

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Shenango Valley Depression Project

Life during the Depression

O. H. 470

CLAYTON LEDBETTER

Interviewed

by

Marilyn Lees

on

August 8, 1982

## CLAYTON P. LEDBETTER

Clayton Ledbetter was born on October 29, 1918, in Masury, Ohio, the son of Matthew and Hattie Ledbetter. There were seven children in the Ledbetter family. His father worked at Sharon Steel, but during the Depression he had to pick up extra jobs to help support his family because work was so slow at Sharon Steel. Also, his family had a large garden, raised hogs and had a cow to help provide food for the family.

Clayton attended Brookfield schools and formed a dancing team which provided entertainment for the community. Clayton centered his life around sports and became a well-known football and basketball star in the area. However, when he graduated in 1938, Clayton had to go to work at the Sharon Steel so his twin brother could finish college.

He served with the U. S. Army in the European-African and Asian campaigns and won many awards. He retired from the Sharon Steel in 1981 and continues to be active in the V.F.W. and in sporting activities.

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Shenango Valley Depression Project

INTERVIEWEE: CLAYTON LEDBETTER

INTERVIEWER: Marilyn Lees

SUBJECT: Depression life, Sharon, school, sports, food

DATE: August 8, 1982

ML: This is an interview with Clayton Ledbetter for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on the Shenango Valley Depression, by Marilyn Lees, at Masury, Ohio, on August 8, 1982, at 1:00 p.m.

First of all, when and where were you born?

CL: I was born in Masury, Ohio on October 29, 1918.

ML: What were your parents' names?

CL: My parents were named Matthew Ledbetter and Hattie Ledbetter.

ML: How many children were in your family?

CL: There were about nine in the family all total.

ML: Were you one of the oldest or one of the youngest?

CL: I'm one of the youngest, a twin.

ML: What did your father do for a living?

CL: My father was a steelworker.

ML: Where at?

CL: He worked at Sharon Steel. At that time it wasn't called Sharon Steel. It was called the Sharon Steel Hoop at that time. He was a roller on the ten inch at Sharon Steel.

ML: Where did you live at?

CL: I lived at that time on Davis Street, 76 Davis Street and that was in Masury.

ML: Can you remember what your house looked like?

CL: Yes. It wasn't a bungalow. It was an upstairs and downstairs. It had pretty close to around six rooms or seven rooms. The seventh room was a bath at that time, yes.

ML: How did your father get to work?

CL: By him living so close to the mill he walked to and from work every day.

ML: It would be under a mile?

CL: Yes, it would be under a mile, right.

ML: Did your parents own a car?

CL: At first, no, he didn't own a car, but later on, I think it was around 1932 if I can remember, then he got enough money to have a little car. Well, at that time the cars didn't cost very much, but still that was a lot of money at that time. He finally got a secondhand car.

ML: Do you remember what kind of car it was?

CL: It was a Durrant, which they don't make anymore. They don't make a Durrant anymore and that was the type of car it was. I can remember we used to go to the store at that time back in 1932 and he would take maybe three or four of the children to the store. At that time you could buy so many groceries for ten dollars that none of us ever got a chance to ride back home. We would ride to the store, but we would always go in the store and my father would order the groceries and everything. We would carry the groceries and everything. We would carry the groceries out to the car and load the car up with them. We always had to walk home. We never could ride home because ten and eleven dollars worth of groceries would fill the back seat and the front seat of the car. It was always amazing to think back how the economy . . . today ten dollars would buy nothing.

ML: That's bad. What were some of your duties as a child?

CL: Well, as a child, I would say my father was a firm

believer of everybody doing something. We sort of took turns I would say. Some of the boys would sweep the floors and some of the boys would clean outside. We all had different things and we had sort of a rotation. One would do it today and the other would do it tomorrow.

ML: Because you didn't like to work in the garden?

