

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Early Education Project

Teaching Experiences

O. H. 583

MARGARET STARBUCK

Interviewed

by

Caroline Wilms Hall

on

May 31, 1980

MARGARET NACE STARBUCK

Margaret Nace was born August 8, 1917 in Glen Rock, Pennsylvania. She was the third of four children to Edwin and Ida Roeder Nace. The family moved to Cleveland before she started to school because Mr. and Mrs. Nace wanted good education for their children.

Margaret attended East Denison Elementary School for kindergarten through sixth grade. She remembers single female teachers and principals, separate entrances and playgrounds for boys and girls, and September or January entries in school. The elementary curriculum included annual dance programs at the Public Auditorium, trips to the Cleveland Symphony, and field days with parades, athletic events, and dancing.

Margaret attended Thomas Jefferson Junior High School when recommended for enrichment classes given there. The foreign language classes were taught with charts and gestures since no English could be spoken. Other subjects were learned through completion of projects assigned to the students.

During her years at Lincoln High School, Margaret remembers the classical type teaching, strong discipline, and students leaving school to find any kind of work to help out during the Depression. Her schedule was arranged to allow her to work afternoons her junior and senior years as a doctor's assistant. She graduated in 1934.

After working for a year, Margaret entered the School of Education at Western Reserve University in 1935. She had a

major in social studies and minors in German and music. She had classroom observations and lessons to teach throughout her four year program in addition to two semesters of student teaching. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Education in 1939.

Since jobs were difficult to find, Margaret taught as a permanent substitute for two years in the Cleveland public schools. She then taught in a three-room school in Mentor, Ohio, for three years. An interest in the Pine Mountain Settlement School took her to Kentucky for three years. Lacking high school certification, she did office work at the boarding high school. She returned to Cleveland in 1947 to marry Robert Starbuck.

The Starbuck's lived in Indiana and Kentucky before settling in Salem, Ohio, to raise their four children. In 1961, Margaret returned to the classroom in Salem city schools until her retirement in 1979. During her twenty-two years of teaching, she endeavored to instill her belief in observing the world around in her students. She took them on field trips to the farm, watched the development of frogs from tadpoles, and made nature studies around the school.

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INTERVIEWEE: MARGARET STARBUCK

INTERVIEWER: Caroline Wilms Hall

SUBJECT: Cleveland Schools, Western Reserve University,
College and teaching experiences, changes in
education

DATE: May 31, 1980

H: This is an interview with Margaret Starbuck at her home,
for the Youngstown State University Early Education Project,
by Caroline Wilms Hall on May 31, 1980 at 10:00 a.m.

All right, Margaret would you tell us something about your
parents and your family life as you were growing up?

S: My parents both grew up in Eastern Pennsylvania. They were
of Pennsylvania-German stock. Both families believed in
education. My father worked very hard to get his college
degree at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster,
Pennsylvania. My mother was musical. She was playing the
organ in church when she was eleven years old. Her father
was a pastor of a church. By the time she was sixteen her
parents were sending her to Baltimore one day a week for
lessons at the Peabody Institute of Music. She graduated from
the Peabody Institute of Music at eighteen, ready to teach piano.

Both parents were interested in our having college educations.
After they had lived their first years of married life in
McKeesport, Pennsylvania, they moved to Cleveland where my
father was a teacher. They wanted us to live in a town where
we could get a good education. My father taught until he
was seventy in Cleveland public schools. When the Depression
hit, he had his master's degree and he had reached the highest
salary he could reach in Cleveland, which was \$3,600. The
Depression hit and he was cut back to \$2,400, but we still
went on through our college years. We were, of course, much
more lucky than our neighbors. We were living in an area
where many were steel mill workers and they were just completely
out of jobs. So we were really fortunate.

H: How many children were in your family?

S: We had four children. My brother, the oldest, went to Case School of Applied Science and he graduated there during the Depression. My sister was next and she went to the School of Education at Western Reserve and was going there when I graduated from high school in 1934. I waited a year to go to college so there wouldn't be two of us in college at the same time.

I might talk a little bit about the public school education in Cleveland. Looking back on it, I feel that it was a very outstanding education. We had many opportunities that I have seen just developing in recent years in other areas. In our elementary school, the children all went home for lunch and they all went home right after school, walking. Nobody went by bus. So we were able to stay after school to rehearse for programs, which can't be done very well today. We put on many different, interesting programs that I recall. Every class in the building put on a play for Christmas, so it was a very long program every Christmas time.

Also, there were many organized programs with the whole city. We had a very good dance program through the whole city. From the time I was in kindergarten there were groups of children sent from each grade, from every school in the city, down to the public auditorium for a dance festival. Every first grade learned the same dance. The floor of the public auditorium, which is a huge floor, would be covered with first graders doing the same dance at the same time. Each grade did a different dance. I was introduced to English country dancing and folk dances of Europe through this program. I didn't go to the festival every year because just a team would be chosen, but I did get down to the public auditorium several times during my seven years in elementary school, and that was a big thrill.

There were also opportunities, from the time we were in fourth grade, to go to the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra concerts. They put on special concerts for children. There was great preparation done beforehand. There were pamphlets published which we studied in our classrooms. There would be themes, like a Scandanavian concert or an Italian concert. There would be concerts about certain composers. From the time I was in fourth grade I went to a symphony concert every year. And when I got into junior high I think they were twice a year, and perhaps in high school they were twice a year also. We studied the music beforehand and enjoyed the concerts more because we got an opportunity to hear the music and learn the background of the composer and the music.

We also had big field days at our school. That was a big event with parading, and athletic events and dancing out in the schoolyard. I marvel now at all the preparation those teachers must have made to get everything working so well.

In our elementary school I remember we had a girls' entrance and a boys' entrance. We played on our own sides of the playground. We didn't play together at that time, and I guess we had more peace that way. (Laughter) In our back schoolyard there was a portable building we called it. It was a wooden building, pretty good sized. There were several rooms in it. I was not too conscious of it, of what was going on there at the time, but I realize now that there were handicapped children there, perhaps mentally handicapped and physically handicapped children, who were getting special kinds of education. I remember the craft things that they made. They would have a sale every so often. I remember some Christmases when we were allowed to spend money there and buy toys and baskets which they made. Some of those things are still in our family. So I think that Cleveland was quite far advanced in many ways.

