I finally told him that what he was saying to me was that I cannot have what the men have I had to have a Master's degree in order to get it, and he said yes that was what he was saying I said that I was not going to get my Master's degree I was in my forties at this point I said that I spent most of my time in summer school So I started over at Kent to take Spanish because that was what I was teaching. We were commuting back and forth. I was going on odd hours Strangely enough, when I got over there, my professor was the professor I had at Denison He was head of department He was Professor Abner who was a delightful person but does not teach the direct method

O When you say direct method, what do you mean by that?

L Conversation rather than grammar This is where I had my problems I have had to lapse into English every now and then when you put some idea across because I did not have the vocabulary behind me This is what upset me and bothered me This is what I hoped to get, so I thought that I would just get my Master's in Spanish. When I got into his class, of course, he was tickled to death Denison, of course, was a very small school His wife was a sorority sister of mine In a small town when you are out on a date and so forth, you often would go to the professor's house He used to say to me, "For heaven's sake, go home and study Spanish. Anyone who gets A's is Astronomy and Math and nothing but a B in Spanish is not working very hard " He was tickled to

death when he found out I was teaching Spanish. We car pooled driving back and forth.

As much as I liked Professor Ed, and I did, he was a wonderful person, this was not what I really wanted. This was time that I was wasting because what he was offering was something that I already had. There were two people in the car who were in Library Science. They said, "Well, you said you were just out for a Master's degree, and you did not care what it was in. Why don't take one in Library Science?" So I switched. Then I was accepted into Library Science. Of course, I have an unusual background because I had History, I had English, I had science and so forth.

Then in the middle of summer, my principal called me and said that our librarian was retiring. She did not let them know, and they could not find a librarian. He wanted me to go up to the library. I told him that I was not qualified. He wanted to know how far I was. I told him that I had six hours in the spring and that I was taking six hours then. That was as far as I was. He said that if I would keep on it, I would be all right. The school librarian has to be a teacher first for the school to be accredited. They have to have teaching hours. They do not have to have taught, but they have to have the education as a teacher. That was how I moved to the library.

- O Then you taught at the same time that you were a librarian there?
- L No, the only thing I taught in the library was Library Science to the students and how to use the library. I feel very, very strongly that this is a must. Over at Kent, because we were in Library Science we were out in the library all of the time, and it was amazing to see the college students who really do not know how to use the library.
- O It is the same at Youngstown State University.
- L How can they get any place? How can they find anything for themselves if they cannot use the library. I started classes over at Wilson as soon as I went into it teaching, we had seventh graders then. The new seventh graders and the ninth graders at that point, I could not take them all; I would not have that kind of time, but the seventh and ninth graders, I taught them introduction into the library and how to use the library, how to use the resources, what the various resources were and so forth.
- O It was a natural course that they would have to take?

- L It was through the English department. I worked it through the English department, and the English teachers went along with me. I did the teaching of it up in the library. They brought the classes up and turned them over to me.
- O What kind of library did you have?
- L At Wilson?
- O Yes.
- L We had a combination library over there. At the time in the library, we had seventh through twelfth. This was a sad situation because your seventh graders are so far from your seniors. Seniors in most cases are wonderful too. I know they talk about students, but I still say that most students are delightful. In a way, those little seventh graders would try to attract the attention of the Seniors. They would push them and do everything imaginable, and the Seniors were so nice to them. It really is not a good situation. It is not good for those seventh graders because they are not ready for it. So we tried to separate them, so I separated the library. Lori and I had the seventh and eighth grades. Then the rest of it was high school. When I had seventh grade students, I was down at the end. The library was setup pretty much . . . I suppose the college library is like it except on a smaller scale, of course. We were very fortunate at the time I went into it and that the government was buying us books.
- O. When you hear about book censorship now with different schools, and the different school boards when they complain about certain books, did you ever have that problem as a librarian?
- L. Oh, yes.
- O You did? Could you tell me something about it?
- L One of them was the Catcher in the Rye. When I read it, I realized some of the vocabulary sort of shocked you. You wondered about some of the ideas in it. I realized this since I was from the older generations and so on and so forth. I was not accustomed to reading this type of thing and so forth. I was a little amazed about it myself. The senior English teacher, one of the senior English teachers and I decided to have a panel and have four students read this book and have a panel and discuss it. It really was quite thrilling. I realized that the people at that age did not see that language at all. That was part of the book as

far as they were concerned either objecting to it or in it's favor, one way or another They just did not see it What they saw was a boy who could not communicate. This is what they brought out. They brought it out in sort of a delightful way so that when this book came for censorship, I had this background I had this, and I could tell the parents that they had to see this book of these high school students and realize that the students Yes, the language was there, yes your students and your people experience, but this is not what they saw.

O Do you mean that it was the parents who objected to it? Did they go to the school board first?

L It was the parents. No, they never went there They came directly here, they came to the principal As far as I know it never went beyond that, not with me any way.

O How big was your library? Do you remember how many books?

L We had about in the neighborhood of 50,000, I think

O How about your experiences as a librarian at Boardman? Could you tell us a little bit about it? Was it very similar to Wilson?

L You realize that I was older when I went out to Boardman I am sure I would have not been accepted except that my training came later By this time, audiovisual was my inevitable I had a special course in 1967 at Case Western Reserve that was sponsored by the government. It was an experimental course There were people there from all over the United States Actually it was paid by the government We had to stay in a hotel up there, and people flew in. Poor Case Western Reserve did not have very many facilities as far as room and board were concerned. Youngstown was very, very good to me School started two weeks before our classes were over, and they let me go early I made it up there It was in the summertime It was using audiovisual material in the school We learned how to program, and we learned how to, well the whole idea. Of course, I had already had quite a bit of this over at Kent because it was coming in my experience Most of the people there were either older, I do not mean older in age necessarily, but older in experience than I am in the library. But they did not have this background, and a lot of the teachers and librarians objected to it

When they opened the new school out here in Boardman, they did not call

it a library. It is an instructional material center. The library is fantastic. There was only one school library in all of Ohio that was larger than this one, and that was up in Lakewood, outside Cleveland. It was on three levels. On this upper one, as you would come in, there was a reading area for the students. You would go down three steps and there were all of these carrels for the children. They were all equipped so that you could plug in anything at all, the viewers or the tape records or anything else. We would have these programs set up.

When I went out there, of course, the librarian who was out there was not the least bit interested in this. So when I went out for an interview, this is what they wanted, someone who cared about this thing. So I catalogued all of the A-V (audiovisual) material out there. It was over on Market Street. It was the middle school. It was in the center of Boardman. I had to go over there and decide whether it was on the high school level or on the junior high level or elementary level, and catalogue it. We had it right in the card catalogue. The only difference between that and anything else was the fact that there was a red line across the top of it. There was that red line across it, and this would tell the students that it some time of A-V material whether it was a tape or whether it was a filmstrip. We even had films here. When they would use the films, they had to go to the back room, of course, but there were two rooms right there in the library that they could use. They had to make the arrangements ahead of time. We would try to set them up because the periods were short. We had to make sure they had a chance to see it all. They could take out anything.

The offices there were fantastic. There was one window the students would go to get the A-V material. A lot of the teachers would have special material especially the science department and the history department. These teachers would use it more than any of the others. They would put on special material. It was special reading material.

- O Do you recall what some of the special material would have been? What are some of the things they used to teach their kids?
- L It has been so long. It is hard for me to remember. I remember that they had programming practically for everything as far as science was concerned especially the physic teachers who used it. Some of it was even beyond me. I did not really know what they were talking about all the time, but the students would understand. The teachers would put it on, or they would send it down, and I would put it on.
- O Did you think it was important to have audiovisual?

L It is a learning method There are still people who think it is better to get it from books, but there are some students, of course, who get more from their ears In this day and age, when they get so much from television and radio, this sort of just fits right in It is just another learning device, that is all It has its advantages and possibly it has its advantages for the lazier students too and the students who have a little difficulty reading They would put on tapes and make up tests. If you were the type who was teaching the students to test orally and so on and so forth, the students could come in and take a test which would save the teacher quite a bit of time

O Did you ever have any discipline problems when you were a librarian?