CL: (Laughter) And we did have a very, very big garden and that's one thing I didn't like to do. I didn't like to work in the garden, that is true. But still I had to do my share. It was always funny, because between the two brothers, I do have a twin brother, he didn't mind working in the garden and I wanted to go somewhere. So if I had two cents or three cents, which was a lot of money, I would say, "I'll give you two cents if you pull the weeds in the garden for me." He would say, "Okay, okay." Then after he would pull the weeds I would say, "Well, two cents was too much, how about giving you one?" So then we got to arguing over it. I wanted to change the deal, turn the deal around. Still we had different things that we had to do, our garden. Then later on in life, my father decided to buy some hogs. My father was a hog raiser years ago before he came to Masury.

ML: Where did he come from?

CL: He came from Wilmington, North Carolina and my mother came from Wadesboro, North Carolina. He used to raise hogs on a farm there. So he decided after work was so slim, he said, "Well, I'm going to buy maybe one or two little hogs." He bought the hogs and then started raising different small ones and what have you. There we had the chore of feeding the hogs and getting food. We went to bakery shops and got more or less scraps, like old bread and stuff, and brought them home. We watered the bread down so the hogs would eat it. That was a job for some of us to take over, different ones in the family. That went along for a while. That sounded like it was getting profitable. Later on, after my father had several hogs raised, he thought maybe he would get a cow because the kids were drinking an awful lot of milk. Somewhere, somehow along the line, he made a deal for a cow. So that was one of the big mistakes that I think he ever made.

ML: Where did he keep the cows?

CL: Well, we had an open field. There was an open field in the back of our home. All that area, there were no houses built-- that was in the back of our house. That was just an open field and so we could just turn the cow loose back there.

In raising a cow we had a problem, we learned how to milk the cow. We would feed the cow, but somewhere along the line the cow was not profitable. The cow would lose weight and we didn't know what to do. Later we got rid of the cow. We just didn't know what to do, but we had a lot of fun trying.

ML: Did you have any other animals like chickens?

CL: Well, no, we didn't have any chickens. What had happened was my father had a couple very good friends that had a farm way out beyond Yankee Lake, and they were friends of my father and every time they would come into town the farmer would always stop by the house. They would say, "Hey, Mr. Ledbetter, here's a chicken," or they would just drop by and tell my father, "Here are some eggs," because they knew he had a big family. They would always come by and give my father some chickens, some eggs, or some vegetables out of their gardens. So as we went along, the things got pretty tough at the mill. He decided he was going to go down to the gas company. He talked to the gas company. He said, "I'm not working and I can't pay my gas bill. I've got a big family, but I'm willing to work." The gas company said, "Okay, Mr. Ledbetter, if you're willing to work we'll give you some work." My father said, "I'll work and do what you want me to do and you take the money out and pay the gas bill and the rest of the money you give to me." They said okay. At that time the gas company and also the water company would use a fantastic amount of men working on gas lines and the water lines digging ditches. My father would go down there and work. He was always a hustler for the family. He would go down and work for the water company and also for the gas company. This went on for quite some time.

Next my father said, "I think that I'll start painting." We figured--dad painting? He said, "Well, yes, I think I can paint." He went to a person that had a very large home. My father said, "Your house needs painting; I'll paint it for one hundred dollars." At that time the house that he painted would have been worth maybe \$300 or \$400, but this was during the Depression and one hundred was a lot of money. At that time he was only working in the mill one day a week or not at all. He got the hundred dollars and bought some more pigs. We grew the pigs and he had some money to buy the feed and things. At that time nobody said anything because this was a small neighborhood. Nobody said anything if people were trying to survive. We did put lime around the pigpen to keep the odor down and

whatnot. Then at butchering time when the pigs got to be hogs, we would have different farmers or different people that really knew how to butcher pigs and clean them come and help my father. He would more or less give them so much meat for their families for helping. Money was never exchanged because there wasn't too much money. He would give some to each person that helped him butcher the pig. We would salt them down and there was a friend on the next street who had a smokehouse. In return for smoking the meat my father would give them so much meat for their family. This is the way it went on through the Depression. I would say the people during the Depression days were very, very close. Nobody locked their doors. When kids were playing in the yard and they got called to eat, then everybody was called to eat. Everybody came and had a bowl and sat down.

I'll never forget, we had this big copper boiler. Once a month we would wash it out and call it chili day. My father would take cans of beans and they would get some hamburger and put it all together. All the kids in the neighborhood would all come with their bowls. I'll tell you one thing, my father was always very heavy-handed. I can remember that he was very heavy-handed on the red pepper. He made it too hot. All the children were around the boiler with their bowls, standing in line. We would sit down to eat this chili and tears would run out of our eyes and we were crying. We were crying but we were afraid to tell our father it was too hot. He would say, "Well, how's the chili boys? Girls, how is the chili?" The girls were all sitting there with tears running down their cheeks crying, "It's good!" We would never tell him it was too hot. We would always wait for that day of the month. We all had a good time. My father just loved that.

ML: That's a great story. Can you remember what kind of games you played?

CL: Well, we played softball at that time. The other game we would play was like hide-and-go-seek. We would choose up sides. We would get about ten children and stand by a pole or tree. Five would hide and the rest would wait. Then they would count to fifty and search, leaving one person at the pole. If we captured someone we would bring him back. The person left behind would guard the captured one. We went to find the rest of the people. If one of the other guys saw their member captured he could run to the ring and yell, "Release!" But if the guard saw him coming and touched him before he got to the ring, he was captured. You had to work to capture them all. That was one game.

ML: Can you remember some of the things your family did together at this time?

CL: Well, at that time we did a lot of going on picnics. Of course the picnic area wasn't too far. The park that we went to was Buhl Park, which was very famous at that time. Everybody went there. So they would get together and get a little lunch together and we would go out to the park. During this time we would go to the park; we would play softball. Of course, we had a volleyball. One of our neighbor boys had a volleyball, but we didn't have a net. We would just knock the ball around. We couldn't afford a net so we just knocked the ball around. We would play softball. That was the biggest thing, the softball, because you only had to have a bat and a ball. You didn't have to have the gloves. We couldn't afford that. So that's what we played mostly; we played softball.

ML: Did you have any pets, dogs, cats?

CL: We had cats when we were young, no dogs.

ML: Where did you go to grade school?

CL: I went to grade school at Addison School.

ML: How did you get there?

CL: Well, I didn't live too far, so we walked to and from Addison School.

ML: Did you walk home for lunch?

CL: Yes, that's right. We walked home for lunch.

ML: Where did you go to high school?

CL: I went to Brookfield High.

ML: That's in present day junior high building?

CL: Right, in the present day junior high building.

ML: Do you remember what discipline was like at this time? Did they have problems like we have today with students in school?

CL: No, I would say that our school was very, very disciplined. I can't remember the four years that I went to Brookfield ever having any real discipline problems. Maybe in school there were some; that would be a more everyday thing during our lunch hour; maybe the boys would throw paper balls around at different persons like that, but we never had any discipline problems in that school. It's amazing when



I hear all the problems they're having today, because it was unheard of. Actually it was.

ML: Was there any smoking or drinking or any problems like this?

CL: The only time that I can think of that there was drinking would be during a Halloween party; they get this hard cider. They used to get this hard cider and that was a big deal, because to get some cider that wasn't hard, that was all right. All of a sudden somebody, somewhere along the line, would come up with some hard cider. That hard cider would kind of knock them for a rope if you would use too much of it. That is the only thing I can remember in high school that ever occurred. It would happen maybe with a certain group of fellows. Now it wasn't all around. I'd say a certain group of fellows would get this hard cider and maybe get a little too much and they would find out about it and more or less expel you from school or some kind of harsh punishment they would use. But that didn't occur too much at all.

ML: Do you remember students dropping out at this time because of economic reasons?

CL: I would say a few dropped out, but I don't remember whether there was a large number. There might have been a few students that dropped out. Maybe they could get a little job downtown or somewhere to help the family out. There were a few that dropped out, but I wouldn't say a large number that I can remember.

ML: What were some of the school activities that you had besides sports, because we'll get into sports later? You mentioned operettas.

CL: I had a dance group. We would stay after school. I was in the dance group. That was the main thing I had going there. One time I was dancing in the hallway downstairs and I didn't know that the superintendent was in back of me. I was showing the guys the steps. I was a great person for going to the show and watching Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers at that time, and Grace Kelly at that time perform in the movies. I used to watch them over and over. I would see the movie over and over and try to paint those different steps in my mind. I used to come home and I used to practice all the time, practice. So I became a pretty good tap dancer. I was in the hallway, down in the basement one day and I was practicing and showing them a Fred Astaire step or a Gene Kelly step I was doing and the superintendent was standing in the back of me watching.

When I turned around and saw him, I stopped. He said, "Keep it up! Keep it up, you're good. I didn't know you were that good." So the superintendent at that time, he told Mr. Jenkins, the music teacher. He was our music teacher at that time and the superintendent was Mr. Cleveland. He said, "I saw Ledbetter down the hall dancing and he's a terrific dancer. Can't you get him going in some of those plays or something." So Mr. Jenkins comes to me and says, "Hey, I hear you're a pretty good dancer." I said, "Oh, I can dance." I was a little shy. He said, "Hey, we can fit this in." We'll put a sign up and let the girls sign up and we'll have a little dancing team. This is how it started out. This is how it kind of got me a few enemies too, because the list was so big. We could only afford about eight or ten girls to buy uniforms for, they had a list of names up there of about twenty or twenty-five girls. I had to cut down to maybe ten girls. So you know the fifteen girls that didn't make it--"Look at that mean Ledbetter. I'm better than her." Well, what was I going to do. I was only allowed to have ten. I finally got them down to ten and we formed the dancing team. We got the costumes and everything. We would dance during intermission and costume change. Then after several people from the surrounding area like Hubbard High School saw the dancing team, they asked Mr. Jenkins if he could get permission for me to bring the dancing team over to Hubbard during the lunch hour and give a little demonstration in tap dance. Anyway, we got together and we went over to Hubbard. At that time another school named Scienceville--now called Youngstown North--found out about us. We said, "What are we going to do? We'll go to Scienceville to perform over there, but no other school," because we had other things to do. We went to Hubbard and performed during their lunch hour. Then I think about a week later we went to Scienceville and performed during their lunch hour. We gave a pretty nice show during their lunch hour, which was really nice. I thought it was fantastic. We enjoyed the dance scene that we had. There wasn't too much else that I did other than play in sports.

ML: What sports did you play?

CL: I played basketball and football.

ML: We'll just talk about football first. What was the equipment like?

CL: The equipment at that time was very limited. You had your football pants, your shoes, and your socks, your jersey, shoulder pads, helmet without any face protection. At that time it didn't have face protection and nose protection and the mouthpiece and all that. They didn't have any rib

pads. Now they even have those jackets to protect your ribs and everything like that. That was about the extent of the equipment back then.

ML: Did the school pay for everything, all your equipment?

CL: Yes, the school paid for all our equipment.

ML: What got you interested in playing football?

CL: Well, I would say that when I was in junior high, I played sports all my life in the community more or less, in these different open fields. I just grew up loving sports. I played football, basketball, baseball, softball. I just loved it. At that time all you had to have to play football was a football and a field. The same thing for baseball, all you needed was a bat and ball. As I continued playing sports, I more or less got a chance as a young person--going in as a freshman in high school--to play with the bigger boys. What I mean by bigger boys, the other teams. They had some baseball teams around here. I was pretty young. I happened to be pretty good, so they would let me come in and play. As long as the baseball team would continue, I would play, but the money was short. Then they would have to do away with baseball and have to go to softball, which is getting back to a bat and a ball and that was it. Football grew on me also as I came along from junior high into high school. I just idolized certain people because we didn't have television then, but we had little sports books. I would get a second-hand sports book. It might be two or three years old, but to me it was just like new paper. One thing that I learned in school is that nothing is old, so long as I never saw it.

