

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Canfield Fair Project

O. H. 282

FRANCIS G. LESS

Interviewed

by

Carrie Stanton

on

December 5, 1983

FRANCIS G. LESS

Francis Less was born November 20, 1918 in Green Township, Ohio to Anthony A. and Mary S. Less. He was educated at the public schools in Leetonia and Greenford and has been farming since 1936, when he graduated. His career began with custom work and trucking for neighboring farmers, after which he planted apple orchards and raised poultry. Mr. Less has seven children.

At present, Mr. Less specializes in two crops: apples and sweet corn. He is a member of the Board of the Canfield Fair and is in charge of the apple display, poultry, rabbits, and Rooster Crowing Contest.

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INTERVIEWEE: FRANCIS G. LESS

INTERVIEWER: Carrie Stanton

SUBJECT: Canfield Fair Board, Farming, Chicken and
Rabbit Competition, Growing Apples

DATE: December 5, 1983

S: This is an interview with Francis Less for the Youngstown State University Canfield Fair Project by Carrie Stanton on Washingtonville Road on December 5, 1983 at approximately 2:45 p.m.

We usually start with your own background, when you were born, where you were born, your education, that kind of thing.

L: I was born in 1918, November 20, in Green Township, about a mile from where we live now. I attended the elementary school at Leetonia, Ohio, and high school at Greenford. I graduated in 1936 and I've been farming ever since.

S: Your parents were farmers?

L: Yes. The first year I was out of school, I worked with my father on the farm. I didn't raise any crops for a couple of years; I just had some equipment and I did custom work for farmers.

S: What do you mean by custom work?

L: Well, I had a tractor and a sprayer and a truck, and I sprayed orchards and vegetable crops, mainly potatoes. Then when the crops were in, you could usually find some trucking to do. At that time, there was more of a variety of crops. It wasn't quite as specialized. There were a couple of different growers

that planted a lot of lima beans.

S: Lima beans! Is that common around here?

L: Not anymore. (Laughter) That was in the late thirties. Before and during the Second World War there was just more labor and that was a lot more handling. We hauled beans from there for four years. I was single then and I took the equipment and went to Florida in the winter. I sprayed potatoes and hauled potatoes down there for three years. The first year we were married we went down, too, but that ended that. (Laughter)

I had bought a little farm before that, but it wasn't much of a farm. We did buy some of the land we have now and got into the orchard business. I have, more or less, been doing the same things ever since.

The bean business changed after the Second World War. There was more machinery and, of course, freezing came into the picture. There was a co-op that we belonged to that had machines to shell the beans. We raised lima beans for a couple of years, but then we gave that up.

We raised potatoes for awhile, but we didn't have the right kind of land, really, to be in competition with other potato growers. Our land wasn't suitable to use bigger equipment on.

S: There are quite a few potato growers around here though, aren't there?

L: There are, yes. Well, not actually so many, but there are a lot more potatoes grown. When we were growing potatoes, we grew about thirty acres a year. That was an average size grower then. But the people who are growing potatoes now are so specialized that they have two, three, four hundred acres of potatoes. And they have the equipment to do it and that's what it takes. Our land was too rolling, but it was better suited for orchards.

Then we got into the chicken business in 1958. For about twenty years we had laying hens. We started out with two thousand and then we got up to twenty thousand, and we gave that up too.

S: Why? Is that a tricky business?

L: No, not really. It's a specialized business and the equipment doesn't last too long. Our equipment was getting old. We were in competition with people that had new equipment. We had a family that worked for us and when the husband was 65 he wanted to retire so we quit then.

We specialized in sweet corn and apples--just the two crops. But we raised a little bit of grain too, especially when we had the chickens. Although we actually didn't use that grain to feed them, but we did have grain to sort of protect us on the price of feed a little bit.

S: What made you get into the fruit growing business?

L: Well, that's what my dad specialized in--apples.

S: Did he always specialize in that?