L I think probably because of my size I probably had less discipline problems than most people I very rarely ran into discipline problems

O Really?

L Very, very rarely I can remember one homeroom we had at Wilson They kept the homerooms together In this group there were twenty-eight boys and eight girls in the class Why they kept them together to this day, I do not know At this time, we had a different principal He had nothing to do with that The assistant principal kept them together as a group There definitely were problems The teacher they had in ninth and tenth grades simply refused to take them their junior year because they caused so many problems. I was graduating my senior class She said that she did not have to have them that next year I told her to bring them in here. Dave Ford was the principal They were juniors, they were great big fellows

The first day they kept stomping their feet the whole homeroom period I never had this experience before I did not know what to do, so I did nothing This I found was the best thing to do I hesitated rather than jumping into something where you had discipline I hesitated to see what might come of it The very second day they started it, the boy in front of me said, "Why do you not stop them?" I said to him, "Stop what?" He said, "Does that not bother you?" I said, "No, but if it is bothering you, I will ask them to stop " This is how things worked out So I said "Would you mind stopping that? You are bothering Johnny up here " They stopped, but they tried something else They tried all sort of things on me. I found that usually if you met them halfway, you could handle them pretty easily I think probably my size had something to do with it. I do not know I can honestly say that I never had a time like that I never had that many problems even when I was a board member which really was not that

long ago I do not think the students have changed that much There were always problem students like this one class. They were definitely a problem There have always been problem students I know that drugs and so forth have changed the picture, but the whole society has changed

O Were there drugs though earlier?

L If there were, we were not conscious of them These boys, some of them acted awfully strange We wonder today if they might have been on drugs We have no way of knowing, of course. This one boy in this group . The door would open, and he would stand there and dance right across the room This type of thing I would look at and wonder what to do with him I handled him accidentally He was sitting in his seat right by the window He danced clear across, and he sat down there He put on quite a show I walked right over to him with no intention of stopping him because I do not believe in that I never had to do it As I got up to him, he was playing up to the class, and he jumped out of his seat He had his legs twisted in such a way that he fell backwards, and the class thought I knocked him down I never touched him and he knew it It was purely accidental I found that you just use a little bit of common sense Of course, I think this is what most psychology is which is common sense Of course, that was back in those days I do not know what it would be like today, but I do not have any problems. I found the Boardman students entirely different from Wilson It was rather a lonesome experience for me at first because Wilson was very much a family school. You knew the whole families Out here it was completely strange and entirely different They are much more sophisticated students here at Boardman

O Was it because it was a bigger school too, or what do you think the reason is?

L I really just think that most of the students at Wilson came from backgrounds where the school meant a great deal to them I do not know whether this is true in Boardman or not Maybe it is. Of course, teaching and being a librarian are two different things You do not get to know the students in a library I never knew their names, I have no reason to know all their names I would help the students I would work them and the A-V and helping this get set up and so forth I would help the students on the floor but not as individuals, but just with someone who needed help I did not know their names. Of course, this is the reason probably some things were not close to Wilson

O Before you were a librarian, now you said you taught history and quite a variety



of subjects How about like current events? How would you teach that? For instance, you were teaching during World War II, right? Did you have discussions on it?

L Well, this, of course, was what we were doing in the core group Yes, we took the current events to date There were little magazines and pamphlets that came out weekly that would talk about current events We got those for class You would get enough for your whole class The students did not have to buy them The school bought them referring to Wilson. We passed them around just like there was a whole set of Reader's Digest, for instance, that you would send out to a class During the war, a lot of the boys were working in the mill

O. The students?

L The students Now these would be seniors They were actually making more money than I was teaching One of the boys told me to look at his paycheck for two weeks I looked at it, and it was more money than I was making teaching You started with the present and tried to teach work back to this. This is how we tried it. This is how we tried to teach history, especially in core In core we did not rely on anyone book We relied on reference books down at the library You did an awful lot of digging before your classes were ready You would hope that they would go in this direction, but they always did not The discussion did not always go in the way that you hoped it would It would be going the other direction So you would have to start out again in that field

O It was called core?

