

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Swedish Baptist Church Project

Church Life

O. H. 476

LORENA YOUNG

Interviewed

by

Rich Gustafson

on

June 6, 1979

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INTERVIEWEE: LORENA YOUNG

INTERVIEWER: Rich Gustafson

SUBJECT: Evangel Baptist Church, Vacation Bible School  
Church History

DATE: June 6, 1979

G: This is an interview with Mrs. Lorena Young for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on the Swedish Baptist Church, by Rich Gustafson, on June 6, 1979, at 9:00 a.m.

Mrs. Young, perhaps you could give me a short family background.

Y: To begin with, I was born in Lorain, Ohio. I was the youngest of six and the only Ohioan; the rest were from Pennsylvania. My father came to Lorain, Ohio with what was the National Tube Company from Johnstown. He came before my mother and the children. Then he got into a boarding house and didn't send for my mother. She picked up her brood of five children and came. That made two years between all of our children except Mary and I, and there were five years because my father was one place and my mother another. Then I was born there. I went to the first year of high school. My mother didn't start me to school until I was eight; therefore, I was sixteen when I was in high school. I went out to Pennsylvania for one year with her people after she died and I skipped a grade. The Pennsylvania schools weren't as advanced as us. I came back and I started. I went to eighth grade and then I went into high school by my own brother supporting me. We both lived with my married sister and my father. It was a bad time going to high school. They were building on and it was the biggest class of freshmen which I was a part. We had to go in the afternoon from 12:00 to 4:00. I had to have two studies at home. The sophomores, juniors, and seniors went in the morning. My sister detested school and books, and I had to wash diapers and scrub floors and everything. I

had a red-haired teacher who was interesting. There was such a change from grades. If you didn't know anything they got you on your feet in grades and they pumped you. Not in high school; you had to get up and recite. If you didn't know anything you got a zero. This teacher was coming near the end of the semester. We had A and B classes. She said, "Lorena, you're going to fail ancient history." I said, "I know it, but I don't have time to study." That is one of my hardest, history and geography. That is what I had to study at home. She said, "Well you stay after school and I'll help you." I got through by the skin of my teeth and went into 1A. I wasn't going to have that struggle. By then I could get work; I was seventeen. I quit and my brother wouldn't talk to me. I didn't tell him why I quit. He courted a girl for twenty years before he married her. When he married, when he thought he was going to go into that First World War, that's when he married her. She said to him, "You see that Lorena goes to school." He didn't like it when I quit. Then I started to work. Then I met Dewey Young when I was eighteen and we were twenty-one when we were married. Then we came to Youngstown because Dewey's step-father was a mill bricklayer. He got into Lorain and Dewey learned this trade of pattern-making in Lorain National Company; that's how I met him. Then he was a mama's boy. The reason he was a mama's boy was because his mother didn't have good health. His step-father wasn't good to her, and Dewey felt he had to protect her. He had a step-brother and step-sister that were younger. Cy was in Rayen up here and Marietta was in Hall's Business College. He wanted to get back home with his mother. He was here commuting every two weeks to come to see his girlfriend and then in time we were married. There was only the National Tube Company to work at. I thought this was the hilliest, dirtiest place because I lived along the lake, but I wouldn't have wanted to go back after a while. I only went back to see the family.

- G: Maybe you can give me some of your experiences of when you were first associated with the church on Southern Boulevard at this time, the reasons why you became a member.
- Y: We were saved and baptized in the Baptist Tabernacle, all of us, within three years. Doris, Jim, and I were baptized together. Frank was overseas. Then Frank came home and got baptized. Then Tom was baptized when he was twelve. Then Dewey and his step-sister were baptized together. As I said, Jim came home from Bethel not planning to go back because he wanted to work with Ben Sherman. Jim was always good with youth so he went up to Youngstown College and worked here. But the first things that disgusted him with Youngstown College with church history that they had to take . . . This was a Methodist preacher and he said, "Mom, when I walked into his class there he was sitting with his feet up on the desk curling his moustache," and that disgusted

Jim as a preacher. There were two boys from Poland that Jim met through Youth For Christ that were studying for the ministry. Bob Jackson told Jim, "Don't argue with those preacher professors up there because they'll take it off your grade. He had those two boys wrapped up with the Methodist preacher they wouldn't even talk to Jim in the hall. Jim wondered what became of those boys. Jim was so glad to shake the dust of Youngstown College. He was so glad to get back to Bethel. He didn't have enough credits to graduate the fourth year so he went back to Bethel and Rhoads Seminary and made up those credits and graduated. Then Tom went to Bethel and didn't have enough credits to graduate and he wanted to get married. He didn't want to finish and Doris said, "You finish school." He went to Youngstown and got his credits and they said, "You go back to Bethel and graduate."

Then we were in Evangel with Jim and have been there ever since.

G: Maybe you can give me some of your recollections about the ministry of Sherman when he was there and some of the events of the church at this time.

Y: I never heard a better preacher and more influential than Sherman. He had such piercing eyes that if he thought you weren't going to tell him the truth I think he would have scared it out of you. He could preach.

G: There was some dissention over Sherman when he was there. Could you elaborate on what were the reasons behind this?

Y: He got too familiar with other men's wives. He picked the young ones. One young man said to him, "If you fool around with my wife I'll kill you." There was a man from Struthers that wanted to kill him. This one he left with. The one preacher that was at First Baptist spent the whole night telling that man he couldn't do that. The results were that she had a grown son and they disowned her. She was a beautiful woman.

G: How did the church manage to make it after Sherman?

Y: We went through hell. I never want to be in a church that splits. Curious, inquisitive people, when we had the big meeting, however the public learned it, the deacons were going to force Ben to resign; he wasn't going to. There were more people that came into that church and anyone that was a nonmember was asked to leave. Were those women upset! They thought they were going to get a good earful. There was not a name mentioned until one certain woman got up.

- They didn't know this young woman was involved at all until this woman announced it.
- G: Maybe you can relate some of your experiences with Sunday school activities, church socials, picnics, these things.
- Y: Not much in Sunday school. I was an assistant teacher for a while. I got out of that and then I was a deaconess for several terms. I got out of that when my term was up and that was it. I worked daily vacation bible school under Sammy Hess when Ben Sherman was here. Then I had backyard bible school. I had a good success at that. I would go up and down the street. The second year I didn't have it.
- G: Maybe you could describe something about the experiences after Sherman left. What was done to reunite the people?
- Y: Kolmodin was the first man who came. He was the laziest preacher I ever saw in my life. The church was too big for one. I was glad when Kolmodin left.
- G: Could you give some of your reminiscences of working as a deaconess? Who was on the deacons' board?
- Y: Ruth Anderson used to say, "How come I'm never asked to be a deaconess? New people come in and they're deacons?" I said, "I don't know." There is another woman that is misunderstood. She has a heart as big as herself.
- G: Give some of your recollections of other people in the church.
- Y: John Peterson was an old saint of God.
- G: Do you remember much about the camping program the church had?
- Y: Our kids traveled to New York for camping and rented campgrounds. Dewey traveled both ways many times to take the kids and bring them home.
- G: Did you frequently attend conventions that were held? Do you remember anything about conventions, Middle East Baptist Conventions?
- Y: I was a delegate one year; that's when Ben was here. A group of women drove Ben's car to Erie, Pennsylvania. One time Dewey was a delegate and we went to Illinois.
- G: It was very common at this time to have revival meetings?

- Y: No. That is what I missed, the tabernacle. We had visitors so much and revival meetings; they didn't have them then.
- G: That must have been before they moved to Southern Boulevard.
- Y: They were at Southern Boulevard. They would have speakers, but not as a revival. Then they would have mostly musicians.
- G: You mentioned that you worked at daily vacation bible school.
- Y: Two weeks we had it. Every morning I walked out there from 9:00 to 12:00. We didn't cut it short.
- G: Do you remember anything about some of the music that was held, the cantatas and these types of events?
- Y: To begin with, let's say that Ben Sherman wouldn't have choir. We met downstairs.
- G: If you were describing what the church looked like, the physical arrangements as you walked in, maybe at this time before the renovations took place . . .
- Y: (No response)
- G: Do you remember anything about a move to relocate the church a number of times?
- Y: They wanted to use this building as educational and they wanted to build a church. That didn't seem to work out. After a while they had architects to pay and got into too much debt.
- G: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW