

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Early Education Project

Teaching Experience

O. H. 586

LAURA WRIGHT

Interviewed

by

Caroline Wilms Hall

on

May 23, 1980

## LAURA HALL WRIGHT

Laura Hall Wright was born August 4, 1907 in East Liverpool, Ohio. She was the youngest of eight children of Christopher and Luanna Lunsford Hall. Three of the children died during infancy. She attended Washington School for the first eight grades. She remembers taking a final examination in third grade, but excelled academically in later grades and was not required to take any more finals until they became mandatory. She recalls that all female teachers were single, that grammar began in third grade, and geography in fourth.

When Laura went to East Liverpool High School at Fourth and Broadway, she walked the mile distance four times each day. It was necessary to go home for lunch since there was no lunch program in the schools. She completed a college preparatory course and graduated in 1925. After a two week vacation, she entered Kent State Normal School to begin teacher training. She attended full-time through July 1926 when she could apply for her teaching certificate. In September of 1926, she was employed by East Liverpool schools to teach fourth grade at the Pleasant Heights building. She taught here for three years and attended summer sessions in 1927 and 1928 to complete the full two courses for a diploma from Kent State Normal School.

As a teacher, she started the school day with the Pledge of Allegiance, scripture reading, the Lords' Prayer, and songs the children had learned. Since there was no gymnasium, and playground facilities were limited, she taught exercises in the room during recesses. It was also necessary for the teachers to perform

hall duty.

Laura left teaching in 1929 to marry Clarence DeWitt Wright. The following year her son, Richard, was born. She returned to teaching as a substitute from 1936 - 1941 until her daughter, Karen, was born.

Laura resides in East Liverpool, Ohio, and is active in various church and lodge groups. She enjoys knitting and crocheting while listening to radio or television. She is also self-employed producing the DeWitt sterilizer developed by her late husband for use in barber shops.

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INTERVIEWEE: LAURA WRIGHT

INTERVIEWER: Caroline Wilms Hall

SUBJECT: Kent State Normal School, Pleasant Heights School,  
school days, courses, teaching duties, East Liverpool  
schools

DATE: May 23, 1980

H: This is an interview with Laura M. Wright for the Youngstown State University Early Education Project, by Caroline Wilms Hall at her home in East Liverpool on May 23, 1980, at 8:00 p.m.

Okay, Aunt Laura, would you tell us about your mom and dad and your brothers and sisters, a little bit about your home life?

W: I was the youngest of eight children: three died in infancy, one lived to be 22 months old. At the time I was born my father worked at the Hazel Street stone quarry. There are three of us living, two boys and myself, at the present time.

H: What was your home life like?

W: Very lovely. We had enough discipline. We had lots of love and plenty of discipline. I had a very happy childhood.

H: What do you remember of your school days?

W: I went to a neighborhood school all eight years. I got a good education, I feel. When I got into the third grade we had to start taking final examinations. The first semester I had to take my English final. From that time on finals became that you had to take them regardless; I didn't have to take examinations, midterm or finals, until they were mandatory. I had a very nice school life.

I wanted to excel in anything as much as I could, or everything as much as I could. I had a habit of coming home and reporting that I was home, then sitting down on the front porch steps and doing my homework for that evening so that when play time came,

why, I was free to play. So really, I was very conscientious about my schooling.

H: How long was your school day?

W: From 9:00 until twenty minutes to 4:00.

H: And did you go home for lunch?

W: Yes.

H: Did any of the children have to stay for lunch?

W: Not that I know of, unless their parents worked or for some reason you had to stay. There wasn't a prepared lunch.

H: Is the school that you attended still here in Liverpool?

W: It's now an apartment building.

H: What was it called at that time?

W: Washington Building.

H: What do you remember of your teachers? Did you have basically female teachers? Were they single? Were they married?

W: All female, and all single. I later taught in the same building with my seventh grade teacher. I remember some substitute teachers I had at Kent State while I was still going back for further education.

H: Had most of them, do you know, gone to a normal school or gotten some kind of a degree?

W: I don't recall. I wouldn't know for certain, but I rather think they had some certification because Kent seemed to be the one at the time for teachers to attend; it was a teacher's normal college.

H: What subjects did you have?

W: The basic primary studies, and then as you went into third grade, I think, English or grammar was introduced. I don't believe I had geography until the fourth grade maybe. Then just basic. You had the same teacher for everything, except a music professor came in.

H: How often was that, do you remember?

W: I don't recall how often because he was professor of music throughout the city. So, I don't think it was too frequently. I can't remember.

- H: Do you remember how your school day started? Did you have specific opening exercises every morning?
- W: We had the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, and scripture, and the Lord's Prayer.
- H: Did you have recesses through the day?
- W: Yes, not too long of a recess, bathroom privileges at mid-morning and mid-afternoon. I don't recall a lot of playground. I don't know as there was lots of room for it right there.
- H: Then from Washington you went to . . .
- W: East Liverpool High School.
- H: And where was it located at the time?
- W: Where Kent State Campus is today, Fourth Street and Broadway. I went home from there for lunch.
- H: How far was that?
- W: Well, that was a good ways. You know where the building is, don't you? And you know where Uncle Ed and Aunt May live? Well, I walked from there at noontime, both ways at noon, and again in the evening. I knew that I had to be at a certain spot on the way home in order to have time to eat lunch leisurely enough. When the chimes at the First Methodist Church sounded and when certain whistles at the potteries blew, I had to be at a certain spot or I wouldn't make it to May's.
- H: What was high school like for you?
- W: I took a general course. We didn't have a lot of extracurricular activities at the time. At least I wasn't in a lot of them. In my grade school I was in lots of little plays and I liked that. It seemed like if the play called for a mother, I was the mother, and a certain boy--throughout all the classes--was the father. If there was a king and queen, I was the queen and he was the king. But then in high school, I didn't have much of a cast part at that time, maybe choruses or something. I took English, Latin, algebra, general science, and plane geometry. I don't think I had solid geometry.
- H: What time did your day start in high school?
- W: The same as the grade school did at that time, I think 9:00.
- H: And then what time were you out?
- W: I think twenty to 4:00, about the same as it was. I don't recall any difference there. The only thing that changed there was that

you had different teachers for each subject. That was the biggest transition I made. Back to grade schools, the seventh and eighth graders had sewing. We went out of the building for sewing, down to a central building, which was across from the library; old central was here in Liverpool.

H: You mentioned that you took a general course in high school.

W: Yes.

H: Did they have different courses for people preparing for college?

W: Yes, they had college prep courses, and they had business courses.

H: Were they distinguished? I mean you said, "Well, I took a general course." What did they call the ones that people took for business and college?

W: Well, college preparatory. In business courses, the ones with business, they got typing and bookkeeping, which I didn't get. I wanted to take typing, but there were too many business students at the time and they couldn't work me into a typing course.

H: Were your teachers still predominantly female?

W: Yes, predominantly, but I did have some male teachers in high school.

H: Of your female teachers in grade school and high school, were most of them single?

W: Yes, I think. See, there was a state law--I guess it was a state law--that if you married, you were to retire or quit teaching.

H: Were there any that were widows and had come back to teach that you recall?

W: Yes. I think there was a Mrs. Goodwin that came back teaching English literature. I can't recall any others. Some of the teachers in the high school particularly, well, my grade teachers too, were, I think, older people, not so much as you find the younger girls today.

H: So, basically they had been teaching for awhile and had stayed with it.

W: By the time I got there they did.

H: Why did you decide to become a teacher?

W: I had a cousin that was a first grade teacher at the Horace Mann building here in East Liverpool. And from the time, I

guess, I started to school, my mother held her up to me as an example. I don't believe anything else was considered by myself or my mother, really, but teaching.

H: Were there other options open to you besides teaching?

W: Yes, I suppose there were, if I would want to do business or stenography and things like that would be open. I don't know. I led quite a sheltered life it seems like, and it just seemed like what mother wanted me to do, that's what I was to do. It seemed that way.

H: Would your parents have been happy if you had gone into stenography or business?