ML: Who were some of your football idols at this time?

CL: Well, back at that time I used to watch a person from Farrell; they called him Kitty Hyatt. He was a very, very outstanding player from Farrell High. I used to watch him play and I used to read about him. Later on he went to college and became a really outstanding player. I just idolized him.

When Massillon would come to Sharon to play we didn't have any money. We would go up to Sharon early. Sharon High has some trees around the stadium. I would go early and get me a tree. I didn't want to sit up in the tree too long because it would be too long before the game. But I would sit up there and have my hands around hugging this tree. By climbing this tree you can look right over into

the stadium. Massillon had a fantastic runner at the time, Glass. All I can remember was Glass. I heard about him for two weeks and I wanted to see this fellow play. I went up to Sharon and the game was at 1:30 or 2:00. I can remember I went up to Sharon and got behind this stadium. It was about 11:00 then. Whenever a guy came, "No, no you can't get in this tree because there are only three prongs for one person. You have to get another tree. This is my tree." I would stand up in the tree with one foot between one limb. My feet would get in a cramp and I would have to try to take my feet out and shake it to keep my leg from getting numb. You could only put your feet sideways. You couldn't get any relaxation. If you held your feet there too long, then your blood didn't circulate.

ML: What position did you play?

CL: Well, I played halfback.

ML: Did you just play one way, just on offense?

CL: No, during those times we didn't have a large squad at Brookfield at the time. I had to go both ways. I was running the ball on offense and then I had to play defensive halfback. Of course, not having a very large squad there were quite a few that had to go both ways, which was hard. The coach would use a little psychology on me and tell me that I wasn't hurt when I was. I loved the game but I didn't want to go out because sometimes I was hurt. I'd be laying on the field and the coach would run out and Mr. Koppell would run out and say, "Where are you hurting at?" Sometimes I brainwashed myself telling myself I'm not hurt. I just got shook up a little bit. By the time they ran out on the field I'd say, "I'm okay."

ML: Was there a doctor on the sidelines like there is today?

CL: Yes, we did have a doctor.

ML: How would you get back and forth from the games? Was there a school bus?

CL: Yes. They were red buses then and they were school buses. We would ride them just like the regular buses we went to school on.

ML: Can you remember some of your most memorable experiences, like a special game or something like that?

CL: One stands out in my mind; I think about it quite a bit. The coach came to me one day and said, "How would you like to play Rayen High School? I've got a chance to book them for next year." I looked at him and said, "Are you talking about Rayen High School, coach?" He said, "Yes." I told him, "Yes, yes, we'll play them!" He said, "Okay, I'll book Rayen for next year." I know at that time Rayen was a very large school. I don't know whether I would be correct in saying it this way, but I would say that at that time Rayen would have had more in the freshman class than than we had in the high school. Rayen was really large then and they had a very good athletic group over there. I didn't know at that time, but later I found out that Sharon was going to play Rayen about two weeks before we played them. About a week after Sharon played Rayen my father sent me to the hardware store. I ran into one of the staunch Sharon fans that worked in the hardware store. He told me, "I feel sorry for you guys next week." I said, "Why?" He said, "Sharon lost to Rayen 14 to 13. We lost to Rayen by one point. You fellows are really going to get the devil beat out of you when you play Rayen." I said to him, "We're going to beat Rayen!" Naturally I was going to say that we were going to beat Rayen. He said, "I'm going to tell you one thing, I'll give the whole squad of Brookfield a chicken dinner, all the trimmings, if you even score on Rayen." At that time his in-law was working in the same hardware store and he was from Brookfield, Mr. Swogger. Mr. Swogger had a son on the team. He said, "Well, let me tell you, he's a youngster and I'm going to hold you to that. You said if Brookfield scores on Rayen you'll give the whole team a chicken dinner and all the trimmings. If you don't come across, you're fired." He was this guy's boss. He said, "No, no, I'm sticking to my word." I laughed and I went out of the store. That Monday morning I couldn't wait to tell Mr. Koppell. He wanted to keep it a secret between him and I. He was going to let me tell the boys before we ran out on the field. Anyway, that day we were going to play Rayen we were sitting in Rayen's gymnasium and Koppell was giving us the last speech of what to do and everything. We were all sitting there and he says, "Fellows, before you go out Ledbetter has to tell you something." Koppell told me to say if we beat Rayen, not scored on them. I told the fellows, "We've got a chicken dinner at the Moose Hall, ice cream and the trimmings, if we beat Rayen. What are we going to do fellows?" We're going to beat them! Everybody raised up and we ran out on the field. We ran out on the field first before Rayen. We had a small squad, around 22 players, just enough for two teams. Every once in a while when a guy got sick or something we couldn't form two teams, enough to practice against. We would have to use the water

boy or student manager to run our plays. After we got out on the field Rayen sent one team out behind us. My twin brother and I were out on the field and he said, "Those guys look big." I said, "No, they don't look so big." We didn't know that was Rayen's fifth team. Then a lot of players came running out of the dressing room. It looked like they were running and were never going to stop coming out of the dressing room. I said, "Do they need all those players to beat us?" They ran out and had four to five teams. We just barely had two teams. I looked over to Hank Gilliland and I said, "What do you think, Hank?" He said, "That doesn't matter, we'll beat them." We got fired up. They kicked the ball off to us. We tried to go down and score and we couldn't score. We kicked the ball to Rayen and the guy got the ball and we went down on him real fast and he fumbled on the twenty yard line. We got the ball back and bang, we scored! We scored six points! Next we went in for the extra point. We got them seven nothing. They turned around and we kicked the ball to them this time. They tried to come up and throw a little short pass. My brother intercepted and took off for a touchdown. We had them fourteen to nothing. We scored fourteen points so quick it kind of shook them up. They figured this farmer team was never going to beat them. They were getting mad because we had fourteen points. The referee kept penalizing them. We wound up beating them 27 to 7. In two days they called up and they made reservations for the whole squad to be at the Moose Hall in Sharon and this guy was going to pay for our dinner. During that time I think Brookfield was about the best fed team in the history of the school because people were inviting us out for spaghetti dinners. Every time we turned around they were giving us a dinner for winning. This more or less carried us on to the winning championship in football.

ML: What year was that?

CL: That would be in 1936. Then after we went on to success in football, winning the championship in the intervalley league, we got to thinking when the basketball season started, it would be the first time in history that Brookfield ever won the football championship and the basketball championship in the same season. Our goal was to win both championship.

It came down to the last two games. I scored the tying bucket and Nathaniel Cooper scored the winning bucket so we beat Hubbard. We had one more game to play at Hubbard. We had to go to Newton Falls and play them first. We had a little bad luck and didn't play too well. Now we had to play Hubbard again and this was at Brookfield.

So we figured at home we should do better. So this was the big test. By losing to Newton Falls that threw us one behind so we had to beat Hubbard to win the championship. That was one of the most exciting things because we were determined. We were behind, Hubbard got ahead of us. We were behind. I got into foul trouble and I had to sit on the bench for a while. The coach kept me on the bench. Nathaniel was one of your best shooters at the time and he got into foul trouble. So they put me back in the last part of the game and they took Cooper out. Finally, they put him back in. Here we're going down to about less than three minutes left to play. We called time out and we said, "Boys, we're so close, but so far away. We've got to win this game. We've got to win this game." We shook hands and said, "We've got to win this game. We can't blow it." So we went back out and we finally won the game in the last minute and a half. We beat Hubbard by around four points. We wound the championship in basketball. There we had the football championship and the basketball championship. Now I think that was about the greatest highlight, I would say, of the success that I wanted to achieve in high school.