In junior high, I started French. Doctor DeSauze was the head of the Foreign Language Department in Cleveland. He had very, modern ideas about teaching languages. We were not allowed to speak English at all in our classroom. The teacher had to be able to demonstrate with pictures and charts and just her way of speaking, what she was trying to get across. We had to answer in French. When I got into German in high school, we did the same thing. And I've found since, that there are many places that consider this very modern, that you don't speak English in a foreign language class.

All through high school we did special things. We had interesting things going on. I was in a high school where there were many of the old-fashioned ideas. Latin was taught. We were very well disciplined. We had a man and a woman who were assistant principals. They were almost like deans of the high school, who looked after us. We were just beginning to wear ankle socks in my high school days. I remember some girls being called into the assistant principal's office and being told that it was not a proper thing to do, to wear ankle socks to school. We should wear stockings. You can just imagine things like that happening nowadays. (Laughter)

When I graduated, we were in the midst of the deep part of the Depression. We had abandoned the annuals, the annual book, which was a big part of graduating from high school at that time. Very few people bought class rings. At our commencements we didn't wear gowns. The girls wore white dresses and the boys wore suits. The girls always had corsages. That was a part of our outfit. But, because of the Depression,

the corsages were eliminated that year, I remember.

I had started working in a doctor's office. This doctor was a friend of ours, and he had need of an assistant very suddenly. He called my mother and she called me while I was at school and told me to go over to the doctor's office, which was not far from the high school. My schedule at that time, when I was a junior, allowed me to leave fairly early in the afternoon. So I went over to this doctor's office, as green as green could be, and started working for him. It was a real learning experience because I had never done anything of the sort before. For one thing, the office was over a restaurant which was of shoddy character. I found cockroaches all over the doctor's office. His assistant hadn't been able to clean up for some days; she had become ill. These cockroaches scared me to death. I had never encountered them before. I called my mother immediately and she said to go over to the drugstore and ask them what I should do. So I went over and got powder and started spreading it around. But it was weeks before I had eliminated them all. I kept finding dead cockroaches in the drawers of the desk.

Well, I worked at the doctor's office. He was an obstetrician, so I learned a great deal. I started working there near the end of my junior year. I worked all summer and all through my senior year. Because my sister was still in college, it was decided that I should wait a year to go to college. So I worked for him another year, in the afternoons. I got a dollar a day for working in the afternoons from one until five. After about a year he said that I was such a good worker that he would give me an extra dollar. So I got seven dollars a week instead of six dollars a week. I thought I was wealthy!

H: Now, how could you do this?

S: They could arrange my schedule at school so I could leave at one o'clock.

H: Then you didn't have study periods and things like that?

S: Not as many. I think they were forty-five minute periods and we started pretty early in the morning. We started at eight o'clock. I had to cut out the glee club that I belonged to. And I couldn't belong to clubs as I had done before because they met after school.

H: What time did school get out?

S: There were nine periods and I think it was about three-thirty when the ninth period was over. I think I was there through the seventh period, perhaps, and then went to the doctor's office. I could get all my required work in beforehand.

H: Well, then did everyone go home for lunch?

S: No, not at high school. We had forty-five minute periods, three lunch periods. You got a lunch period worked into your schedule.

H: So lunch was divided then?

S: There was a cafeteria, but we could carry our lunches. That's what our family did. We carried our lunches, usually.

H: What was the name of the elementary school that you attended?

S: East Denison, East Denison Elementary School which they are now talking about eliminating. I think that they're perhaps going to get rid of that school.

H: How large a building was it?

S: I think perhaps there were two rooms for each grade and the kindergarten.

H: Did you go to kindergarten?

S: Yes, I did go to kindergarten. My brother and sister did not. They had already started school before we came to Cleveland and they hadn't had an opportunity to go to kindergarten. But I went to kindergarten and I felt it was a very good preparation. We learned a lot of hand skills. In kindergarten there were things that children do in perception classes nowadays. We were to copy certain patterns of stringing beads, I remember. There were different shapes of beads and different colors of beads strung in various patterns. We were to imitate the patterns when we strung our beads. Another thing we did was weaving patterns. There was a kind of a heavy bogus paper that had strips cut into it. You could weave through it. There was a margin around that wasn't cut. It was paper that was bought that way. We had very pretty colored, shiny paper strips to weave in and out. We were shown different patterns, like over two, under two and then alternating, like over two, under one. There were all sorts of different weaving patterns that we did. We were able to follow directions, both visual and oral directions. I kept those woven patterns for a long time. The teacher made them into a book for us.

I think we did many creative things in our kindergarten. They always had an assistant, which was to me very important. I can't understand how kindergarten teachers can handle everything they have to handle in the system where we are now, without an assistant. The assistant would be working with some children at the table, working on quite specific skills, while the other teacher would be working with the rest of the class.

H: Did you have small classes?

- S: No, they weren't very small. In elementary school, I'm sure we had two divisions in each room. Children entered school in September and also in January. Then they had graduation in January and in June. We had an A division and a B division in each grade. I think that when I started first grade, the whole class were beginners. But by the time we got to the third or fourth grade, we had A's and B's in the same class. The teachers would work with one half of the class with one specific thing and the other half would be studying or doing something from the board.
- H: Do you remember that there were a lot of materials provided for you by the school? Did you have to buy your own books, paper?
- S: We had to buy our own art paper, I remember. We must have had very limited art work because we bought one tablet of bogus and one tablet of manilla paper--if you know what those things are--and a package of assorted colored paper, our own crayons, our own paints, our own tablets, our spelling pads and a notebook, a Webster notebook as it was called. We had to provide our own writing paper and our own pencils and paste. The textbooks were furnished in elementary school, as I recall. When we got to high school we had to buy our own textbooks later, but we had to buy them when I started high school. We often bought secondhand textbooks. They had a place in the high school where you could buy secondhand textbooks.
- H: Well, you had older, what, brother and sister?
- S: Yes, so we could pass the books down.
- H: You were close enough that you could?
- S: Yes, most textbooks could be passed down.
- H: What was the name of the junior high school?
- S: I went to Thomas Jefferson Junior High. That was an unusual school. It was just a new school at that time. There were seventh and eighth grade classes in the elementary school when I went, but they were experimenting with special--they called them enrichment classes--at Thomas Jefferson Junior High, and they wanted my parents to send me to this enrichment class. My older sister had gone there, too. There they had everybody grouped by ability. There was the enrichment class and then the seventh grade classes were numbered 7-1, 7-2, 7-3, all the way down to about eight, I think. I'm afraid it got to be a kind of snobbish affair. It wasn't as happy an atmosphere as it should have been. The enrichment classes were expected to do special things. Somehow or other, I was not as happy there as I was later in the high school. I think I was, perhaps, a person that

liked to be more structured. They gave us projects to do and let us work on our own. I don't think I used my time very well. In high school, everything was much more structured and I enjoyed it more. I got better grades in high school than I did in junior high. (Laughter)

H: Would you compare that enrichment class that you had to the idea that they're trying to develop for gifted children now?