L: Not really. He came from Iowa. He was born and raised in Iowa and farmed out in Iowa for four or five years, I think, and he didn't particularly like that so he came to Ohio and tried to do the same kind of farming here for a few years. But that wasn't working out, and he was all set to go back to Iowa when this Charlie Roller, that you mentioned--I guess he had one of the larger orchards at the time--wanted to retire or get out of it and he told my dad about it and they traded. Well, my dad used the farm that he had to make the down payment on the other farm.

Right after we were married we had a chance to get an orchard. We never had much money but what little money we made most of it came from apples; and we had some apples every year.

S: It takes quite a bit of time to start an orchard, doesn't it?

L: Yes it does. The first five years you really don't get any return from the trees. You get some apples, but not enough to pay for the year to year expenses. But after the fifth year, then the trees do pretty good and then you can start recuperating some of the money you spent earlier.

S: How old are the trees when you plant them?

L: They're either one year or two years, but you cut

them back to nothing. Even if they are two years old, they would, maybe, have a couple of apples on them, but when you transplant them you have to cut those limbs off so the roots can start.

S: You have to kind of balance?

L: Yes.

S: And then there are apples within five years?

L: In five years, yes, they will start to have a fairly good crop. Some of them have apples in two years, but just a few. At least in two or three years you can tell whether you got gypped by the nursery. (Laughter) And that happens plenty.

S: Really?

L: I don't suppose they can help it, to a certain extent. But, today, when you plant an apple tree, you get a root, and you don't know what kind of apple you are going to get. So you take a bud from a tree that you know what the variety is. You either bud or graft one to that root stock. Of course, now, the way we plant an orchard with the trees much more concentrated on an acre, you use either a dwarf or a semi-dwarf root stock. Then you put the bud on it of the variety you want. Usually a nursery grows those root stocks and does the budding. Anybody could do it if they have the time and take the time and learn how to do it. Today a lot of the trees that are planted come from either Michigan or Maryland.

S: I was thinking maybe they would come from Washington State. They don't come from Washington State?

L: Well, some of them do. Not too many of them do. Everything is much more modernized. They dig them up by machine. They bundle them up and someone might throw the wrong bundle of trees in the wrong bin and then they send them out. And nobody knows, really till it has apples on it. You do get quite a few trees that aren't true to name. Like we have some coming into bearing now that were supposed to be Red Delicious; the last two years some of the trees have had some apples on them, but they've been yellow apples. (Laughter) They are not Golden Delicious, either! (Laughter) Five years is a lot of work, really.

S: You mean they just . . . I don't know what the word

would be--not orphans. (Laughter) Apples can't be orphans. You have never figured out what they were?

L: This particular instance that I'm talking about, no, I don't know what kind they are. The fellow from the nursery has been here. I've sent them to the experiment station. If anybody knows the name of them, they won't tell me. Anyway, it is a nice looking apple, but it doesn't keep too good. But it can be used in cooking.

S: It's edible?

L: Oh yes. And it's a pretty good cooking apple too.

S: Have you seen the trees change quite a bit through the years?

L: That block of trees there was planted when we moved here, but they were just three years old. The first year they had a few apples on them. On this farm there were about forty acres of apple trees, but we've taken them all out and replaced them.

The recommendations were to plant 56 trees to the acre and leave them that way until they were about ten years old. Then cut every other one down, and that left you 27 big apple trees.

Today we have roughly 107 or so to the acre, and we don't intensify them near as much. But they plant up to four or five hundred trees to the acre now. There are some apples in some areas, if you didn't look real close when you were going down the highway you would think they were grapes. They plant them on trellises. There isn't too much of that here, but a little bit of it.

S: Are the apples as good when they do that?

L: Well . . .

S: That's a matter of opinion?

L: The apples are just as good, and probably better, because the tree has to be kept pretty open for the apple to get some sunlight, and they get more sunlight like that and probably color better. But it does take a lot more handwork than growing trees ten to twelve feet high. The average height is ten to twelve

feet, some are shorter and some are bigger.

S: How long do trees produce?

