

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of East Palestine Project

Personal Experiences

O. H. 292

ELIZABETH FABER

Interviewed

by

Stephan Casi

on

April 17, 1979

ELIZABETH FABER

Elizabeth Faber was born in Whitetown, Pennsylvania, on March 2, 1876, the daughter of Emmett Faber and Mary Sterheim. Mrs. Faber's father came to East Palestine to work in the Carbon Hill Mine when Mrs. Faber was six years old. Mrs. Faber attended the local schools up until the eighth grade. At that time Mrs. Faber's mother needed her at home.

In 1914 Mrs. Faber married Jacob Faber who was from Washington, Pennsylvania. Shortly after they were married Faber Bakery was opened up in town. Mrs. Faber worked in the bakery from 1932 until 1940. After the bakery closed down she got a job with the W. S. George Pottery where she worked until she was 75.

Mrs. Faber now lives with her daughter, Marge Faber, at 341 West North Avenue in East Palestine. Among Mrs. Faber's honors are several presidential plaques received from President Ford and President Carter as well as a plaque from Governor Rhodes for reaching her one-hundredth birthday. Mrs. Faber is a member of the First United Presbyterian Church of East Palestine. Her hobbies include sewing and listening to baseball games.

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INTERVIEWEE: ELIZABETH FABER
INTERVIEWER: Stephan Casi
SUBJECT: East Palestine Schools, Businesses
DATE: April 17, 1979

C: This is an interview with Mrs. Elizabeth Faber for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on the history of East Palestine by Stephan Casi at Mrs. Faber's house at 341 West North Avenue, East Palestine, on April 17, 1979, at 3:15 p.m.

The first thing I wanted to ask you, Mrs. Faber, is what do you remember about your parents and family?

F: Oh, a lot. (Laughter)

G: What could you tell us about what life was like when they were around, and where did they come from, and where did they live in the United States?

F: We used to live in Mercer County when I was six years old. We moved here to the McClosky place in Ohio, not very far from here. Then my father died here. We lived all that time here, and when I was six years old I can remember back when I lived in Mercer County.

C: Was that Mercer County, Pennsylvania?

F: Yes. I can remember back. I was back once to visit a girlfriend, and she took me out to the old home where we lived over there. Everything was gone but the home.

C: You were six years old when you came to the East Palestine area. When you were a child, what did you remember about what you did for fun? Was there a lot of work to do when you were a child?

- F: Oh, I had lots of work. There were ten of us with my father and my mother, and we had to work for a living. I played baseball with the boys. I had six brothers and I was the only girl. After I would get my dishes washed, I would go out and play ball with the boys. That was the only one I had to play with.
- C: When I think about kids today, they have a lot of free time that they don't know what to do with. Years ago, everybody had to help out, and there was a lot of work. There was a lot more work years ago than there is today for the kids. Did the kids have spare time years ago? Did everybody have to help in the graden, and things like that?
- F: Well, my brothers, they had to plow and fix the ground to plant. My father, he had to work. At night he would say, "I want that done when I come home." They would have it all plowed. He knew just about how much they could do because he was a farmer himself when he was a boy. They always had their work done, but they never got to run around much. My father raised two families because the children from town would love to come to the country, and there would be some there half the time, so we had to work.
- C: What type of activities? You said you used to play a lot of tricks when you were a kid, on everybody.
- F: Yes, that is right. I would have fun with them. I would just tell them to do it and they would do it. There was a fellow that lived across from us, and he came over. When I was about eight or nine years old, my mother had bought a bottle of, they called it Porter's Cure of Pain, and this fellow came in, and she said she had just bought a bottle of Porter's Cure of Pain, and I said, "Oh, yes, it is good, just taste it." Well, he might have known that when it was for pain that . . . It burnt his tongue and . . . (Laughter) he got after me, and I ran and laughed.
- C: You know today a lot of women work. I suppose years ago your mom didn't work. She probably had to stay home and take care of the kids. Is that the way it was? Did most women stay home?
- F: Oh yes, they never ran around like they do. They never had parties or anything in those days like they do now.
- C: What type of family activities, what did the family do? How did you celebrate? Did you have church socials and things like that?

We lived in the country, and we didn't get to go to church as much as we should have. My mother would take us at night. We would kneel at her knee and pray. We would call it our prayer at night.

C: What about transportation when you were a child? How did you get to different places?

F: Well, my father owned a big wagon, and he owned a buggy, and we went by buggy. We had three or four horses. We always had plenty to eat because we earned it. My father was a good farmer, and he would raise about three crops off of one hill. He would plant a couple of grains of corn, and a couple of these little beans, soy beans or navy beans, they called them, and then he would plant pumpkin seeds. He would have loads of pumpkins and we would feed them to the cows. The corn, he had that for the pigs. We had our own meat for year-round.

C: Did you ever have to buy meat?

F: No, we had all we needed. He would raise about five or six big hogs. He fattened them on corn. He would just throw the corn over and let them eat whenever they felt like it. Some of them would weigh two hundred, and some two hundred and fifty pounds. He always had about three or four of them. Of course, he would kill a young steer. We didn't care as much for beef as we did for pork. We liked pork best. We would make sausages, and we had most everything. My mother always kept a big pot of boiled potatoes, and anybody that would come by, she would peel them and get our maid and she would put up a meal in a short time.

C: Did you have to go to the store to buy anything? There must have been some things that. . .

F: Well, coffee and sugar, we usually had to buy, and any spices if we needed them. That was about all we had to buy.

C: Do you remember how much some of the things cost? Today things were very expensive, so you remember how cheap some of the things were when you were a child?

F: Well, my mother would never sell anything. But she would make apple butter and all kinds of butter. We would go out and get berries, and she would make jellies, and everything like that. We had plenty to eat that way, so we didn't have to buy anything but sugar and coffee, and spices or whatever we hadn't had.

- C: How about clothing? What did your parents do about clothing for the children?
- F: Well, when we were small, my father would go down and he would buy our shoes. He would take a twig off the tree, and then he would put it down behind our heel, and then he would put that in the shoe. Our shoes always fit us. (Laughter) That is the way we got them. Then, of course, my mother would go down and buy stuff. She made all of our clothing. She even made my father's shirts. They used to be corduroy, and she never had a machine. She did it by hand. I don't know how she ever did it, but she would make these quilted or fancy shirt fronts for the kids.
- C: What did your father do? He was a full-time farmer, is that right?
- F: No, He used to work in the mines. He worked in the mines for quite awhile. The manager was Mr. Louis, and he always thought a good bit of my father. He said to my father, "I'm going to change you over." He said, "I want you to go around every night and take what every man would dig." Some would dig a ton, and some would dig two ton, and then he would take it and give it to the next man. That was Grant Hill.
- C: That is where the mine was located, up in Grant Hill?
- F: Yes, over here at Bacon.
- C: Near Bacon Avenue?
- F: Yes, there is a mine over there. He worked there and he worked in the state line place for awhile.
- C: There was a mine at state line wasn't there?
- F: Yes, the state line's over here.
- C: They still sell coal over there I believe. They have an area where they still sell coal.
- F: I suppose they do.
- C: I suppose your dad came home pretty dirty sometimes, working in the mines?
- F: Yes, sometimes he would come home earlier, but he never made very big wages. They got about two dollars a day.
- C: And that was hard work wasn't it?

F: Oh, hard work.

C: The miners today are getting, they say the miners average about sixty dollars a day today. It is still not an easy job.

F: No, it's not. It is a hard job.

C: You went to school, Mrs. Faber?

F: Yes.

C: What do remember about school? What could you tell me about some of things, some of the subjects you took, and what the teachers were like, and the buildings?

F: Well, we had one teacher we liked really good. "He" taught I forget how many terms. That's that schoolhouse up here.

C: Where was that located?

F: Up the hill there, then you go down a little. There is a lane that goes down there. But it's made over into a house now. They don't have that school. I didn't get to go to school as much as I should have. I had to help my mother, and she had so much work to do.

C: Do you remember, did you take the regular subjects, reading, and writing, and arithmetic?

F: Yes, that is about what we took.

C: You know I should have asked you this earlier, but I have forgotten. When were you born, Mrs. Faber?

F: 1876. My little neice--she is not little, she is about 18--came over and took me down to town. She said to me, "Are you sure, Aunt Lizzy, that you are 103 years old?" I said, "Oh, yes, Heidi, I know I am." Well, she said, "I don't know, you don't look it." (Laughter) I said, "Well, I look pretty wrinkly." "Well," she says, "you don't look to be the age you are." (Laughter)

C: When did you get married, Mrs. Faber? What did you husband do for a living?

F: He was a baker.

C: A baker?

F: Yes, and a good one.

C: Was he a baker in town?

F: Yes, we had a bakery here in town until 1940.

C: What was the name of the bakery?

F: The Faber Bakery. He worked for my brother. My brother had a bakery and then he worked for him. That's how I came to meet him. He was from Pennsylvania, that was Washington, Pennsylvania. He baked for my brother for awhile, and then my brother sold out, and then he started a bakery. We were in the business for quite awhile.

C: Did you help out at the bakery?

F: I did towards the last. He had one of those rare diseases. The muscles died, you know, and he wasn't able work. He worked for a long time, and then he got so that he couldn't work very good. He said he would have to close up shop, and we did in 1940.

In 1940 he took a bad spell, and I thought he was going to die. One morning he was so bad that I called the doctor about four o'clock. He doctor came and he said, "Well, Mrs. Faber, all I can do is to give him some medicine. If it doesn't take hold, I'll be back about eight o'clock. He said, "I want you to give him this medicine every hour until I come back." So I did, I just stayed with him and gave it to him. When he came he said, "Well, my medicine took hold." He lived eight years after that. He made a garden, and I got a job with my nephew.

He was a born artist. Those things up there, he made those from scratch, just took plaster of paris and he carved them. Then he made his own slip, everything, and built his own kiln. He's still over there.

I worked for him about six years, and cast for him. The poor fellow, he is not very good; he has cancer, and he has diabetes. Two of the worst things could be, but he goes to work and he is all right yet.

C: You mentioned the doctors. What was it like years ago? Today in East Palestine you have about five or six doctors, did you have any doctors in East Palestine? Did you have any trouble getting a doctor to come to your house?

F: No, we had one or two that would come to the house, but I have one now that will come. He told me that he would come any time that I needed him. Most of them won't come, you have to go.

C: How many children did you have, Mrs. Faber?

F: I had two, a daughter and a son. My son only lived two days.

C: What do you remember most about raising a family? When you raised your family was it expensive, you know, when you think about the food, the stores, and the clothing?

F: Well, it wasn't like it is today. When you asked about when I was a child, my mother, she would never sell anything that we could make use of, but she would never sell what she didn't need. She got ten cents a dozen for eggs. She would have maybe some butter, you know, left over that she would churn twice a week. We used a good bit of butter, and she got ten cents a pound for her butter. There were so many things you didn't get very much for.

C: What year did you get married?

F: 1914.

C: Well, that was about the time World War I was going on, and the United States would be entering soon. Did your husband happen to go to fight in World War I?

F: Well, no, he had a child; he got exempted on that, and he didn't have to go. None of my brothers, they were older, had to go, but my grandfather, he went in the war of . . .

C: The Civil War?

F: Yes.

C: He fought in the Civil War?

F: Yes.

C: Did he used to tell you about the war when you were a child?

F: Well, they lived in Virginia, and we didn't get down there towards the last. I didn't get to see my grandfather. I saw my grandmother, but I never saw my grandfather.

C: So your grandfather fought for the Confederates?

F: Yes.

C: Is that right? For Robert E. Lee and the Confederates?

- F: No, I don't think so.
- C: Well, you say he was from Virginia, but he fought . . . well, West Virginia, okay. All right, back in those days, I think it was 1862, West Virginia broke away from Virginia. He fought with the Union forces?
- F: He fought there. He was fifteen, and my father, that was his father that had to go to war, and he wanted to go too. No, they wouldn't take him. "Well," he said, "you might as well because I will follow you." They said, no, they couldn't, and he did, he followed them. A fellow told him he better go back home, and he said, "No, if you can't give me something to do, I'll follow you." He followed them, and so the fellow said, "We might as well give him something," so they made a bugler out of him. He followed them, and after the war was over, he joined the regulars, and he fought forty years in the Army, different armies. He said the worst army he fought against was the Japanese. He said they would snap you off when you would be walking along. You wouldn't know there was anybody around, and they would shoot you down.
- C: Do you remember what it was like during World War I? Was it different, the country? What was going on? What were people thinking about? Were people worried about the war, that America maybe wouldn't win.
- F: Well some did, and some didn't. Some of them felt as though they were all right. I have one nephew that was in the Second World War, that would be the Japanese, wouldn't it? He came pretty close to getting it. Then I had another one, he said that they were in an old building, him and another fellow, and he said the first thing he knew, the one side of the building was shot. They were shocked. He said, "We piled out of that, and ran over to the side that they had shot." They said then they had shot from the other side. He said, "If we hadn't done that we would have got it too." This one nephew, it seems as though he was one of the bunch that was left. Most of them were taken away and shot.
- C: When you and your husband got married, where did you move to in town, or did you still live out in the country?
- F: No, we moved here in town, just on this other East North Avenue. This is West, and we lived on East North Avenue until she was about two years old, I suppose. Then we moved to "Little" Washington. We were only there for eight months. His brother was in the baking business, and his father, but he didn't like it in "Little" Washington. He said to me, "Would you like to go back home again?"