L Core, C-O-R-E

O That is really interesting I have not heard too much about that

L It is not today It was just during that period Actually, for a long time they had been teaching I actually was the English teacher in this core period It just did not mean very much because we were doing one core Now this was ninth grade core We had English, history, always those two, and sometimes science in with it We took our model and started with that We started with Youngstown We took the students on a trip We even went down to the mills We took the students every place and tried to branch off from that back in the history and tried to arouse their interest and breed their own research We tried to bring out the individual and get the individual interested in some particular

phase He would just go out on his own from there. This is what we were striving for We succeeded with some students, and some students we did not

O. If you were going to like to the steel mill on a field trip, how would you explain it to your students? What would you tell them that you wanted them to get out of it?

L It has been so long that I do not remember I just remember I would say that I probably was not the one who did the explaining on this It was one of the men who did that

O. That is very interesting Did you go to Butler?

L Oh, yes, we went to all the various industries in the town. We were on that phase I remember talking about industry in Youngstown and so forth Then we went every place We went to Ward's Bakery and Isaly's plant

O Did you go by bus or individually?

L Yes, by bus

O Did the kids have to pay at all? Do you remember?

L Yes, they had to pay It was cheap in those days. It was not that much Maybe it was to the individual, but I do not think there were too many The bus had to be paid for The students had to pay for it because you got permission from the parents who knew where they were You had a signed permission from the parents who knew where they were You had a signed permission from each student

O. Did you ever hear of circus day that they had where the circus would come to town? What was that about?

L This did not affect the high school students as it did the elementary In the elementary schools they would take the students but in the high schools, we did not There were an awfully minimum number of students in class on that day They would bring notes from home that they had permission to go as far as that was concerned Whenever the circus came to town, that was true, we always allowed them to go if they wanted to go But they had to have permission from home to go

O. Why were they allowed to go to the circus?

L It was a learning experience when you stop and think about it.

O. Yes, I guess so

L Anything that is a learning experience the school will go along with It really is

O How about religion in school?

L Our life was so very, very different If we married, we lost our jobs We knew that We had to be much more careful in our conduct You have to realize that I am saying this in my position as a retired teacher I think that this is one of the things that is wrong today We were much more dedicated than they are today Many of the teachers are wonderful teachers, they are fine teachers I am not saying anything against this, but their first interest is not the school Ours had to be because we were not allowed to have a home of our own As soon as we were married, we lost out jobs Therefore, you gave of yourself I know that we gave of ourselves really morning, noon, and night because you attended the school activities just as a part of your job I never thought of it as a job For instance, at football games we all had to sponsor things, and we never were paid any extra money for anything as they are today I had seniors play for years and years and years I never got an extra cent for it It would always cost me money because of the transportation and so forth But you did not think of things like that

Now like at the football games there were your majorettes and your cheerleaders Well, I had charge of the cheerleaders for a long time There was no money to outfit them You did not use the taxpayers' money for these types of things, so we would have to earn the money We would makeup a program for the day. I would go out in the field with the girls selling the programs until 5 00 when the man stopped us because the man was paid for selling tickets at the football game It bothered them that we were not taking it We did not want it because we had to outfit our cheerleaders This is why we were doing We were not doing it for money for ourselves I am not talking about myself personally. I am not just one person This was the type of thing We sponsored clubs with no thoughts of financial advisement. It was just part of our job, and you thoroughly enjoyed it You got to know the students much better

I think this is maybe one of the reasons why we did not have the discipline problems because the students felt closer to you Unconsciously they would know that you were giving of yourself, and they appreciated it, I think I had to

stop selling football programs because the man objected because I was not taking any salary for it. This is where I think all of the sudden things started to change way back then. The man sold tickets, and he was paid. We were not. It did not bother us, but it bothered them. So finally we had to stop it. Then we had to find some other way of getting enough money to make outfits for the cheerleaders. Really the home economics department would make the cheerleaders' outfits. It was sort of a big project in the school for many of us. There was not that kind of money available.