L: Well, you can have an apple tree produce for thirty years. But one of the things, usually there is an improvement in the variety. That is the way it has been done in the past and I suppose they will continue the same thing. The older varieties can't compete with the new varieties on the market. They have a good quality but they don't have the appearance that some of the new varieties have. The biggest thing is that, the first thing that the customer sees is the eye appeal. They don't taste them till after they get them home. To a lot of people, if the apple is hard and juicy, it's good.

S: How has the variety changed around here? Do you just start out with a couple different kinds and now there is a lot of different kinds?

L: No, I think there were more varieties years ago than there are today for the volume of apples. Red Delicious is the most popular apple, and I'm sure the Yellow Delicious would be second. But the McIntosh is very popular too, although in this area we don't grow near as many McIntosh as they do in the East. Of course, the West is really all Yellow and Red Delicious.

There are still a lot of apples used for processing. For instance, Gerber's and Smuckers buy a lot of apples for applesauce and apple butter and the things you see on the shelves in the store. Golden Delicious is a very good apple for those uses. I'm sure any processor would buy any other variety they could rather than Red Delicious, as they don't cook up. Red Delicious is a very good apple for cider.

As far as growing an apple tree, the Rome Beauty is really good to grow because they are more hardy and probably yield better than any of them. They are very attractive apples too. Maybe not quite as good quality, but they would come in the class with Yellow Delicious. They are good for fresh consumption and processing too.

S: What is the biggest obstacle in fruit growing--the weather?

L: The weather, yes. This year we had a frost on the

ninth of May--I forget which date it was for sure without looking it up. Red Delicious were right in full bloom. The weather affects Red Delicious more than a lot of varieties. They froze pretty bad and we had a light crop of Red Delicious, and even the ones we had weren't too good. They were in full bloom and the early bloom is the bloom that makes the best and the biggest apples. Those really all froze. Late blooms made quite a few apples, but they didn't get too big.

The seventeenth of July we had a hail storm but we were very lucky, we didn't have much. Our apples have a few hail marks on them, but not near as bad as some growers have. It was right in this area, too.

Apples don't grow too good in hot weather, and we had a hot summer.

The trees made a terrific growth this past year which isn't too good because the new growth has a lot of leaves on it and they shade the apples. Then the apples didn't color as good this year in our area. That isn't true in the cooler climates like around the lakes and Washington.

S: When you hear there is a frost warning up, what do you do?

L: Pray. (Laughter)

S: Can't you do something?

L: Yes, you can heat. Now there are all kinds of methods. One thing that was getting pretty popular was a charcoal brick. You put two of them in a plastic bag and you have to handle them fast. That worked good up until about 1972 when the price of oil went up. Then they quit making them. I'm sure they quit selling them because they got too expensive. You only need to replace them every three, four, or five years.

Elevation is the most important thing. You shouldn't really plant an orchard in our area. If you don't have about a twelve hundred foot elevation you are taking a chance. There are a lot of orchards though, planted on eleven hundred feet and probably lower. But, 1320 feet is the highest spot in Mahoning County. This is about 1240 feet right here, but we have some at a little under 1200 feet.

It is about as safe as you can get. Places where the orchards are more concentrated and the land is more level like citrus orchards in Florida heat a lot and use wind circulation.

Here it is hard to tell which way the wind is going to move. Heating that you can't do on the spur of the moment isn't too practical. With today's conditions you can tie up a lot of money heating. It's better just to pray and move to higher ground!
(Laughter)

S: Don't they spray some crops with water?

L: Strawberries. You can't do that too good on trees. It's been tried, but it isn't too good. The water freezes on the berries and protects them. If you did that to a tree you would probably destroy it.

S: So it isn't worth it?

L: No, not at all.

S: Do you and your brother have the stand down there?

L: No, that's another brother. There are three of us. Paul lives up here on Route 165. That is where we were born and raised. My dad lived there. Joe, he has a farm down on Route 14 and they have a market down there and they raise the strawberries.

S: You don't contribute anything down there?

L: Well, we all have our own businesses. This year we sold them a lot of apples. Since their ground is a little lower, they raise berries on it and it works pretty well. They had a bad hailstorm there this summer and it ruined what apples they had. It really ruined them!

S: So the weather was pretty bad this year?

L: Yes.

S: You don't raise peaches?

L: No, not any more.

S: Aren't there peaches raised around here?

L: Not very many. Paul has some peaches and Huffman has

quite a few. There are a couple of farms south and east of Salem that raise quite a few. And down by New Waterford, Simmons and Hartley raise quite a few peaches.

S: Are they even more delicate than apples?

L: A lot more. There is something that happens to the tree or the ground; the tree gets a canker and then it will eventually die. If it's close to the main part of the tree, you have lost the tree. If you are careful and spend time you can control it some. But it really takes a lot of supervision.

I have always liked to grow corn. We grew a lot of corn for grain. Landmark used to have a 200 bushel contest where they would give you a prize if you could grow 200 bushels to an acre of ground. It's pretty hard to do. It takes such good soil and everything has to be perfect. It can be done. We did it for five years straight. At the time that this was going along, we bought a mechanical harvester for sweet corn and we just figured we could do better growing sweet corn. Good ground is limited and we have been growing sweet corn ever since.

S: Can't you keep rotating the crops for that?

L: It is good to and better, but we don't. Sometimes for erosion control and disease control, it's better to rotate, but we don't because we are limited on the amount of land we have. We don't plow. We haven't plowed a field since at least 1972, maybe even before that. We use minimum tillage instead. We pick the sweet corn in July and August, and then we plant a cover crop right away.

S: Like what?

L: Rye. We don't plant clover because it doesn't make enough growth. We use rye and oats. If you looked at our land right now you would think that we were a big wheat or rye grower, but it is just a cover crop that we plant to protect the land until the spring. We never work it up real fine or anything. We always have some organic matter laying on top to protect the soil.

S: You harvest the oats, right?

- L: No, we just disc it up in the spring. One reason we use oats is that the winter kills the oats. If we could get it planted in August, and if the growing season is real good, it will be out in head and we could combine it, but we don't. You wouldn't have the weather for that really. But the winter will kill it. It's a little easier to work up in the spring than rye. If we had a bad spring, a wet spring, rye would grow so fast making the ground hard to handle. Most of the time when we're planting a cover crop we put half the seeds in oats and half rye or wheat. The oats will freeze in the winter and it's not near as hard to get it disced.
- S: A little education here today! Now let's talk about how you got on the fair board.
- L:
- L: My father was on it. I know he wanted one of his sons to continue. So I thought I would like to do it, and I do enjoy doing it. That was the reason I wanted to be on the board and I got elected.
- S: Do you remember when your father was on the board?
- L: Oh yes, ever since I was in grade school, as far back as I can remember. I can remember going to the fair with him.
- S: What do you remember about the fair back then? Was it little?
- L: Yes. I remember where the medical building is, that's where the apples were displayed. There was a racetrack at the east and south end of that building.
- S: East of the administration building?
- L: South.
- S: Seems that somebody said that.
- L: I can remember that track being there, but, like I say, I'm pretty sure that the one that they use today was built and they had the races up there then. But that track has changed. The old one was still enough in existence that you could tell where it was at that time. That's about all I can remember.
- S: Was it where they have the farm equipment now?
- L: It wouldn't have been down quite that far. At that time the farm equipment was on the first midway. That's the only midway there was really.

S: So it was closer to Route 46 then?

L: Yes, it was right to Route 46. There really wasn't anything between the old building, where the art is now and where the medical building is, but parking. Directly east of that area is where the racetrack was.

S: What was in that building that's right by Mr. Zeiger's entrance there? I think that's the educational building now. What was in there?

L: It was educational then too.

S: Oh, it was? You know which one I mean? It's right next to the street, across from the pumpkins down there. That has always been the educational building?

L: Yes. But I don't think it was as big.

S: Oh, you think they added on?

L: Yes.

S: You've seen the fair grow quite a bit?

L: Yes.