S: I think it's the same idea. In our social studies class, for instance, we were given a syllabus at the beginning of the year and our teacher told us how many projects we were expected to do. We were to delve into material ourselves and work out something that was visual. I remember building a model of the Cleveland Airport, for instance. We spent a great deal of the time on our own in that classroom, supposedly working out things and then we would go to the teacher and make our reports. As I recall, we did a lot of fooling around, and I didn't enjoy that very much. I didn't care for that type of education.

H: Did you change classes there?

S: Yes, we did. In junior high we moved from one class to another all the way through. We also had a creative writing class. I don't think I'm a creative writer. That was agony for me, to sit there that whole year and try to create something. I didn't do very well at all with that. (Laughter) We were introduced to some poets in that class. The teacher read to us from various poets.

H: Then you moved on to high school? Where?

S: I went to Lincoln High School in Cleveland, and as I said, I enjoyed that very much. I started there in ninth grade. The junior high went through ninth grade, but my father was not content with what I was doing and he felt I had better get into high school. So I moved over into high school in the ninth grade. They had a junior high at the high school also. It was a big, old-fashioned school. It was based on many of the old classical types of teaching. We had very thorough Latin teaching, which I enjoyed. I took four years of Latin and I had two years of German. I felt as though it was a good education that I got there.

H: What do you remember of your elementary, junior high, high school teachers? Were they male or female predominantly?

S: Entirely female in elementary and the principals were also female. I think that was the pattern in the entire city, female principals in the elementary schools. Hardly ever did a man teach in elementary school at that time. I think there was a man out in the special education building behind our building. There were some quite large boys out there and

it was good to have a man there to help them.

In junior high it was very much mixed. We had both men and women. The principal was a man and the assistant principal was a woman. I didn't have much respect for that man. I felt that a lot of his ideas were not particularly good. He was there because he was an innovator. He was pushing things along. I was kind of a conservative child I think. (Laughter) I didn't like some of the things he did.

We had assemblies regularly in the junior high which were quite outstanding. We had speakers from a lot of different places coming to the junior high and different types of programs. I think some drama groups came and put on plays. They had a very good drama program there, too. They put on good plays. I didn't go into the drama program. I wasn't that much interested in it.

There were noon movies. We had a forty-five minute period for lunch. We ate lunch at the beginning of the period and then went down to the auditorium and saw a movie. They showed two reels each day. We paid a few cents, maybe one or two, to go into the movie. You could go to the library or out on the playground if you didn't want to go to the movie. That was the most movies that I had ever seen. We didn't go to movies much in my childhood. We just weren't a movie going family. I got introduced to lots of movies that way. (Laughter) We would see a whole movie in a week and then usually have cartoons or a Laurel and Hardy short comedy on Friday. That's the way it worked out.

H: So you went to a fairly large high school?

S: Yes, it was a large high school. I think there were something like three hundred and fifty students in my graduating class. It was junior high and high school combined. It was the Depression and a lot of children dropped out. They didn't stay in to graduate. It was too expensive to stay in school. If they could get anything to do, they did.

When I was a senior, the merit scholarship tests were just beginning. I remember going quite a few Saturday mornings to meet with our assistant principal so she could help us. She went through various kinds of tests and exposed us to a lot of ideas that we wouldn't have had before to prepare us to take these tests. She had us reading various kinds of literature and doing all sorts of things to help us to pass these tests. We took the city tests down at Cleveland College in the center of town and then we went to Kent, I remember, for our district tests. Kent State University at that time, was just a college for preparing teachers. There was just a horseshoe of buildings. It has changed too drastically; I can hardly believe it.

I took those tests and on the basis of those tests, I got several offers of scholarships for colleges, but my father said we couldn't afford to go out of town. And I think he was right. I thought I surely had to go to our church college, which was Heidelberg College in Tiffin. Other members of our church had gone and I had heard the wonderful things they did. I thought I just couldn't live if I didn't have dormitory life, but my father said, "No." So that was that. I got some good offers of scholarships there, and opportunities to work, but we didn't pursue it farther.

Our Board of Education in Cleveland . . . Did you have any more questions about high school?

- H: I was just going to ask what area of Cleveland was this in?
- S: It's on the west side of the river, not very far from the Cuyahoga Valley. Lincoln High School is probably about two miles south of the public square and I lived another two miles south. I walked to school lots of times. I didn't have to walk, but I liked to walk and I walked home a great deal of the time, too. We did have special student streetcar fares. You could buy student passes or you could buy special tickets that were reduced for students to ride. We didn't have school bus systems at all. But the youngsters could ride on streetcars if they needed to, to get to school and that was a big help. As I remember, the adult streetcar tickets at the time were about seven and a half cents a piece. Student tickets were less than that. They weren't very expensive. We could transfer onto another streetcar line for a penny.

The junior high school that I went to was farther away from my home. That was at least three miles from home, maybe more. It was quite a distance. I could go by streetcar. My father often took me and then would go on to his school from there to save money.

- H: But, it was safe to walk?
- S: Oh, yes, I think it's still safe to walk in that area of Cleveland. People have lots of misconceptions, I think, about Cleveland. I felt it was a wonderful city to grow up in. There are parts of Cleveland that I wouldn't walk in now, I'm sure, but I wouldn't hesitate to walk in that area where I grew up.
- H: Okay, one more question about your teachers. You said that they were all female in elementary.
- S: Yes.
- H: Were they all single?

- S: Not quite. I remember one whose husband was an invalid or semi-invalid. And, well, I know that I had teachers who got married and stayed. Maybe they didn't stay in the system right then, but some of them came back into the system later, I know. I don't know how that worked out. I don't know if there was anything in the contract saying they couldn't get married, but it was not encouraged, I'm quite sure. And I think at that time they didn't want to employ two people of the same family, like husband and wife, in the school system. They wanted to spread the jobs around. They were supposed to live in Cleveland if they taught in Cleveland. I remember that too.
- H: Okay, so you went to college. Were you expected to become a teacher by your parents?
- S: Yes, my parents expected me to. I didn't want to, particularly. The doctor that I worked for said I should be a nurse. He thought I picked up things so easily and so well that I should be a nurse, but I said, "No." That was something I just didn't care about at all. My father said that we had to prepare for something and school teaching seemed to be the most obvious thing. I think it was a wise thing to say we had to prepare for something. My older sister was prepared to be a teacher and my younger sister, who is more of an individual than I, or asserted her individuality more perhaps I should say, vacillated greatly about being a schoolteacher. She ended up being an elementary schoolteacher, but she didn't want to be very badly. She vacillated in her college course between taking home economics at Mather and preparing for elementary teaching in the School of Education.
- H: Was that the best occupation for a female at that time?
- S: I suppose so. As far as financial returns you mean, or status?
- H: Was it considered socially more acceptable than other things you could prepare for?
- S: I think nursing was socially acceptable, but I don't think nurses got as much salary as teachers. Perhaps they don't even yet. The only other thing would probably be clerical work. I wasn't inclined that way at all. I don't think people looked down on girls when they did clerical work. I really wasn't conscious of people looking down on anyone. You did what you could do.
- H: Okay, so you went to Western Reserve then?
- S: I got a scholarship at Western Reserve University. At the time when I started college, the Cleveland Board of Education helped to support the School of Education at Western Reserve

University because they wanted to have a good supply of teachers coming along. So they gave half the support to the School of Education and they also provided scholarships on the basis of tests for people that wanted to take them. I got one of those scholarships. Now the tuition--I have a bill right here--for one semester was \$150. The scholarship was for a hundred dollars for one semester. So I had to pay only fifty dollars plus fees which amounted to ten dollars. I paid sixty dollars a semester during my whole college time. Maybe there were fees for certain classes that were more than that, but that was basically it. I paid sixty dollars a semester for college which is unbelievable. But, it was very fine.

The first year that I was in college, the School of Education was in a public school building. The college part of it was in half of the building and there was an ordinary elementary school in the other half. It was called Observation School. It was a place where we could go to observe very easily any time. We were free to go in and out of that school. We were a comparatively small School of Education and we had very much of a family feeling. We had our own dean right there and we had some excellent professors. We were pretty much looked after. They didn't want anybody coming to the School of Education who wasn't serious about it. So we didn't fool around very much.

H: Where was this?

S: Our school was just west of the Western Reserve campus. Do you know where the Case campus is? Case has now become a part of Western Reserve, but at that time it was a separate school. It was Case School of Applied Science. It was up high on a bluff and we were down below on Stearns Road. Doan Brook came through and had made the valley. Our school was right across the highway from this bluff where Case School of Applied Science was. Doan Brook was open at that time. It's now covered over, but it was a lovely brook. It was flowing toward Lake Erie. It was a nice, little wild area right there in the midst of all the traffic. I remember our general science teacher in our freshman year taking us over there and teaching us about the leaves and the flowers and the insects that we saw there in that area. We learned a lot firsthand right there in the center of the city. It was fun.

H: As you took your first graders out and taught them about the trees?

S: That's right, I did that too. I feel you should get to know what you're looking at. Have eyes that see. That's what we were taught. I think it's very important that you have knowledge of what you're looking at and an appreciation of what is right around you.

H: You mentioned Stearns Road.

S: Stearns Road was the road eight next to this Doan Brook. It runs between Carnegie and Euclid Avenues.

H: So you were at this school all four years then?

S: Not exactly. After my freshman year the Cleveland Board of Education withdrew its support. It was feeling the Depression very much. And so the School of Education was taken over entirely by Western Reserve and we were moved out of that building into what had been a lovely house. I wouldn't know if you would call it a mansion, but it was a good sized house on Bellflower Road which was just opposite Flora Stone Mather. Flora Stone Mather was the women's college. Adelbert was the men's college. We were right opposite Flora Stone Mather Campus. We then were able to take many courses on the university campus as well as in our own building. The staff was very much reduced. There were very few of our own School of Education staff members left. That building was our headquarters, and we had our own dean. We felt very much a part of that school. It was very much a social unit. Practically none of our students were dormitory people. We were nearly all day students who went home at night, and so our structure was for day students. We enjoyed each other. I still have a lot of friends that I write to from that school and I still see some of them. I have enjoyed them all through the years. They were really outstanding people.

H: Margaret, when did you start college, was that 1934, 1935?

S: I graduated from high school in 1934, but I didn't start college until 1935. I took a year between. Another interesting thing, I might say here. At that time the Cleveland public schools offered postgraduate high school work because so many of the young people had nothing to do. They offered them a chance to come back and take some more courses. Postgraduate students were expected to work as an assistant to somebody in school as payment for the courses. I went as an assistant to my father at the school where he taught. By that time they had free textbooks, and he was put in charge of the textbooks, which meant charging them in and charging them out. It was a big job. He was also treasurer of the school. He had to handle all the money for all the clubs. Each organization had to deposit their money with him in order to keep things straight. He had a great deal of book work to do besides his teaching. I was assigned to help him. So I was at his school (South High School) in the mornings. I took two classes and worked for him for several hours, then went to my doctor's office in the afternoon. That was another interesting time and, I felt, a growing experience that year. I was glad I waited a year to go to college. I think it meant more to me than it would have right out of high school.

H: Did these courses that you took help you as postgraduate courses or give you any credit when you went to college?

S: No, I had already graduated from high school. They were just high school courses. They didn't give me any credit. I took typing and shorthand, which were a help to me, and I took an economics class, I recall, and a physiology class. I got interested in physiology because I had been working for the doctor. I wanted to find out more. Those were interesting classes. I didn't keep on with my shorthand, but it was an interesting thing to learn. It was different from anything I had ever experienced before. The typing, of course, helped a lot later on.