ML: How do you think high school sports differ today from back during the Depression?

CL: Well, I would say different because I feel that during the Depression days everybody, it seemed to us, what they did they had a strong desire to do. It seemed like they were dedicated in what they were doing, whether it was basketball, whether it was football, or what have you. It seemed like they were so sincere. The sincere was greater and the dedication seemed to be greater. Today it seems like it's a halfhearted situation. Now, I'm not putting this stigma on all the players, but I would say the majority of the players, it seems like they are going through the motions as a player. They're not putting their heart and soul in it like they did years ago. I see it so much. Like I talked to some of the young boys today that are out for the team. I said, "You have to take inventory of yourself. Search within yourself. You have to make a sacrifice. I want to be good or I want to be mediocre or I want to strive for success with all my heart, or don't play." You either play the game with sincerity or you don't play at all. That's what I feel and I tell them if they go into this game of sport, football particularly, halfhearted, they'll get hurt. They'll get hurt because they are what I call shadow boxing. They are faking. When you go into a sport like that and you are faking your way through just to look good, you wind up getting hurt seriously. When you go in with sincerity you are going to play hard and fair, and it seems like you are going to come out okay.

You can't fake your way through because you will get hurt really bad. You had to be sincere about it and go all the way or don't play at all, that's it.

ML: In your opinion, can you give any explanation as to why sometimes students these days aren't as dedicated or as sincere playing sports? Do you think it's a reflection back on the times in which you lived, like during the hard economic times?

CL: I would say yes. You're on the right track there. I feel that today there's too much distracting the student from being dedicated and being sincere. There's too much. Let's say you can drive the car to school. Parents have money and they tell the parents something so they wind up with the money. It's not true what he's going to do with the money, but regardless he winds up with the money and he winds up with the car. He winds up with a girlfriend. Otherwise if you didn't have the money, if you wanted to sit on the porch and talk to the girl, that's it. That's as far as you're going to go because sit on the porch and talk to her . . . Mr. Koppell was a very good person with his money, because I was going with a girl at the time and I didn't have the money. We were off and not playing this Saturday and so maybe Koppell would loan me a few dollars to take my girl to this show to have a good time. Today money is so available and it's so much a thing. This is why a student doesn't get too sincere about sports or his schooling. There's too much going on and he's free to all of these different assets. Back in those days you didn't have two or three things; you either played football or that was it. I think there's too much freedom and too many things to be involved in that it keeps them from being dedicated in whatever they might be happy in.

ML: Can you remember what the mood of the people was during this time for the most part? Even though times were bad economically, what was the attitude of the people like?

CL: It's amazing because I feel that people during the time of the Depression, I can remember so good and I see it now in talking to different people; it just shakes me how people were so close and so friendly. The attitude was beautiful. Everybody was getting along and we didn't have anything. It was amazing. It is something where you just can't find enough words to say how people in the community got along. I always say that we had a heck of a good time with nothing. We just made up different things. We would sit around. We used to have a game with a little pen knife. We would take the pen knife and stick it into the ground. We would



take the pen knife and see if it would stick on the long part of the knife. We would stick it in the ground and flip it up and you would go to first base. It was a baseball game.

Then we also had a game called teeter-totter. You would take two pieces of stick, sharpen one of them with both ends to a point. We would take that piece of stick and put it on the ground and everybody would get a stick and hit that stick on one end and let it bounce up in the air and see who could hit it the farthest. The next person would do it next. We would add up how many yards we would knock that stick. We made up all kinds of games and they didn't cost anything.

We would also take bicycle tires and take the tires off and just have the rim. We would take a long, stiff piece of wire and curve it up in so that we could roll that hoop. We would get two guys together with the hoop and make a hundred yards. With two guys standing next to each other we would tell them to roll the hoops and see who could get to the other end faster, the hundred yards. One would win and they would race back a hundred yards. This would be on the streets, just down the street.

ML: You mentioned how the neighborhood people helped one another. Did the churches at this time help the more unfortunate people do you know?

CL: Well, I'd say the larger churches, yes.

ML: What church did your family go to?

CL: I went to Ruth A.M.E. Zion.

ML: Was Mount Olive here?

CL: Yes, Mount Olive Church was here. I went there when I was small. On Thanksgiving and Christmas we would bring cans of food for the less fortunate ones.

ML: Do you remember any families losing their homes in your neighborhood at this time?

CL: Now that's something I don't remember, anybody losing their homes.

ML: Do you remember what the unemployed men would do with their idle time?

- CL: I can remember what my mother made us, especially us men. We used to sit around once in a while and play cards. My mother would say, "You men can play cards so many days and so many days you can learn how to cook." My mother would make all the ones that were sitting around cook. She would teach them to cook one thing real good to help out their wives. She felt a man should know how to cook.
- ML: Did your older brothers have jobs when you were in high school?
- CL: My oldest brother, Cletas, worked at Sharon Steel when he got out of high school. I had an older sister and she worked to help the family out. She did housework and cooking. Later she went into nursing. The next to the oldest went to beautician school. My father said everybody couldn't go to school, that somebody had to work and help out the others. I had to go to work. He got me a job at Sharon Steel. I thought it would be about four or five years before I got out of the mill and got to school. But things started happening for me and I stayed in the mill forty-two years. I started working for the union and helping people out. I feel I was fortunate in becoming a union representative. I was sent to several colleges as a union representative. Every year they would send me to Washington, D.C., Detroit, St. Louis, and Atlanta. I got an education going to these different seminars. I had to take up different workshops. It makes me happy to think that I did get to go to about seven colleges for six to eight weeks and learn different things as far as public relations. This was the main field. The seminars were on how to be more productive as far as working out problems with the company. It was how to solve a problem without being overbearing towards the company. We worked together for one main objective and to solve problems.
- ML: Before the interview we talked about scholarships. Can you explain what was available when you were getting out of high school?
- CL: When I was getting out of high school there weren't a tremendous amount of scholarships given out. They had part-time scholarships where they would pay your room and board and you had to buy your books. This would come on a part-time scholarship.
- ML: But there wasn't too much available?
- CL: No. The scholarships that were available were mostly to

, bigger schools. At that time Massillon was a great school for athletics. Canton, that was the biggest school yet. There were scholarships available for the bigger schools, but for the smaller schools there weren't a whole lot available. There were probably only a few in music or physics or a few things like that.

ML: What did the people in your neighborhood think of Franklin Roosevelt?

CL: I remember when he was elected. I think that the people felt he was their saviour. When he went in he started the WPA and CC Camps. He had a lot going for the people that wanted to work, that didn't want a handout. I think the people had a very good attitude towards President Roosevelt. People had fantastic respect for him.

ML: Since there wasn't television how did you come in contact with Roosevelt?

CL: They would have radio speeches. We would sit with our ears up to the radio. It just seemed like everybody had to keep quiet; the master was speaking. Today if the president comes on people even get angry. When Roosevelt spoke that was it; everybody got quiet.

ML: Can you remember any other well-known people at this time that you admired that you listened to on the radio or read about in the newspapers?

CL: There was one person from Brookfield. I ran into a Mrs. Purvis at the festival the other day. Her father-in-law was the constable around here. Anyway, she and her husband were telling me about this fellow that was called "Fats" Hall. He was an outstanding athlete at Brookfield. I always admired him. He was from a very large family and they all were athletes in that family. I watched this boy closely because he was the type of player that I wanted to be. Now he is the mayor of Wooster, Ohio.

END OF INTERVIEW