W: I don't think they would have cared, but mother had always held this cousin up as an example to me. This girl said something to me--she was the oldest of my aunt's family; the mothers were sisters--when she knew I was going to teach. She said, "Now, there will be plenty of time to have fun in your classroom, but don't go in with a big, broad smile on your face the very first day. Let the children know that you are there to teach them and they are to obey the rules of the school and things that you say and ask them to do. Once you have them under control to the point that they understand you and you understand them, then you can begin to relent and have your fun with them."

H: And did you follow her principle?

W: I did pretty much that. I never had discipline problems really. I would give the children work to do between bells, busy work, I called it. I always graded it. I didn't give them anything that I wasn't going to read over and assess them on it in some way, because then it is just really busy work. But this was to keep them . . . Like you gave them an assignment of the morning's work, just to keep their hand in that so they would not forget what they learned that morning. Then they would get a little of that at noon when they came back after lunch. If I had hall duty, I only had to walk to the door. Well, there wasn't much rowdyism, but if I would see them getting a little stirred up about anything, then I would just walk to the door and that's all I would have to do.

H: Then you took your training at Kent State Normal School it was called?

W: Yes, Kent State Teacher's Normal School I think is what it was called.

H: You graduated in 1925 from high school?

W: That's right.



H: And then you started that summer?

W: That summer, after thirteen days of vacation only, then I started to Kent.

H: How was the program set up at the normal school? How long was it to be for you?

W: It was to be a two year course, really. You went a few days ahead of time and registered. Maybe I registered that morning when I went over, the first morning. I guess we went early enough to register then. I don't think we had to make a trip ahead of time.

H: What was Kent like at that time? How big was it?

W: Quite small according to what it is now. As I remember it, the buildings were only in a semicircle. The only buildings there were two dormitories and an administration building. I believe the library was a part of the administration building, and to the right of that semicircle was the training school building. While I was there, I believe--either that or shortly after I left--the library was put down in the middle of the semicircle. The buildings were all up on a hill. In fact, the alma mater was, "Kent State College is set on a hill. To reach its height you had to climb with a will . . ." I don't remember all of it, but it was that and it was a climb up the hill. But I lived on a street right adjacent to the campus.

H: There were dormitories, but you did not live on campus?

W: No, I didn't live on campus.

H: Was there a particular reason that you didn't?

W: No. I don't believe my parents knew too much about what college life was going to be. I was the only one of our family who went any further than high school. We had heard about this family at Kent through relatives of neighbors. They told me what a lovely place it would be for me, and they even gave me a recommendation to take to them.

H: Tell us, again, on the tape about your experience of getting to Kent, and this house.

W: Well, I went to Kent without a reservation, and we found the home that I was to go to. I went up to the door and a youngster came to the door--a boy who looked like he would be ten or eleven or twelve years old maybe. There were three boys in the family. The parents weren't home and I told them that this home had been recommended to me and I had a reference from--I can't remember the first name; Thompson was her last name. They said that the

house was full. I said, "Well, I really need someplace to stay tonight, even if I have to find a place tomorrow." So, the boys looked me over and decided I should stay. I went back to the car and told my parents.

They were coming back the next day. At that time my father worked for the railroad and the railroad company was having a picnic at Brady's Lake, which wasn't far from Kent, so they were coming back the next day. They weren't going to worry about me too much overnight as long as I had a bed to sleep in. They picked me up the next day to take me to the picnic with them after I had registered. By that time I knew that the people had accepted me into their home.

H: Tell us something about the home.

W: The home was a large home. We had a doctor very close, the brother-in-law. I don't know just how, now, he was related to the family that lived right next door, which my parents thought was a good idea. Of course, there was a doctor up at the college too. But the home was large, and the family--that was the mother, and father, and three boys--lived on the first floor. There were five bedrooms on the second floor, and all but this one, little room had been assigned, two girls to a room. Then you went through this one, small room and there were five beds in the attic, two doubles and a single bed in the attic; room for five more girls.

When I went back in the wintertime, there were just five or six girls and we just used the second floor.

H: How much did you have to pay board, a week or a month?