H: What kind of courses did you take in the School of Education?

S: We had a great variety of required courses in the first year, as I recall. We had an Introduction to Education which I thought was very good. We got into the philosophies of education which I think is important, different ideas that people had developed through the years of how education should work. We started in observing in classrooms in our freshman year. We would go as a whole class, or at least our professor was with us. Maybe not the whole class, but a pretty good sized group of us went. We knew what we were going to be observing, what type of teaching we were going to see. We had to take very specific notes. When we got back we would discuss them. We had to tell what the teacher used in visual materials, how she introduced the subject, how she developed it and what her conclusion was. We had to watch and see all the development of a lesson, which I think was very good experience.

Before that year was over, maybe before the first semester was over, we were teaching in those situations ourselves. We would be assigned ten minute or fifteen minute lessons. We were being observed by our own professor, by the classroom teacher, and by other classmates. So we did a pretty specific job. Our professor helped us prepare our lessons. It was a very well structured class, I think, where we knew what we were doing and we had to carry it out carefully and well. We taught several short lessons during that first year, our freshman year.

Our administrators were very particular, and weeded out students, so that we did not get to our junior year unless they were pretty sure that we were good teaching material and had done careful work as we were advancing.

We had general science. We had art. We had physical education which directed us toward things that we would teach in elementary school. I think we had a basic English course for grammar and that type of thing in that freshman year. I can't remember all

the things we did have that freshman year. A social studies course, too, I believe, of some sort. But as we advanced we had educational psychology and we had more art and physical education as well as a course in teaching mathematics. We also had to study mathematics so we knew how to do it. We had to be good mathematicians ourselves. We were allowed to take a good many elective courses too, for enrichment.

We had to have a major field and that was not just "education". I had two minors. Social studies was my major. It included history and geography, the teaching of social studies, economics and various things like that. I had German as a minor and music as a minor. I was never a performing musician, but I sang in groups. I was in the university choir and glee club, and so got a lot of exposure to music that way. I took basic music things, theory and sight reading. I also took history of American music and appreciation of music. May Hill Arbuthnot was one of the outstanding people on our staff. She was very well-known in the field of children's literature. She was on our staff the whole time I was at Reserve.

H: The Arbuthnot Anthology of children's literature?

S: That's right. As I said we were a very close-knit family, so we got to know our professors well. They were the kind of people that entertained us, would have us in their homes or put on special events. We got to know them well. We had special social events. We would go to the science lodge in a metropolitan park. The whole school would go and have an end-of-the-year gathering there, and we would have our Christmas gatherings there. We really had a good time knowing our teachers and each other.

H: How many were in your class when you graduated from college?

S: Oh, dear, I don't know. [Looking at a photo] Let's see. Can you estimate how many that is? These were the people that went to the School of Education. Now, actually at our commencement there were many, many more because there were people who were finishing their degrees who were already teaching. We had to take four years of college right away. They weren't giving certificates at that time in Cleveland for teaching. You couldn't begin teaching unless you had your degree. What is it?

H: If I counted right, there are thirty-seven in that picture.

S: About thirty-seven. Some of those were music students, and some art and industrial art students. They weren't just elementary education, but most of them were. When we came to our commencement there were loads more people. As I said these were folks who were already teaching, who came back to

get their college degrees. They attended afternoon and evening classes. So we had a big class when it came to graduating, but we didn't see those people very much, didn't get to know them very well.

H: Well, then you were talking about these certificates?

S: Earlier than this, you could get a teacher's certificate at the end of two years and teach school, but by this time, at least in Cleveland, you couldn't start teaching without a degree. I'm not sure how wide spread that was. They didn't even offer a certificate, at that time, at the School of Education.

H: So you came out with a bachelor's in elementary?

S: Yes, Bachelor of Science.

H: While you were doing your training you had student teaching?

S: Yes, we had it the second half of our junior year and the first half of our senior year. We went every morning for a whole semester to a public school in Cleveland. They had at that time just two schools designated as training centers. Those teachers had special training. They were specially picked to be our training teachers, which I think was a good idea. I was in a second grade class in my junior year. As I said, I went every morning for a whole semester.

H: Where?

S: At Mount Auburn School in Cleveland. And then, in my senior year, I taught in a first grade class. So I was exposed to two different levels and two different teachers, which I think was very valuable.

H: Was it the same school?

S: Yes, I was in the same school because it was easier for me to get to that school than the other school. We went back to the campus in the afternoons and took classes. We met with our supervisor one day a week at the campus. We talked over problems with her and that type of thing. She was one of our regular teachers there in the School of Education who supervised us. We also had Cleveland supervisors coming in to see us, and would give us help too. We were well supervised. Cleveland had a great many supervisors. They had a supervisor for art, for music, for handwriting, for reading, for math. I think for every subject there was a supervisor. The supervisors circulated a great deal and visited classes. They knew what was going on in the schools. They were there to help, not just to criticize. It was a good learning situation.

- H: Were they there as specialists to help the regular teacher?
- S: Yes, they were, that's right.
- H: Did they actually take the class themselves and do teaching?
- S: I never saw that happen. They would observe us and then they would talk to us. I know that we had curriculum centers in Cleveland. One school was the reading center where they experimented a great deal with the reading curriculum. They would have observation days set up so that certain teachers were invited to go to that school and see the way the teachers were doing it. But it wasn't the supervisors teaching, it was the regular teachers doing the teaching. They had a great deal of help from the supervisor. The reading supervisor would spend a lot of time in that particular school and that was how they improved the reading curriculum and teaching methods. That was helpful too, to go and observe.
- H: Now, when you did your student teaching, did you take over the whole class eventually or did you just teach subjects here and there?
- S: I can't recall specifically. I think I taught most of the morning by the time I was finished. But I don't think I was on my own, nearly as much as they seem to want students to be on their own today. There was somebody in and out all of the time that was conscious of what was going on in the classroom, I'm pretty sure. We were given responsibilities for many things, as I recall. I remember putting on quite an elaborate stage play. I think it was in first grade. I remember having the children painting the scenery. I was in charge of that. I could ask the teacher for help, but I don't think she made any suggestions. I think the play was pretty much my job. I felt quite responsible, but I don't think that I handled the whole morning by myself.
- H: So you never had to go in for a full school day from beginning to end?
- S: No.
- H: You never faced that until you were actually in the classroom yourself?
- S: That's right. The fact that we started right at the beginning of the school year was important and went through to the end. I think it was important for us to see all the development. It was better than just having a small segment which some students do nowadays, very small segments.
- H: So you were in the classroom your freshman year, or were you in your sophomore year?