S: And your own department, has it grown quite a bit too?

L: Well, not since I've been on the board, but I can remember when the poultry building was where the pumpkin building is.

S: Yes, because all those buildings down there are new.

L: There was a period there when I didn't go to the fair as much. We always went, but we didn't go every day. That's what I meant. We had seven children.

S: Oh, you had seven children! My goodness!

L: When they were small we didn't go to the fair as much.

S: Are they involved in the apples and corn and what-have-you?

L: One of my boys is, yes.

S: Oh, and the other ones aren't! Do they live around here?

L: Four of them do. One lives right next door. One lives right up here at the end of the orchard. One lives across the road at the end of that orchard. The other one, after

you get to the end of the tree here, it's just a little ways on the other side of the road.

S: When you bought your first farm, did you buy the land off your father?

L: No. I don't have any of the land. The second farm I bought was a farm that my dad bought when he came from Iowa. But he traded that with Roller and bought the farm on Route 165.

S: You said your father was from Iowa. Was he from the old country somewhere?

L: No. His grandfather came from Germany. I'm pretty sure my grandfather was born in Iowa too, but I'm sure my dad was born in Iowa. They lived close to Walker, Iowa. That's about twenty-five miles northwest of Cedar Rapids.

S: I know there were some Rollers that went out to Iowa too. They liked it better around here.

L: I can just barely remember some of the things. My dad moved here in 1914. I was born in 1918, and I think he was just on the verge of going back at the time of the Depression. I can remember the Depression.

S: Well, tell me about the Depression.

L: The farm that my dad was raised on belonged to the other daughter. They sent some pigs to Chicago on a train and I think they had to pay five dollars and some cents. It was by the carload, you know, you would pay the freight and the handling. They didn't get anything for the pigs. I remember about that farm there. The fellow that owned that, in the 1920's and early 1930's, built some buildings. Those people just walked away from there. They could still walk. They didn't take anything with them. For our sake, I'm glad my dad did come to Ohio because at least he didn't get hurt as bad here as those people out there that were raising just one or two crops and they had to send it to Florida to sell.

I remember people used to come to my dad's farm. In the Depression there used to be several people, hucksters they called them, from Akron and Canton and Youngstown. They would come and buy apples in bulk, thirty cents a bushel or fifty cents a bushel. They would just take them out on the street and sell them. The first years that I can remember, in the late 1920's and early 1930's, that's the way they sold them.

- S: Thirty cents a bushel! About how much do you think they would sell them for?
- L: About fifty.
- S: They were happy to just make a nickel, probably.
- L: But by that time, most of them had trucks.
- S: Do you remember when they had horses?
- L: Not too much. Well, I remember when my father had horses right before the Second World War.
- S: The great big draft horses?
- L: Yes. My dad used to take them to the fair and he used to let us drive them up. It was a thrill to get to drive to Canfield with a wagon by yourself!
- S: You don't have anymore of those horses?
- L: No. I had enough of that. (Laughter)
- S: You don't have any livestock.
- L: No. We have two cats right now. We had twenty thousand chickens and we did have a few pets.
- S: That must have been a real challenge, twenty thousand chickens!
- L: All the chickens we ever had were in cages, right when cages first came into being.
- S: Did you have to go gather them by hand?
- L: Yes. We quit. I don't regret it. Sometimes you see some of that equipment advertised. You can't sell that equipment to anybody. You can give it away.
- S: What would you consider poultry equipment?
- L: Cages and feeders and stuff like that.
- S: Did you breed your own peeps? Did you breed chicks or did you just go out and buy them?
- L: No. For several years we did buy day-old peeps and raised them until they were ready to lay eggs. Then we would move them into the other building. They stayed in there for about thirteen months.

S: What did you do with the eggs, then?

L: We sold them all to Landmark. When we first started we sold some retail and delivered them in Youngstown.

S: Would this have been during the Depression?