W: I did my own cooking. There were facilities in the basement if we wanted to. I ate some meals out, but I did my own cooking. I think \$2.50 included my room and the privileges for cooking, \$2.50 a week.

H: I wonder what you could get for \$2.50 a week now.

W: You wouldn't get much.

H: Now, did your parents pay for your college?

W: Yes.

H: Do you remember what it cost them?

W: I don't know what tuition was. I don't recall. I don't know why I can't remember some of these things. They paid until I started to make my own way. And occasionally they would send me some money then. My father could get passes for me to come home. If I would go to Ravenna, Ohio and get a train after

school, I could get home at 6:40 in the evening. Not often did I get a ride from there. After I got a little bit acquainted, I guess maybe I had some rides. But after I began to work he could no longer get me passes.

H: So as long as you were a student, he could get passes for you to come home?

W: Yes, but after I started to work, even the summers after I started to work, why, I was on my own. I think the cutoff age was eighteen . . . See, I was seventeen when I went, when I started. I think it was because after I started to work and had my own money . . .

H: Okay, if you were seventeen when you started in Kent Normal School, had you been young, five, when you went to school?

W: No, my birthday being in August, I started in September.

H: Okay, but how old were you when you started school if you were so young to go to college?

W: I started when I was six, and I finished in 1925.

H: So your August birthday was the difference. I understand.

W: My August birthday was the difference. See, I was eighteen the August after I finished in June.

H: While you were up at Kent, what training did you receive? What kind of courses did you have to take in Normal School to teach?

W: Well, I had basic music courses, English, math, geography, and history. I did my practice teaching in kindergarten and third grade. It all seemed to be very basic things.

H: You say basic music, was this geared for you to teach it?

W: Yes, you had to direct. Occasionally, in the choir you had to beat time or make the motions as a director would do. And occasionally, you had to sing a little ditty all by yourself. You had to teach it; I mean, once you started in your class you had all the subjects to teach in the class.

H: Did you have methods courses?

W: Yes, pretty much of them.

H: What did your methods courses cover?

W: Oh, I'm thinking back to lesson plans.

H: Did you have to write plans for these courses?

W: Yes, I had to write lesson plans. The days you were taking your practice teaching you had lesson plans to make for that day in whatever subjects you were teaching particularly.

H: Well, for your methods courses, did they teach you how to write up these lesson plans?

W: Oh, yes.

H: How detailed were they?

W: Well, in the beginning I thought they were quite detailed, but after you got a little further along they didn't seem to be so difficult. Your questions and expected answers and things like that, and what points you wanted to bring out and such things.

H: You mentioned practice teaching, when did you practice teach during this time period?

W: I would say it had to be my last two summers, 1927 and 1928, probably because I had kindergarten.

H: If you went summers, how did you have children to teach in the summer?

W: I don't know; they had children in the training department.

H: What was the training department?

W: It seemed to me there was a teacher for each room. It was just like an ordinary school, only student teachers went in and took care of what their assignments were.

H: You mentioned this before--it was on campus, right?

W: Yes.

H: In this semicircle of buildings?

W: Yes.

H: Were they just children from that area of town or were they the professors' children?

W: Well, a bit of both I would think.

H: And they ran it all summer long rather than just through the school term?

W: Yes.

- H: But it would have fallen in what, your second year?
- W: I would say.
- H: If you went to campus what, September through May . . .
- W: I went from June clear around to the last of July the following year. Then you were committed to apply for a teaching certificate. I did apply, but the superintendent misunderstood me; he thought I was going back to school that fall of 1926. I had put in the full year and both summers, see, and I said, "No," and I was quite upset about it. So when I went down he said, "Well, I'm sorry about this. I had three openings, two of them were mixed grades and one was a straight fourth grade." That's the Pleasant Heights Building and that's the one I took.
- H: Now, this was in Liverpool when you took the job?
- W: East Liverpool, yes.
- H: So, you had applied for your teaching certificate, then did you get it before you actually started to teach?
- W: That year? I don't recall. I was privileged to teach. Now, whether I got a certificate at that time or not . . . I must have.
- H: Did you have to take the teacher's examination to get your certificate at this time?
- W: I don't think, as long as your grades were good. I don't recall taking a teacher's exam.
- H: What social restrictions did you encounter, if any, being a teacher?
- W: I don't recall that I had to worry about it as far as that goes. I was always conscientious enough. I've used that before. When I was teaching children that coffee and tea was not good for them, I quit drinking either coffee or tea, and drank hot chocolate. My mother said to me, "Don't you want a little coffee this morning?" I said, "Mother, I am teaching children that it's bad for them, so I must not do it myself."
- H: Were there places that you were very careful that you didn't go or weren't seen because you were a teacher?
- W: I didn't go to places like that that I felt that . . . I don't know as I had to restrict myself to it.
- H: Did other teachers at that time have to if you didn't?