I had the senior play for years. When I got out of the senior play, I took over the yearbook. I had the yearbook for three years. You never thought that you should be paid extra for this. It is so hard for us today. When I understand what the teachers are getting, they do not care. When I hear some of them talk to you, I think it is just too bad. Really your interest does not lie in the your students. It cannot or you would not be talking the way you are. For instance, I happened to be at the bank one day, and I heard two teachers talking. One of them needed some dental work done. She was not going to have it done until after they passed and got this free. Then the other one was a woman. Her daughter needed braces or something on her teeth. She needed some kind of special work. She was not going to have it done until they paid for it. I kept thinking that they just want and expect too much today. Of course, this is not just the teachers. I am not saying that it is just the teachers. It is just the society today. People want things like something for nothing. It is sort of tragic because it is changing our society entirely.

- O. Did any women object to the fact? Well, for instance you got paid less even though you had more hours working on your master's. You hear so much about women bringing it to court. Did they ever?
- L. I objected extremely when I found out the men were being paid more than me. It did not do me any good. I was not going to sit down and pout about it or object to the men because they were getting more than I was.
- O. Or to the fact that you had to quit your job when you got married?
- L. Yes, there were teachers who objected to that. I am glad things have changed. On the other hand maybe most of us because we could not be married in those days. That is why you see so many in my generation who are still Miss because otherwise it would not be that way. I think maybe we gave more of ourselves to the school, for instance, just with my hairdresser. I went to have my hair done yesterday. Well, she was not there because her daughter had an

earache She belongs at home. This is true I was not objecting to her not being there Somebody else did my hair, but for teachers this is another story What about those students? What are they getting when a teacher's interest slides some place else? I think that is one of the things that has caused a big change in the school system today Do not misunderstand me

O I understand I know what you are saying

L Personally, I know that they do a beautiful job, but their first interest is not there They do not go out at night for social activities and so on and so forth I think that is another thing Our students' activities were centered around the school more We had prom I will never forget the first dance we had You realize the students we had came up from seventh and eighth and ninth graders Most of our activities centered around the school Their friends were there at school and probably at church too that was another thing I will never forget the first dance They did not know how to dance It startled us too We never thought of that Here we had the orchestra for them and so on and so forth, and they just stood around They did not know what to do. Somebody made a game out of it A whole bunch of us made a game out of it. We got them all out on the floor They finally caught on because it was just sort of natural There were always school activities They were after football games; there were dances after football games and so on We were willing to go and sponsor them I do not think you find too much of that today

O. Were you involved in PTA (Parent Teacher Association) at all?

L. You cannot help but be involved in PTA I never was out at Boardman. I belonged, I joined, but I never went In my situation out there was entirely different for the simple reason that I probably made it different as far as that was concerned But I never really got to know the students because of my position, you do not This is the thing I missed terribly when I went into the library Even at Wilson, I had to be a different person in the library than I was in the classroom You are not nearly as close to the students. At Wilson you knew all of the parents so well when you would go to PTA If you did not go to their meetings, they came looking for you because you knew the parents so well when you would go to PTA If you did not go to their meetings, they came looking for you because you knew the parents and they knew you At holidays like Christmas and Easter you were always invited down to their house for breakfast or for supper. For graduation you just went from one party to another

The PTA at Wilson is still a pretty strong organization I do not know, but

the last I heard a couple of years ago I heard it was a strong organization Those parents felt very close to the school and were very quick to criticize if they did not like things It was done in a nice way that you did not mind, and you could usually see their point of view or you could make them see your point of view It was one or the other, but the PTA was very, very active We all went to them They had meetings, and we all went to the evening meetings We were expected too

O We were talking about religion You said something about the public address they would have for prayer

L Yes, the students would put on a little five minute worship of some kind In your class, of course, you had students from all denominations Each student would take his turn Sometime it would be that if you wanted to say it this way for instance, sometimes it would be Catholic, sometimes it would be Protestant, sometimes it was Jewish, but I do not think anyone ever took offense on that

O But they did stop that though eventually, did they not?

L That was because of that law with that woman down in Texas

O Madeline O'Hara

L She did so much Really it was a nice way to start the day because I would feel that way, but I think most people do unless they are atheist. I think most people felt that I can see no reason today why they could not have some point of personal period like a moment of silence if nothing else One of the public speaking teachers, and I was one of the teachers for a while, would always make out a schedule The students would sign up They took it by the week, a student would take it for the week Sometimes two or three of them would work together on it

O How about dress codes? Do you remember if they changed throughout the years? How strict were they?