L: No, we didn't go into the poultry business until 1948. At that time we lived across the road. We bought this farm and we didn't have time to do that retailing anymore with the eggs. At the same time, we had been adding to the chicken business, expanding that some, and we sold all the eggs to Landmark to use. Then they packed them and sold them to supermarkets.

S: I remember Landmark eggs.

L: That same plant is still processing eggs, but it isn't named Landmark anymore. They merged with another company from eastern Indiana, and I don't really know what brand name they use. They pack a lot more eggs than what Landmark bought, IGA and Kroger in particular. When we were selling eggs to them I probably saw more IGA boxes and more Kroger boxes than Landmark boxes. They pack some eggs themselves. Most of the stores that they sell them to want them in their own box with their own label.

S: Now, tell me exactly what you're doing, your role on the fair board.

L: Of course, we have meetings all summer and are planning the different things. I am responsible for the fruit exhibit. At the time I went on the board we had chickens. I remember Elden Groves, the fellow that had the poultry before, was retiring and Elden said, "Francis Less is the only one that has a feather at the fair board." He said, "He'll be in charge of poultry and rabbits." I've really enjoyed that, too.

It's altogether a different kind of chicken than we were really used to. We had all Leghorns and these are all more or less fancy breeds, show chickens. I met a lot of nice people that I would have never come in contact with before. I knew a lot of people that had chickens, but I didn't know the strange people we were dealing with at the fair. But they were really nice people.

S: So you send out premium lists?

L: Yes, they're all different entries that are listed in the premium book. Of course, they knew a hundred times more about it than I did. But I learned a little bit about it. It pretty well takes care of itself.

You have to be checking to see that everything goes right, and watching that you don't get too many, and that they have good, healthy birds and that they have enough cages to put them in and so on.

S: How do you find people to judge, from the exhibitors themselves?

L: Yes. They are specialized judges. These past few years we've had a judge, Clarence Weaver, from the Toledo area. Previous to that there was a fellow from the Dayton area that came up.

S: You don't get local people? Too many problems?

L: Yes. The closest judges that I know . . . There's one in the Akron area. He's not so far away, but I can't think of the name of it. It's in the Akron area. He judges at the Canton fair, but they judge their poultry on Saturday so he could take care of that. I asked him about coming here but he really had that other fair and he just couldn't do it.

S: Do the judges get paid?

L: Oh yes, they get paid, especially when they've got to travel such a long distance. They get paid pretty good. This Weaver, in particular, he takes a little longer, but all the exhibitors seem to be well satisfied with him. He does a good job. He does it a little more reasonable in comparison to what some of the rest of them charge. You usually try to engage a judge pretty far ahead to make sure you've got him. We get it done just a little bit more reasonable now than when we did the first year I was on the board. That makes a difference. You sort of have to watch that too. It's probably worth it, but you've just got to watch, that's all.

I have to coordinate the rooster crowing contest, which is the theme of the fair. It's a very interesting project. It lasts for half an hour. It starts at 9:30 in the morning and lasts till ten. In half an hour, the record any rooster ever crowed was 92 times.

S: Ninty-two times in half an hour?

L: Yes.

S: He must have never shut his mouth!

L: But the average was about sixty. I think, the last several years it was around 60 or 65.

- S: How do they get them to do that?
- L: They bring them on the grounds sometimes on Sunday or Monday morning. I think they're probably brought in Monday morning early. They do try to keep them covered. Some of those roosters know it's daylight anyway. (Laughter) Some of them don't crow at all. There's probably half a dozen or so that never make a peep! About 60 crow to the top and we give eight prizes. The lowest one that gets the prize is usually about thirty times. That's one a minute.
- S: Is it mostly kids?
- L: Yes, they're mostly kids, but of course the parents are always there too, and they get involved. The contest in 1982, a lady from Canfield won.
- S: What kind of chickens crow best? (Laughter) Or does it matter?
- L: I guess it doesn't matter. Some of them are the real large chickens. But probably most of them are Banties. I would say the Banties have probably won more prizes than the big ones.
- S: Are they the little things?
- L: Yes. (Laughter)
- S: Are you judging the rabbits now too?
- L: Yes.
- S: You don't get as many entries in the rabbits?
- L: No, we don't have as much room, but the rabbits are really popular. There's sure a lot of interest in rabbits. But the rabbit show, I don't have all the figures out yet, but we don't publish a premium list in our fair book. They have their own premium list. It's not as much the premiums, actually, as it is for their points in their rabbit club.
- S: They have rabbit clubs?
- L: Associations. They're more or less national.
- S: Different breeds?
- L: Yes, different breeds and different rankings. They have their own set of rules. The fellow that we have taking

care of the show publishes a book and writes the entries. Of course, they get premiums and the fair pays them and gives them ribbons. There is an open class for anybody who doesn't belong to a club, but it's not for breeds, it's just for rabbits. There are a lot of children taking interest in that.

S: Yes, my daughter wants to bring one to the fair.

L: Well, she can! Like I say, I could give you the fellow's name that runs the show and writes the entries.

S: What would the other classes be like, Lop-eared?

L: Lop, they call them. There's a breed they call Lop.

S: Yes. Then there's those real furry ones. Maybe Angora?

L: Yes.

S: And those are all separate?

L: Yes, and they have to be according to that sanction, they call it.

S: They have to meet their specifications, then?

L: Yes. Those rabbits have to be tattooed.

S: What about the apples? Who judges that? Do you have people coming from out of town to do that?

L: We always get one person from the Ohio State Department of Horticulture. Then, we have some local fellow in. In the past we had three apple judges because it's sort of a tradition; at least since I've been on the board. And my dad did too, at the time. The apples are just a little bit different. All the apples that are exhibited at the fair are locally grown. It doesn't have to be, but that's just the way it has worked out in the years. Six different growers exhibit.

S: It's mostly the commercial growers? It wouldn't be somebody that had an apple tree in the backyard.

L: No. It's not near all the larger growers in Mahoning County, but the ones that do exhibit, are some of the larger growers. They've been doing it and they fill up all the space that we have. It just hasn't been something that you could go out and just keep encouraging people to come, because we just wouldn't have room for them. You've been in to see the displays there?

S: Yes, they're beautiful.

L: I'm sure that it's one of the nicest ones anyplace at any fair. I'll give you a couple reasons for that. If you had your fair in the early part of August or July, like a lot of fairs are, the apples wouldn't be very nice to put in. And if you had it much later there would be a lot of early varieties that really look nice at the fair that would be gone. So it is an ideal time to have an ideal apple display, and I really think that the growers themselves do a fantastic job of displaying their apples, because they pick them and inspect them and then they bring them and put them in those trays for display and they put them on the plates. They do all of that themselves.

S: How are they judged, on color? Do they have to taste them?

L: No, they have five categories. I don't remember just what they are, offhand, but they're in the premium book, what percentage for what. There can't be any defects on them. The judges know apples and apple varieties. They do a pretty good job of judging, I think. It's all listed there, and before they start judging they read the book and see what percentages.

S: Do you always get first prize?

L: Well, since I'm on the board I don't exhibit. I don't really think it's the thing to do. (Laughter)

S: Oh, why not!

L: Last year, like I said about the freeze and the hail and apples were pretty short, we did fill some trays and display them, but we didn't enter them. I wouldn't do it, that's all.

S: You have integrity!

L: But I wouldn't leave the space empty, either.

S: Is there anything that you would like to add?

L: Did I talk a lot?

S: It was interesting.

L: I didn't know you were recording that at first!

S: Good! People get so nervous.

Mrs. L: There is one thing that I would like to add about the

directors. Not every person can be a director because it is strictly a non-paying job. So you have to have dedication, which all the men have. They're a very fine bunch of men and everyone gets along real good together and they have a lot of fun.

S: Yes, I've heard that.

Mrs. L: That's true. They're very unselfish. It wouldn't work if there were selfish directors. There aren't any selfish ones, because there can't be. All they're interested in is a good fair. And I think they have one.

S: Yes, they do , a special fair.

END OF INTERVIEW