- S: I think we were assigned to observations, but I don't think we actually taught in our sophomore year. It seems to me we were told to go and observe certain things and we would have to make arrangements with the teachers ourselves to do that.
- H: And you were in your junior year for student teaching period and your senior year.
- S: Yes.
- H: So you had quite a bit of classroom experience.
- S: Yes, we did.
- H: All right, then when you started teaching, what do you remember of a typical day?
- S: (Laughter) Well, my days were rather unusual, I think, because as I said, we were in the midst of the Depression. We were still feeling the Depression when I graduated in 1939. Cleveland was not hiring any teachers with a contract. I got a job as a permanent substitute without contract, which meant that they could put me into a place that was vacant, where no teacher was assigned. They put me into a vacancy, and if they needed to move me somewhere else they could, without any difficulty. At that time they were trying very much to save money. They had a certain ratio set up for the school system. There had to be so many children per teacher in each building. It seems to me the number was up in the forties. It seems like an awfully high figure to me now. But I think it was something like that. And if the ratio fell below that number, they would move a teacher out of that building. The permanent substitutes were the ones that were moved.

When I was hired, they saw that I had a minor in music, and so they put me into a situation where I taught music all day long, fourth, fifth and sixth grade music in two different schools. I would move from one school building to the other at noon every day. I didn't play the piano well enough to accompany anybody, so this was a real strain on me. I had to lead with my voice. I knew a lot of music. I mean I had a good understanding of the music literature that was around so that I could lead, but it still was an awful strain to be singing all day long. I had fourth, fifth and sixth grade children and I had done my student teaching only in primary. I had done all my preparation for primary grades. So it was pretty strenuous, but I did get along all right. I had a good principal. She seemed to appreciate what I was doing. But after about six weeks they decided either to eliminate the music in those schools, or they needed to eliminate a teacher and I was eliminated.

Then I was moved to a situation that was something else that had been developed in Cleveland. They kept students who were slow learners in special classes within the school buildings. They had a primary room and perhaps an intermediate one. In the building where I went I was given the older group of slow learners. Many of them were bigger than I was. I had had no experience with that curriculum at all. I felt really lost and it was a very difficult situation for discipline. You can imagine. There were no special textbooks or materials. They had no special way of approaching the subjects that I knew of. I hadn't been introduced to it at all. I was just thrown into the situation and it was a very difficult one. They should have been working on their own levels, but the class was not set up that way. Those were really strenuous weeks. I was very unhappy there. Sometimes I cried in the mornings and my mother would cry with me. She hated the thought that I had to go to that school again. I was there several months, I think, and then again, I was bumped. By that time, it was probably February.

One interesting thing I remember at that school. The Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus, came to the arena in downtown Cleveland. I don't know whether the students had to pay anything or not, but practically every student went. They chartered streetcars to take us to the circus. When I was a child they chartered busses to take us to various things downtown, but this was a chartered streetcar. The streetcar went directly from the school to the arena. When it got to a place where it had to turn, the conductor would get out and switch the track so that it could make the turn it needed to. That was quite an experience. They must have had quite a job running all those streetcars, parking them somewhere, waiting for us to come out again. I don't know how they did all that.

After that, I think that most of the rest of my first year was substituting for people who were ill. Some of them were rather long illnesses. I learned a lot that year, but it was not very easy.

- H: Did you ever, during all this time, being pushed from one situation to another, think that maybe you had chosen the wrong profession?
- S: Yes, I was very unhappy, I can tell you. Also I got five dollars a day for each day that I taught and nothing for the holidays. Even if I taught around a holiday I didn't get paid for that holiday.

The second year, I was again a permanent substitute, but I was put into a classroom where I stayed practically the whole year. It was a building where there was a very good principal. She helped me a lot. I had a second grade and it was much more

to my liking. I enjoyed it. We did a lot of interesting things that year.

A strange thing happened. At Memorial Day I was told that a teacher who had had a leave of absence for illness wanted to come back to that building. She had preeminence over me, so I was bumped again. I had taught up through Decoration Day. There were only two weeks of school left. I had prepared my children for a big field day. The principal asked if I would like to come back and watch the field day. I said that I thought I would. But she said, "I don't think you should be out on the playground. I don't want the children to see you." They didn't want parents and children to know how it happened that I wasn't there anymore. So I watched from up in the building. When the grapevine got hold of the fact that I was being released at that time of year, my dean from the School of Education called me that same weekend and said he had heard about it. He wanted me to come out and interview some superintendents that were coming in to see him. I went out immediately to do that and got a job in Mentor for the next year, which was very nice.

H: How long were you at Mentor then?

S: I taught at Mentor for three years. There I taught in a three-room schoolhouse which was out in the country. It was a part of the Mentor Village School System. It was on Lakeshore Boulevard. That was pretty much a resort area where people came and vacationed in summer cottages, but there was enough of a permanent population to have a school. We had a first grade room, and I taught second and third grade in my room. Then we had fourth and fifth in the other room. The sixth graders went to the big elementary school in the village. We were very much on our own.

H: What did you have for materials to work with?

S: Oh, we had good materials. It was a well supplied school. I don't think it lacked anything at all. I say, it compared very favorably in materials with Cleveland, but we didn't have nearly the supervision. In Cleveland, we were so supervised. Everything was blocked out. You knew what you were doing this fifteen minutes and the next fifteen minutes. It was very structured. You knew that somebody might walk in at any time and you were supposed to be teaching what your schedule said you were supposed to be teaching. It was a bit nerve-racking. You had to have your materials all lined up very well at the beginning of the day. You had to be able to move from one thing to another very quickly, which was good training. I appreciated that.

H: And then you went on to Pine Mountain Settlement School in Kentucky?

S: Yes. I was in Mentor for three years and enjoyed it. We were right in the country and I could do a lot with the children. I was much freer to teach. I didn't like to be boxed into fifteen minute periods. I like to be able to pursue things longer. And I was free to do that there. We had a frog pond right in our backyard and we could observe nature very well. We had a brown thrasher that built a nest right outside our window and we could watch the whole process. We had a lovely time. I enjoyed it very, very much out there.