L I think there were dress codes, but I do not remember them I sort of remember a dress code

O Would a student be punished if he went against the dress code?

- L I suppose a student would be called in I cannot remember I cannot remember any students taking advantage of it in those days Those were the days of bobby socks and so on and so forth I do not think it was ever really that important
- O In the 1950's when you were teaching at Wilson when the ground case about the desegregation came, I believe that was 1954, was there any problem of desegregation in the Youngstown School System where you taught? Did you see any differences? Was there segregation?
- L Wilson always had some black students but not too many over there Some of them had been there for a long, long time They never gave it a thought They went to the dances. They stayed by themselves Often there was one black boy in the whole senior class One of the guidance people would make sure that he understood that he could bring his friends from another school so that he would not be alone if he wanted to come. It never was a problem at Wilson When I think of those early days, we really never thought much about it because they were included right in I never had much feeling about it because I suppose I did not run into it too much Wilson was a school to which other schools would send the students because it would be closer for them For instance, a students up at Rayen not being able to adjust would be sent out to Wilson, and we received quite a few black students this way In the fall there would be a lot of students who would come to our school, but one by one they would leave because there were not very many out at Wilson Maybe it was not right, I do not know I do not think the students ever objected to it one way or the other or gave it a second thought. Maybe they would get very little attention I suppose But it never was a problem at Wilson when I was there.
- O I want to skip back now to what you said about World War II when you said some of your students were working in mills Were they ever drafted while they were still in school?
- L Yes, oh yes
- O How was this explained?
- L I taught summer school during the war I taught senior English boys who were trying to graduate before they were called They were called as soon as they reached the age For instance, the one boy, you would know who he was because he is the principal at the vocational school, was in school one week. He

graduated a month later he was back wounded. It was sort of hard. I think it was one of the hardest things I ever went through was to see those boys and know they were going and to know how they must have felt.

O: How were they feeling? Do you know? Did they talk to you about it?

L: Yes, they talked about it very, very freely. I think most of them were frightened. They had no idea what to expect and so on. They were frightened. They talked very freely about it because they wanted to talk about it, but they put on a brave front, naturally being fellows they would. It was a heartbreaking time. We used to go down to the railroad stations and say goodbye to them.

O: The whole class?

L: No, just their personal friends and so on and so forth. Some of the students you had in class would go down. It was really a heartbreaking period.

O: I can imagine.

L: Yes, it was.

O: Did they ever keep in touch with you afterwards?

L: Oh, yes. I wrote letters and things like that. Fortunately most of the boys came back, but there were those who did not. We felt for their families and so forth. It was not as easy a period. Those of us who were here in the schools we worked awfully hard with the students to try to get them through so that they could graduate before they would be drafted. But they did not all make it.

O: Have you seen any major changes in the educational process in Youngstown throughout the years? You have said that they have just changed the names. Have you been doing things?

L: This sort of tickles us because so many things that we were doing they came out with this big write-up like in *Modern Man*. It was nothing really. We were always trying new ideas. When I went out to Boardman, I discovered that the terminology expression in English. For example, a student came in and asked me for something, and I did not know what he was talking about. I would be so embarrassed, so I would go to the other librarian and tell her. She would explain to me that he would be so and so. She would say that was the new



terminology all the way through. Of course, they tried like down at the elementary school when they took out all of the walls and for a while had open school. I do not know whether that is true or not, but they are always trying innovations. This is good. I think we need to think them through before we sit down and carry the students into it.

O Right

L Because is it to the advantage of the student or is it not to the advantage of the students? If it is not to his advantage, let us not bother with it.

O You have kind of answered this next question throughout the tape. What would be the most enjoyable part about teaching for you and the least enjoyable if there was anything?

L I think the thing I enjoyed the most was the contact with the students. You got to know the students. You know that everyone is an individual. You got to know them as an individual, and this as I said is what I missed terribly when I went into the library. I no longer had that.

What did I dislike the most? I guess grading papers, homework. I am not just speaking for myself. I think I am speaking for most of the teachers in my period. We had to be dedicated. Even today I know this is true out at Boardman. I do not know about Youngstown whether it is true there or not, but I feel so sorry for English teachers having gone through it myself. But out at Boardman the teachers are . . . So much is expected of them because they have a program set up there. The students write so much one every grade level. For instance, not I am not saying this is the way it is, but in the ninth grade they are writing paragraphs. You realize that every one of those paragraphs have to be graded and corrected and rewritten and regraded and so on and so forth if there is going to be any results. Those teachers. Their homework is unbelievable, and this is one thing that people do not appreciate is the work that they do outside of class. They say that they are given one free period. Yes, the teachers are given one period, but you do not get very far in one period.

It is just like I said when I was teaching language. It was always 2:00 in the morning when I went to bed because I had to make tapes and so on and so forth. Of course, it was a new field for me. This is one thing that I think maybe was sort of good because when I got into the field, I really went into it. I think anyone does. You put yourself out, you work twice as hard as you do if you have something year after year after year. When you sort of know that field. At Wilson we never had the chance to slow down. There was always something

new

- O If you wanted somebody to remember something about the history of education in Youngstown, what would it be? I know I am putting you on the spot, but I want to try to make up for anything that I might have forgotten to ask you, anything or if you would have any other storied or incidents throughout your career. What are some of the things that you remember?
- L I think what you are trying to get across is the fact that any society is made up of individual people. This is what we are trying to stress in the museum. I just wonder if the news guides are being shown this at all. This is one of the things that I thoroughly enjoy for the simple reason that you like to know about the people who have made a success with something and so on.
- O I think they realize that they have to do that in the museum if you are going to have something affective.
- L She did. This is one of the things that I think you try to stress is the fact that people make up society and the people make the success or the failure.
- O Is there anything amusing that happened or anything sad that happened with any students of you besides going to war?
- L Well, believe me that was a very, very sad period. It is hard for me to keep dry eyes now when I think about it. I think it was sad for all who experienced loses during that particular time.
- O What about the unions? Were you in a union?
- L That is why I left Youngstown. There was the American Federation of Teachers, AFT and the YEA which were the two organizations. We always had the YEA which is the Youngstown Education Association. Now the men in particular went into the union. Of course, I can see what happened today. I cannot appreciate it. I think it is a tragedy, but I can see what happened. I think I can understand it. The men were joining the union. Of course, the YEA always had an election. I was secretary of YEA when the union forced us into that strike we had which was a very short strike.
- O When was this?

L It would be in the early 1960's I suppose I do not remember the exact date We were out only a couple of days. Of course, those of us who were strong in YEA, just walked across the picket line The students did not come It was a very short strike It was rather an unpleasant time To me there were men teachers, co-workers They did not act that way at all They really got quite nasty. We had our meetings up in one of the motels on Wick Avenue, in one that you drive under.

O. Right across from Ursuline?

L I think so I think that is the one There were two up there The other is not there now I think that is the one They would call me and tell me not to come out of the house until I heard a certain signal Then I would report there. We would be up there at 4 00 at night sometimes Then I was in a vulnerable position because I was in the library Those men did all sorts of things afterwards to make my time unpleasant This is the reason that I left Youngstown was to get away from the union I have no use I appreciate what unions have done, but I think they overstep You have to be very careful who went upstairs

As far as the teachers are concerned today most of their background

Their families were in the union This is all they know My father belonged to the union too, as far as that is concerned, but he was never in favor of it He always said that anytime there was trouble, he lost out one way or the other This is all they understand They think they have to fight for it I wonder what they are fighting for They certainly are not fighting for

I will go along and say that teachers go into the profession, they know that their salary is not going to compete with industry. If they want what they have in industry, they should go into industry Many of them without the success of industry, I think they are wise enough to know it Of course, there is this too that we need strong teachers, so maybe they should be better paid They should be able to compete with industry Our youth of today is what we need, of course, but we need strong teachers So there are two sides of the story Whose side of the story you are going to take? I do not know

End of Interview