And I said, "Well, wherever you can do the best, I'll be satisfied." He liked it here, so we came back here. I have been living here for 59 years. We bought this in 1919 and we moved back here. I've been here ever since.

C: But you've lived in the East Palestine area since you were six years old, haven't you?

F: Yes.

C: When you got married, how did you and your husband get around as far as transportation? Did you ever use trains to go places?

F: Yes, when we went to "Little" Washington we always took the train. We didn't travel too much. We were too busy. We had a bakery for so long, and we had to take care of it.

C: I mentioned to you before that people seem to have more spare time. A lot of people today work 40 hours a week and that is it, and then they have Saturday and Sunday off, but when you were married with a family, you just didn't have that spare time, did you?

C: No, we didn't have any spare time, we were busy all the time.

F: Was there still the horse and buggy, or did the car start to come around here?

C: Yes, it was a friend of mine, her husband was the first one that owned an automobile here in town. Then after that, why, Dr. Hartford was our doctor here then, and he bought an automobile, but that was before there were any roads to drive on. He said to me when I was a clerk--my brothers had a grocery store and a dry goods store, and I clerked there for six years--he said to me, "That was the first ride we ever had in an automobile, and it was a rough one." He said, "If you take your niece and nephew, I'll take you out for a ride in the automobile." My nephew was just a little fellow, oh, he was ready to go. We were driving along, and all of a sudden we hit a bump. His head flew up and he almost hit the ceiling. He said, "I don't want to ride with the doctor." I thought the doctor would . . . He just laughed, and laughed. He didn't want to ride with the doctor after all.

C: Your family still had a bakery during the Depression? Do you know when things started to get bad in this country, during the late 1920's and the early 1930's? When we had a Depression, what was life like in East Palestine? Did it change?

F: We had , I think, three or four bakeries, and a little place like this, and nobody got very much. I always took care of the business part of it, and he did the work. Of course, I baked the pies. The lodges used to have doings and maybe they would have five or six hundred at it, so I would bake maybe a hundred and fifty or two hundred pies, little pies just big enough for lunch. I had this one fellow, he would always come to me for his baking, his pies. He said we made the best pies in town. Then it was the lady, I think the auxiliary they called it, and she would always come to me for the pies. We got a little more that way than some of the rest of them, but they had it pretty tough some of them.

I said I was thankful to my Lord, I never turned anybody away. When they would come in and they would want something to eat, if I didn't have what we called leftovers . . . Sometimes you would have some leftovers, and you would put it back. I always kept a box and kept it good and clean, but they would get hard. One day there was a fellow that came in, and he asked if I had anything for him to eat. I said, "Well, I have some leftovers. They are a little hard." I gave it to him, and he went out and he came back in and he said, "Lady, I can't eat that, it is too hard." I said, "Well, you are not hungry. I could eat it if I was hungry." I said, "I will just get a little coffee. You could eat it that way, dip it in." He said, "Well, I can't eat it. I said, "You are not hungry." He went out, but I never turned anybody away, I always gave them something.

C: Did your family have to make any sacrifices during this Depression? Did you change your life style a little?

F: Well, my brothers were in the baking business. One or two of them worked in a factory. They seemed to get along all right. We never had any trouble. I would never turn them away.

C: Well, I suppose the fact that East Palestine was a rural area out in the country, people had gardens, a lot of gardens, and there were a lot of animals that were butchered, so it wasn't like living in a big city, I suppose.

F: I knew just about how long things would keep. I would take the buns and roll them. I knew long it would be before they would mold. There was one fellow that came in and he would buy two or three dozen of these leftover buns, at five cents, and when they were fresh, ten cents. Everything was cheap, and I gave him these buns and he said, "Mrs., do you know what I do with them?" "Well," I said, "I don't know, I suppose you eat them." He said,

"Yes, we eat them. I'll take these home and my wife will just put them in the oven just before we are ready to sit down to eat. They will be warm when they come out, and they are as good as any one you take out of your oven." He said, "Just that good." I said, "Well, I'm glad somebody gets good out of them. I couldn't just sell them for fresh. I'm glad somebody gets some good out of them."

C: Mrs. Faber, after the Depression things got a little better, but I don't know if you could say better because we went into World War II. The President during the Depression was Franklin Roosevelt. Did you like Franklin Roosevelt?

F: Well, not too good, I didn't. I just didn't.

C: You didn't think he was helping the country that much?

F: I didn't think he was, no. Maybe he did more than I thought he did.

C: When did your family get out of the bakery? What year was that?

F: In 1940. That is, my husband sold out. Of course, my brothers have been in and my nieces are in the business yet, the Golden Dawn here, Morris' Golden Dawn. My brother owned that till he died. He was 72 when he died. He was the last brother I had go. I have one sister living and a few nephews and nieces.

C: What did you think about World War II, when we got into World War II? Of course, you didn't have to worry about anybody, your husband was too old to go and you didn't have any sons.

F: No, and my nieces and nephews were grown up too; they weren't in it.

C: When you look back at East Palestine, what are some of the changes that you've noticed about the town that you like, you know, things that you like to see?

F: Well, I'll tell you, I can remember when there wasn't very much of a town here. On the main street down there, there were only a few houses. See, that has been a hundred and three years, it's made a big difference. All along here there was nothing, just plain. These two houses right across here, up above where Mr. Hersh lives, there were only two houses out here. All this has built up since then. My brother built this one.

C: They had a theater in town later on, didn't they?

F: Yes.

C: Mrs. Faber, I just have a couple more questions for you. First, I want to ask you about all these plaques on the wall. Could you tell me about all those plaques you got?

F: Well, I got two when I was one hundred from Jimmy Carter, and I got one from Nixon. Then I got one from Meshel, he was a senator. Then the other one in the middle there, that dark one, I got that for being a hundred years old, the only one in Palestine. Palestine had become one year old. I got two from Carter. Then I got one from Applegate, this time he called me, instead of sending me it. The senior citizens gave me a party and gave me a plaque. Then Meshel gave me another one; that made two from Meshel. Then I got two from the representatives of Ohio. Then I got one from Meshel, personally. I got another one from, it's the president of the . . . Those are the last two I got. Under that other, are two more.

C: Both of them are from Harry Meshel and William Palmer, who is from the Office of Aging of Columbiana County?

F: There's another one under it.

C: Tell me, I'd like to live as long as you've lived, give me a few hints, Mrs. Faber.

F: (Laughter) Hard work, for one!

C: Hard work?

F: Yes.

C: Did your grandparents live a long time, too? Do you think maybe you inherited that from your grandparents?

F: No. It seems my grandparents died younger, in their seventies or maybe eighties. My brothers all died young.

C: But you think it was hard work?

F: It was hard work, I think that did it.

C: How about the food you ate? You must have eaten the right food?

F: Yes. We lived on a farm and we ate what we raised on the farm. I said I never knew what it was to be hungry.

- C: Today you probably see in the newspapers and television that they have a lot of junk food, and they say there's not very much nutrition in this type of food. When you were growing up and even when you got older you didn't have that type of food, you had all good food to eat.
- F: Yes, always had. We had good food. We had all the eggs and milk. Every night before I'd go to bed, about eight o'clock, I'd eat a big bowl of bread and milk. (Laughter) I had to have my bread and milk. After I got older, why, then I didn't do that. I always had good food.
- C: Well, I want to thank you for allowing me to talk to you today and I hope I see some more of you Mrs. Faber.
- F: That's what Mr. Palmer said. He wants to fill up that corner. (Laughter) He's always so nice.

END OF INTERVIEW