- W: Well, I think they would look down on smoking at that particular time. I never did smoke. I think some did, but I think that was looked down on. I don't know, really, because it just didn't become a question to me. I don't mean to say I've always been such a perfect person, but I just didn't lean that way. The movies I attended didn't seem to hold any drawbacks for me in any way. I just don't recall of any restrictions, that I felt conscientious about them, that I had to watch every step I took.
- H: At that time, was it expected of teachers to go to church and be Sunday school teachers and be involved in the community?
- W: I don't know that it was expected, really. Well, no doubt it was, but then I always did those things. I taught Sunday school class, I helped with childrens' programs in the church. I don't know that it was a requirement for everybody to do that, but that was my way of life. I don't want to sound like a prude. I don't want to sound like I'm trying to make myself a perfect person, but I didn't take part in the other things.
- H: No. I just wondered because sometimes--even though our life styles are different from someone else, even though that was a natural part of your life--there may have been things that were restrictions on the education community.
- W: I don't recall. I think teachers were held in more respect, maybe than what they are today. I don't know. But I didn't feel any restrictions on me at the time.
- H: So, you didn't feel torn between being a teacher and being an individual?
- W: No.
- H: All right, then let's go into your teaching. Your first teaching job was at . . .
- W: Pleasant Heights, fourth grade. I taught there three years before I married. When I married, I had to quit teaching. I was no longer a regular teacher, a steady teacher.
- H: That would have been 1926 through 1929?
- W: Yes, I finished teaching in 1929. Then I substituted any time I was called the first year after our marriage. The next year, say in 1930, I had a baby. Then I felt that my place was home with the child and I didn't accept anymore work until he was old enough to start to first grade. There wasn't any required kindergarten in Liverpool at the time. So, when he was six, then I applied again for substitute work. I substituted the biggest part of the next five years. Then I had another youngster. I had a daughter then. There was

eleven years difference in the children. From the time he was six and for five more years I could substitute. Then after that I didn't teach anymore, after February of 1941. I think I have substituted in every building in East Liverpool. We didn't have the localized schools we have now.

H: How many schools were there in Liverpool at that time?

W: Oh, I could almost name them. During my substitute days I had to work at Maplewood building, Lincoln, Grant Street, Third Street, Sixth Street, Central, West Bend, Washington, LaCroft, Pleasant Heights, Glenmore, Walkers, Garfield, Horace Mann, Nevill Institute, and Klondike building. That's as many as I can recall right now. And that included all eight grades at one time or another.

H: They were housed in these different buildings?

W: Well, all the buildings didn't have eight grades, but I have substituted in any and all of them, one through eighth grade.

H: So, even though they were neighborhood schools, they had several classes in each building in the neighborhood?

W: Yes. Now the LaCroft building, I remember that the children went there till about fourth grade. I believe they came into Pleasant Heights at fourth grade. I'm not just sure how many buildings didn't have all eight grades.

H: But none of them, basically, were like one-room schools?

W: No, only this one at Walkers, which was on the road between East Liverpool and Wellsville. That's the only one that I can recall that had four grades in one?

H: So, it was a two-room school?

W: Two-room school, upstairs and downstairs. About onerow of pupils to each grade, or a little more because I don't know how many I had at the time. But there would be a row, maybe a row and a half of one grade. I don't know that the principal told me how to do it or not, but I remember giving all the other three classes something to do and then took one class up to a reading circle, then the others were to be busy doing their math or English or something else.