One of the teachers in the three-room school lived in Mentor. The other two needed a place to room. The superintendent told me of an elderly couple that was prepared to keep us. I stayed in a different home each year I was in Mentor. The community folks decided among themselves whose turn it was to board the teachers. I had no car so I had to live close to the school. I went home each weekend by Greyhound bus. On Monday morning I had to get up at 4:00 a.m. in order to get to the Greyhound bus terminal in downtown Cleveland, to get the bus that would get me to Mentor in time for school. I was always afraid that I wouldn't make myself get up when the alarm rang.

Our "room and board" started with Monday supper and extended through Friday lunch (the landlady packed us daily lunches). For those four days of meals and lodging we paid \$8 per week.

I enjoyed the families I roomed with, and the other teachers that roomed with me. It was a pleasant community, Mentor-on-the-Lake. I bicycled about, and visited the homes of all my students, a practice I continued when I taught in Salem (without the bicycle, however).

I had gotten to the place where I was feeling, after five years of teaching, that I didn't want to do this all my life. We were very much interested, my sisters and I, in folk dancing and folk music. We knew Berea College in Kentucky was an outstanding place for those things. My sister and I were thinking we ought to be going on with our education in the summer, but we didn't like the idea of starting work toward a master's degree in education. So we decided to go to Berea one summer and learn to weave. (Laughter) That was a whole new world. We enjoyed it thoroughly. We had a lovely time at Berea College. We were there for four weeks the first year and six weeks the second year.

While we were there we got to know about Pine Mountain Settlement School in Kentucky. Our weaving teacher had gone to Pine Mountain Settlement School as a child. A house mother from Pine Mountain was in our weaving the second summer. And she said, "Why don't you all go back to Pine Mountain with me and visit the school?" We were delighted. Pine Mountain is about

a hundred miles from Berea. It was wonderful! We enjoyed that visit so much! We found out so much about the school, which was a basically religious school, but was not a denominational school. Many ideas that they were fostering were not being fostered in denominational schools. For one thing, the Pine Mountain staff wanted to keep up the folk culture as much as they could and many denominational schools were squelching that folk culture as much as they could. Pine Mountain had been founded by women who had a vision of what the mountain people could do with good education. The person who donated the land, William Creech, wanted for his grandchildren an education that was worthwhile, to help them in life. So the school was founded on the principle of teaching children to work as well as to study.

The school had a small hospital for the community. Students worked in the hospital and learned a great deal there. Every area of work was supervised, very well supervised. They had their own farm, so boys were working with a dairy herd and working in fields and learning a great deal about farming. The students worked in the library. They worked in the kitchen. They did all the cleaning on campus and it was well supervised so that they learned how to do things well. They worked in the laundry. It seemed to us an ideal kind of a situation.

It was a boarding high school. We weren't qualified to teach in high school and we weren't particularly anxious to teach either. But we got jobs. My younger sister and I got jobs in the office. I became the bookkeeper. I handled all the money of the school, and she became the secretary of the school. She was secretary for the director and also was in charge of raising funds for the school. We had some very interesting times there and I loved it.

When I sent my application to Pine Mountain they wrote back to the superintendent of schools in Mentor for a recommendation, and he came to see me. I hadn't talked to him first about it. I suppose I should have, but I thought I would wait and see whether I would have a chance to go to Pine Mountain before I would say anything to him. Well, when I started teaching at Mentor, I should say, the contract said, \$120 a month for as many months as they required us to teach. That happened to be nine months, but I suppose they could have cut it down if they wanted to. Also, there was a stipulation in that first contract that this contract was null and void if a single woman teacher got married during the time she was under contract. I moved up in the three years that I was at Mentor from a \$120 a month to \$1580 a year. I was also the principal of that little school the last year I was there. That really was not much more than that I was the one responsible in case there was an emergency. Also, I had to send in the attendance records, et cetera. There was really nothing much more than that to being principal. I'm not sure I even got an extra monetary

consideration for being principal.

Well, the superintendent came to see me, and he said, "Why do you want to go there?" I said I thought I wanted that experience. It seemed like such an interesting place. And he said, "Well, if I raise your salary, would that help to keep you here? How much are they going to give you there?" I said, "Sixty dollars a month, plus my room and board." He looked at me and said, "Well, I guess, I can't offer you more money to stay here."

That wasn't a teaching experience at Pine Mountain, but I observed a great deal about teaching and we had a wonderful time living there. I was there for three years before I got married. My sister stayed on for about thirteen years.

H: Were you married in Cleveland?

S: Yes, I went to my home to be married.

H: Did you live in Cleveland or did you come to Salem then?

S: No, my husband was employed at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. He was an electrician and he was on the maintenance staff of the college. They were changing over the electrical system at that time. They had their own generators at the college and they felt that the time had come for them to change over to alternating current so they could buy electricity from the city. My husband's job was to change everything over from direct current. He enjoyed that very much. He was working at Earlham at the time that we were married. Our first three years were at Earlham. My husband was the kind who liked interesting things to do. When that particular job was over, he didn't want to stay on doing regular maintenance work. About that time Pine Mountain offered him a job of being in charge of the buildings and grounds there. So we went and were at Pine Mountain for two years. I was too busy with our family by that time to do anything besides take care of the household.

Our Allen was two years old by that time, and our Dorothy, who was brain damaged sometime near birth, was five months old. While we were at Pine Mountain we realized that she would need more help. We decided we had better move to another place. We did take her to an osteopath for a while, every two weeks for treatments and she seemed to improve a little. But it was, I think, about a hundred miles one way through the mountains to get to the doctor and that was an ordeal. Eric, our third child, was born at Pine Mountain. He was just a few months old when we started making the trips to the osteopath. Those were difficult trips! We decided that we had better come here to Salem, where my husband's family lived, where we could get more convenient medical help than we could at Pine Mountain.

H: Then you went back to teaching.

S: No, I waited until our youngest child, Edith, was in first grade before I went back to teaching. It was not until 1961, I believe, that I went back to teaching.

H: All right, you've been in teaching for a while; what major changes have you seen or did you see while you were teaching?

S: It's hard to say. It was quite a change from the Cleveland type of teaching to Salem type of teaching. But here in Salem, I think we now have more requirements handed down from the top than we had at the beginning. Perhaps, in some ways, that is better; but in some ways I felt that I could do better teaching when I was freer to teach as I wanted to teach. I know a lot of people don't trust teachers to teach as they think best. But in first grade I taught reading nearly the whole day long, because reading would come into everything I was teaching. You can present reading concepts in practically everything you teach. And if you're too much structured in a schedule that you have to follow it's much more difficult to do it that way. I felt, too, that there were so many interesting things that children needed to know, just ordinary living types of things that they needed to know. Many were not exposed to those things in their homes. I felt that I needed to take whatever opportunities I had to teach those things too. I know you have to have a teacher who has some sense of what has to be accomplished and how to accomplish it, to have the freedom that I liked.

H: But you're not talking about total freedom to do what you want when you want?

S: No, I'm not talking about that.

H: You're talking about within guidelines there are certain things to be accomplished but yet you go about doing it?

S: Yes, I didn't like the idea of saying from 10:10 until 10:20 I'm going to be teaching this particular subject. I liked better to be able to be more free and to build, for instance, my writing program right into my reading program. I can't say that I'm going to spend only twenty minutes with this group in reading because I have to give them instruction in how to do their writing or their grammar or something that is in connection with their reading seat work. To me it was just too hard to say, "Now, this group is going to be here twenty minutes and this group twenty minutes." And it was very difficult for me to say, "Now everybody is going to have spelling at this time and everybody is going to have writing at this time." Because when I was, for instance, presenting the seat work that I wanted the class to do before we went into our reading classes, I was teaching writing and I was teaching grammar and I was teaching spelling all in that period of time. I feel it's a more rounded

out program when you don't isolate subjects.

H: Well, is it actually possible to isolate spelling, grammar, language skills, reading skills? Can you actually cut them down and isolate them and say this is specifically spelling?

S: We had certain books here these last few years that we were supposed to go through. You were supposed to take your class through the grammar book--it was a language development book--and you were supposed to take your class through a spelling book, and through a writing manual. To me, those were isolated and I felt they needed to be joined together.

H: Do you feel then possibly that our education system has become too specified or too technical?

S: I can't speak for the whole. I know what had happened here in Salem, but I can't say what has happened everywhere. I'm thankful that in Salem we never got to the place where we isolated children and said that they had to pursue a certain course all by themselves; because at least in first grade I feel they need the stimulation of other children. I think they do in other grades, too. They need the stimulus of the class. If you say, "Now you go through this page and that page by yourself, and you accomplish these goals," I feel there's a lot of stimulation lost. I felt that many times children learned a great deal just from discussion. In math, for instance, they need a lot of, oh, playing games where they're competing with each other in order to learn the math skills that they have to learn. If you set one child down by himself to learn those math skills it is a really dreary affair. They don't learn them.

I found that when I had groups that were too small, even in reading, they lost out a lot. They didn't have the stimulation of other people contributing. In reading, you're not just learning to read, you're learning ideas and you have to discuss what's going on. And that's where I think a teacher is valuable and a class is valuable. There was a trend toward individualizing most instruction. I don't know whether they're doing as much of that as they had been doing. Some years ago I visited in some classes where they had stacks of math papers. The children were just working through the papers. Various adults were around to help them and to check to see that they were doing them right. But I felt that there was so little stimulation in that type of teaching.

H: Is there anything specific that you would like to see changed, the teacher preparation or something that you encountered as a teacher?

S: Well, I felt that some of the teacher preparation was not as adequate as I would have liked to have seen. Many of the students that I had as student teachers in my class, hadn't had enough participation in actual classroom activity before they came

to do their student teaching. And then I felt, too, that they were limited in their experience in student teaching because they were with only one teacher. A student should have experience with more than one teacher. Teachers teach differently, and I think that it isn't fair to a student to have only one experience. If a student can train with two or more teachers it is so much the better. And I felt the student teaching time was too limited. They should have had a longer time to do their student teaching.

H: Would you be in favor of the internship that they have discussed in the state of Ohio where the student comes in and works with a classroom teacher or several classroom teachers throughout a full school year?

S: It probably would be a good idea. I think it would be helpful if a student could work with various teachers. A full school year would certainly be helpful.

I felt too, that perhaps the Schools of Education did not know their students well enough. There was not a close enough relationship between the administration of the educational programs, the students, and the professors, that some students came through to student teaching, who really should have been eliminated from the program before that. The administration, like the dean of the school, and the various professors should know what kind of a person each student is, and whether she can stand the stress of teaching, or whether she can carry out what a teacher needs to do.

H: Well, what do you think of a teacher's salary being an influence in attracting people into education? Say, if their salaries were increased, would we attract people that would make better teachers?

S: That's hard to say. To me the salaries are phenomenal considering what I started with. (Laughter) I never thought I would earn this much money in a year by any means. And considering that we have only nine months of teaching, I don't think our salaries are too bad in comparison to some other jobs taking comparable ability. I think that our benefits are very good, at least in many systems they are; and our retirement benefits are unusual. I've heard, in various places, that we have outstanding benefits in our retirement. I guess I don't think that just paying people well is the thing that's going to make them good. I don't know what I would say about that.

H: Okay, is there anything else important that you think we have not covered that you would like to talk about? Any experiences, ideas, courses?

S: I'm glad that they are allowing married teachers to teach nowadays because I felt that I was a much better teacher after I was married and had children than I was before. I felt that I understood a great deal more about children and I could handle emergency

situations a lot better than I could before.

I did feel that my education in Cleveland was outstanding. Being on the campus at Reserve, I was able to be in and out of the Art Museum a great deal, in and out of Severance Hall, the home of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, and to participate in programs in Severance Hall. It was a rich cultural experience to have grown up in Cleveland and gone to Western Reserve University at that time. And I hope it hasn't deteriorated too much.

- H: I was wondering, reflecting back on the Cleveland schools and the situation they have been facing in the last year with the teacher strike and talking about closing down, their financial problems, has this been a great concern to you since you went through those schools?
- S: It is a concern, but I could see how very difficult it would be to teach in some of those situations. People like to blame teachers, but if you have a situation where the class is very difficult to control and the whole building is difficult to control, you can hardly do any good teaching. I don't think it is just up to a teacher.

END OF INTERVIEW