H: But your normal school training had prepared you for this, true, that you may have more than one class in a room?

W: Well, I didn't have any training that way, but I guess my method teaching prepared me what to do when I had. The first day I walked into school, I had 51 pupils and 48 seats.

H: Oh, lovely.

W: But that evened itself out in a short time by families moving out of the neighborhood. The children would be sent to another school.

H: What was the schoolroom like other than having too many students for desks?

W: Do you mean the physical setup?

H: The physical setup, right.

W: Rather a large room and I would say maybe eight rows of six seats to a row. I can remember winding myself up and down the aisles, around to observe each child as they were doing any written work. I had quite an experience. I had not had very good grades in one class at Kent. I guess I had sort of a dislike, maybe, for the professor. So, one rainy, and I mean rainy day, who should come to my room but this professor, to observe. I called him by name and said, "Well, of all the days when to expect anybody, today?" He said, "That's when we come, when you least expect it." But it so happened I was pleased with myself. I was having a geography lesson on the zones and I was having one group go to the board and make their drawing and name them while the others observed and then the first one to catch a mistake was to let it be known that they had found that and so on. Then reverse the group and let them go and do theirs. Then we proceeded through the geography lesson. I was quite pleased, really, at the time, that I had a well planned geography lesson particularly for that day.

H: When you taught that year, were you to set up a unit to teach by that included all of the subject areas or did you teach each subject separately through the day?

W: I had so many minutes for each different subject. I covered every subject every day. I don't know, music and writing might have been alternated. I'm not sure now.

H: Were you still teaching the basic areas: arithmetic, reading, spelling, handwriting?

W: Yes, in fourth grade we got into some fractions in math. You progressed. I don't know how they do it today not having done any [teaching] since 1941. I had so many minutes, like, and I went through that. When it came time for a unit quiz, I would give one and then I would grade the papers, and if I felt the children didn't come up to my expectations for them, and too many of them didn't, then I felt that was a test for me and I would have to reteach it, because I hadn't done my best for them or more of them would have caught it. I felt



that when I gave those, or even a six week test just before grade time, I would give it early enough that I would have time to go back over the points that I felt, as a teacher, I had not brought out.

H: Did you have a required amount of material that you had to cover during the year?

W: I guess so. In some subjects we had workbooks to work along with our text and we tried to cover everything pretty much that would be expected of you. You never knew what was going to come out in a final exam, so you had to keep pretty well up on it.

H: You had to give the children six week tests, and midterms or finals?

W: I don't know that six week tests or anything like that were required. But I liked to do it, like I say, in order to test myself to see if I was putting it across. I was there to teach children, and if I wasn't doing my job, why, I didn't feel like I was worth my money, little as it might have been at that time.

H: How did you start the day?

W: With the Pledge of Allegiance, scripture, Lord's Prayer, generally sang a few songs that they had learned, little ditties and things that they had learned, and then whatever my schedule was for the day.

H: You mentioned scripture reading, now, did you select this or . . .

W: Yes. Sometimes we would start and then read, follow through a complete section like in order to bring out a lesson. You weren't necessarily teaching a Bible school lesson at all, but you read so many verses that you tried to make it . . . If you didn't get one complete thought finished up, you did it the next day.

H: What extra duties did you have besides the actual classroom teaching?

W: Hall duty, both as I came in the morning and as you dismissed them to keep order on the stairs and keep rowdyism down.

H: When they came in, they were allowed to come to their classroom, directly?

W: Yes. I'm trying to remember . . . As a child I used to have to line up I remember. You waited outside and lined up, and then when a bell rang, then you were permitted to enter the

building. But I'm trying to recall whether or not that's what happened when I was teaching. I know we lined them in the room to dismiss them, more or less to get them quieted down so that you could get them out of the building without too much confusion, no pushing and things like this on stairs.

H: Were there facilities there for the children to have recess?

W: Not too much where I was teaching. Different schools had different setups a little bit, but not too many of them had too much playground equipment that I can recall. I know that Pleasant Heights, not until they had more lawn put in and the landscaped terrace . . . On one layer of the terrace they put up sliding boards and swings and things like that. There wasn't a lot of ground around. You could play a few games, but nothing like a ball game or anything that amounted to anything. We just didn't have those.

H: Did you have gym periods with the children?

W: Just as exercises like. There wasn't a gymnasium to go to. You had them stand at their seats and do arm exercises and maybe a run around the room and a skip around the next time, just basic things like that, exercises.

H: When did you do this?

W: At our recess time pretty much.

H: Rather than having them outside you ran?

W: Well, we would go outside and run around a little bit, but we would do these others. I think it was a recess. If not, it could have been just a little period like maybe ten minutes of some sort. I don't recall exactly.

H: Since these were neighborhood schools, did all of the children go home at lunch time?

W: Yes, see there was no prepared food program for them. Teachers carried their lunches.

H: You didn't have any children that stayed?

W: Not unless it would be a rare occasion when parents were going to be busy. I mean like a reason for the parents to be away from home at noontime.

H: So then, were you teachers free to go out for lunch if you wanted to leave?

W: There wasn't any place really close enough that you could

get to for lunch. We carried our lunches. Sometimes, if a child had to stay for any of the reasons I mentioned, why, maybe you just sat at your desk and ate in the room with that child. There weren't any rooms to send them to or go to for lunch time.

H: What other physical properties did you have in the room as far as materials to use in your teachings?

W: Well, you would have a globe for geography, your library center.

H: When you speak of a library center, you had books in the room?

W: Yes, extra books for them to read.

H: Who provided them?

W: I don't know whether the children brought some of them in or not. I think the school provided. I think there were certain reading materials given to you to have for extra credit. I don't know if they got extra credit for them, but sometimes children would finish their seat work and they had to have something to do.

H: Right.

W: I don't mean as a library center that they went up to a table or anything. We just didn't have tables around. Everything was pretty much desk work.

H: Were the seats that you mentioned in describing your room, were they fastened to the floor?

W: Fastened to the floor, drop seats, and the tops didn't lift up even, most of the places. They were the kind that you slip the books in. You wanted to look, you had to get down and look for it. You didn't raise the top of the desk.

H: Were the textbooks and workbooks that the children had provided by the school or did they have to purchase their own?

W: The only time they had to pay for a book was if they destroyed it. The books were checked in at the beginning of the year and each child was given the number of that particular book, and that record was kept. Then that book was called in the last few days of school as you finished the course. You remarked them, the teacher remarked them in new, good, poor, very poor and non-usable. If a child had been given a book in new or good and then it became a book not fit to be used then sometimes they were required to pay for it. If they had destroyed it or had lost it, it had to be replaced.

- H: How much parent involvement was there in the schools at that time?
- W: We had parent-teacher associations some places. Sometimes they had that--what's the other name--we had homeroom parents some of the time. I don't say it was just when I was teaching steadily. I don't know exactly. I'm getting mixed up a little bit with when my children went to school and how strong the home school association became because I took part in that always. I don't know whether they have any of them today or not, but it's always the parents that don't need a consultation with the teachers that show up, really. I've had that said to me different times.
- H: So they had a P.T.A., but were the parents involved in, like the work that went on in the classroom?
- W: No, we would have what we called speech days or visitation days and National Education Week and things like that and the parents would come, and we would have carnivals, and money-making things like that.
- H: But parents weren't involved in, say, aid to classroom or working with the teacher in any way.
- W: No, only if they need consultation over the child for some reason.
- H: Did East Liverpool have set conferences when you were teaching?
- W: No.
- H: How did they grade? Every six weeks, every nine weeks?
- W: Every six weeks I think.
- H: What major changes have you seen in education?
- W: More liberalized education I think.
- H: What do you mean?
- W: Well, like you asked me what all I had to work with. I think that they have a lot more today. They have the tape recorders and things like that we didn't have at all. We just didn't have them. Then I think the children are a little freer. I don't know what's expected of teachers today, according to the laws and all, but I think there's more of a liberalized education. It used to be kind of a fixed thing, I think, and a set program.
- H: Do you feel that the more liberal education is better for

the children than the fixed or the set?

W: Well, I think they both had their place. Like I said before, I didn't have any discipline problems that I can recall. I remember correcting one little girl one time. And some of the boys had been acting up a little bit, just in actions, like, doing nothing wrong, but just wasn't the thing I thought they ought to be doing. And I walked in to the room one day before the last bell had sounded and I found this one girl doing the same actions as the boys, and I said, "Oh, not you too?" That's all I said to her. She told me in later life after she had grown that she felt so badly that I had to correct her about anything that she wished the floor had opened up and taken her in, even as a child. So, I think the discipline has its place and yet, I don't think that we have to be as strict as we were at that particular time.

I know the principal in my room, if I were on hall duty and she thought she heard a little more noise in there than she ought to, she would go to the door and clap her hands real quick. But had I been taking care of it myself, I just walked to the door and they simmered down. So that was a bit strict discipline, I think, to what they have today because I think they clammer as much as they want to.

I recall going back to when my daughter was in third grade and I went for visitation day and National Education Week and they were having an art class, an art lesson and they had a substitute teacher. Now, maybe if the regular teacher had been there, maybe it wouldn't have been this way. But each child carried their scissors up to the scissors box and each child took their scraps to the paper basket. I watched one boy, and he wouldn't pick up every piece of paper around his desk in one time. I bet he made eight or ten trips to the wastepaper basket. Now whether that was to say, "Look at me; I'm here," whether that was a showoff thing or not or whether he just didn't see it the first time around or the second or third time . . . Now, I think that confusion could have been done away with by having one person take a box with the scissors in and go up and down the aisle and let everybody put their scissors in, and somebody else pick up the paper basket and take it past the desks and let them throw their paper in. Now say you had 26 or 27 children there and each one on the move going to all the places they had to go to get the room straightened up again for the next class.

H: Is there anything that you would like to see changed in education?

W: I don't know how much truth there is, whether they're rumors or whether it's actually so that the children get so far along and maybe ready for college and can't read. I know of one teacher, well she retired as a principal, but she wasn't a

principal at the time. She was teaching in a fifth or sixth grade. She found out the first few days that the children couldn't read any higher than a second grade level. She took them back that far and brought them up the first few weeks of school. She went back and brought them up through that again to the fifth grade level. She was a person who graduated when I did from high school, but she had gone on and had a master's degree and was ready for a doctorate, but she felt she was too old to go into a doctorate just a few years ago.

H: What other changes would you like to see?

W: I'm not much of an authority on what I would expect at this time. I think that that children today, my own grandchildren, are better educated in a lot of things, say specified. I have a grandson very much interested in photography and he's in the ninth grade now, but a couple of summers ago he took a course at Ohio State University in photography. I don't know what else they do. Of course, they're over in the Worthington and Columbus School District too, and have access to some of the things that maybe the children here don't have.

I really can't say. I can't be very specific about it.

H: Is there anything else that you would like to tell us, any experiences or areas that you feel we have not covered?

W: No, I just feel like I haven't been able to recall as much as I would like to have recalled for you.

H: Tell us about any interesting experiences.

W: When I was called in about 10:00 one morning to this one building that had only the two rooms, four grades in each of two rooms . . . It wasn't the very first morning I was there; I was there quite a few days. But one boy decided he would like to throw airplanes, paper airplanes, around. Well, you have so few minutes to try to put something across to each class in each subject that you couldn't stand for much foolishness. So I warned him that the next airplane I saw go, why, we would take it up to the principal on the second floor. So it happened and away we went. The principal indicated that she wanted him to go up and sit beside a certain little girl up toward the front. He began to cry, wimper; he didn't want to sit beside her because she had freckles and he didn't want to catch them. Nevertheless, that's where he sat.

H: One thing I didn't ask you, what were you paid when you taught?

W: Ninety dollars a month the first year; \$95 a month the second year; \$100 a month the third year. I turned down \$105 because I got married.

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H: What did the substitutes get paid when you were substituting?

W: I don't recall.

H: Do you remember what they made a day?

W: I just don't recall, Caroline.

H: All right, thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW