

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Education in Youngstown, Ohio

Teaching Experience

O.H. 210

DOROTHY L. HONEY

Interviewed

by

Jeanne Ontko

on

June 10, 1981

DOROTHY L. HONEY

Dorothy Laverne Honey was born on October 7, 1915 in Youngstown, Ohio, the daughter of David and Violet Seal Jones. A lifelong resident of Youngstown, Mrs. Honey graduated from East High School and received a BA from Western Reserve University in 1937 and a Masters in Education in 1961 from Kent State University. She began her teaching career in 1937 at Jefferson Rural High School. In 1938, she returned to East High to teach English until 1946. From 1949 until 1951, Mrs. Honey decided to leave teaching and joined the Public Library System of Youngstown as a librarian at the Poland branch. Her deep interest in children, however, convinced her to return to education and from 1952 until 1974 she taught English at Austintown Fitch High School. Throughout her teaching career, Mrs. Honey was also involved in preparing year-books, school newspapers and class plays. She retired from teaching in 1974 and is presently employed as the registrar at the Arms Museum.

An active member of Lockwood United Methodist Church where she teaches Sunday School, Mrs. Honey sings in the church choir and is a member of the administrative staff. She is the president of Austintown Retired Teachers and a member of the Mahoning County Retired Teachers. Mrs. Honey also belongs to the Three Arts Club of which she is president, the Monday Conversational Club, and was a

board member of the Youngstown Playhouse. Her interest in history is shown by her membership in the Mahoning Valley Historical Society and the Austintown Community Historical Society, which was responsible for establishing the Austin Log Cabin.

An avid world traveler, Mrs. Honey is the widow of Burton Honey and has a daughter, Suzanne.

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INTERVIEWEE: DOROTHY L. HONEY

INTERVIEWER: Jeanne Ontko

SUBJECT: Teaching at East High and Austintown
Fitch High School; Dress Codes; Public
Library; Yearbooks and School Newspapers

DATE: June 10, 1981

O: This is an interview with Mrs. Dorothy Honey for the Youngstown State University Oral History Project on Education in Youngstown, Ohio, by Jeanne Ontko at 25 Banbury in Youngstown, Ohio, on June 10, 1981.

Okay Mrs. Honey, can you give me a short biography of yourself, where you were born, your parents, your education, things of that nature?

H: I'm really Youngstown from the word go. I was born in Youngstown. My father was born in Youngstown. My mother came from New Jersey. We were East siderers.

O: What did your father do?

H: My father was a city fireman and my mother worked as a sales lady in Goldsteins, which is a long gone store.

O: Was that in downtown Youngstown?

H: Yes, downtown Youngstown.

O: Where?

H: On Federal Street, I think it was East Federal. Dad was with the fire force. He worked at Station Number 2, which was near where we lived on the East side.

When I was in high school, I did just about everything. I was on the newspaper staff, the yearbook staff and everything in sports.

O: What kind of sports?

H: We had field hockey. This was a little unusual in that day, but our physical education teacher used to work at a camp in the East and she got in touch with these field hockey sticks, so before we knew it, they were back at Youngstown East High and we were playing field hockey. We loved it--and basketball, volleyball, the usual sort of things, but in that time, too, it was a little unusual. We had interscholastic swimming meets also.

O: Where?

H: At the YWCA. We swam against Chaney, Rayen and South.

O: This would be the 1930's then, right?

H: Right, the very early 1930's. Yes, and we earned letters and so on.

Then when I went to college, which was in Cleveland, not too far from Youngstown, I went to Flora Stone Mather College. At that time, Flora Stone Mather was the girl's school of Western Reserve University. Of course, now it's Case Western Reserve and they're all integrated. We were quite separate from the men. Well, I think I did have an integrated class in geology and went over to the Adelhurst Campus for that.

I continued in sports there as well, and in fact, was the first physical education minor graduated from Flora Stone Mather College.

When I was graduated it was pretty much in the heart of the Depression and finding a job wasn't all that easy.

O: This was graduating from college?

H: Yes.

O: What did you major in? You minored in physical education?

H: I majored in English. I also had a major in Spanish, but I would never have wanted to teach Spanish.

While I was in college in the summers I worked at summer camps, girls' camps. I worked at the Akron YWCA Camp as the head of the program one summer and the head of Waterfront another summer and worked on the Waterfront prior to being the head of Waterfront. Once I got off to college, I was pretty much away from home summers and year-round.

When I finished at Mather, there was, as I said, a bit of a Depression on and finding a job wasn't all that easy. What they did at Reserve and particularly Mather, was put out a booklet of teacher candidates and this was sent out to different school districts. Now, at that time, at least it was true here in Youngstown, you had to do a kind of two-year stint or one-year stint before you could get into the Youngstown school system. Also at that time, you couldn't be married and teach, there was a limitation against married women. Of course, that wasn't a problem for me at that point. At any rate, the little booklet went out with our pictures and our majors and minors et cetera. I got a job at a school near Crestline, Ohio.

It was fun because most of the teachers there were not local, they were from other cities and so most of us roomed in one big farm house. We had the second floor. We had wonderful, farmer landowners and they were the people that we rented from. It was also an interesting experience in terms of what we taught because at that point, I taught a different subject every period. I had all of the English from grades seven through twelve so you can imagine the preparation. That really kept me busy. It was kind of fun because all of the teachers were busy. Of course, some of them had been there for a while and once they had been there for a while, they didn't have so much preparation as we did.

O: How would you prepare for a seventh grader as compared to a twelfth grader?

H: For instance, the stories that they read were at a different level and so the subject matter, the content, would kind of lead you into . . . For instance, they were reading Tom Sawyer and at the senior level, we would maybe be reading Edna Ferber and Edith Wharton and so on. Then you tried to do creative things with what would appeal to the seventh grader as opposed to what would appeal to the senior high.

O: How long did you work for them?

H: I just worked there about a year and a half, not quite a full second semester. I'd like to say this, that also at that time, I coached the plays. It was interesting. The first year I had this really fine girl in the lead and didn't she get measles.

O: What play was it?

H: I can't remember the name of the play. It was a typical high school kind of thing. I ended up with the book in my hand playing the lead myself because I didn't have an understudy and there was just no one. It went pretty well; it wasn't too bad. Also, one did not get paid for this extra duty kind of thing. All of that time was volunteer. I enjoyed it though. I always enjoyed working with the kids in extracurricular activities. That was one of the most outstanding experiences in that situation.

Also, I remember I went squirrel hunting with some of the boys.

O: You mean the students?

H: Yes, with some of my students.

O: Why? Did they ask you?

H: Oh sure.

O: Did you enjoy it?

H: Oh yes. That was one way to know the kids. This one boy seemed too reticent and within himself and I kind of nurtured him and we ended up going squirrel hunting one day.

O: How do you go squirrel hunting? What do you do?

H: Well, he had a gun and I didn't. He showed me how to shoot and I practiced shooting at a tin can. I didn't shoot at any squirrels.

O: Yes, I see, just to get to know the kids.

H: Just getting into the woods and looking at wildlife. Anyway, those were probably the highlights there.

Then I heard that there was an opening at midyear in the high school where I had gone and somehow they got to me. That's Youngstown East High. I didn't know whether I was going to be able to take the job because it would depend on whether the local board released me from my contract, and the local board did. That's how I got my try as a city schoolteacher.

O: You went straight to East High then, right?

H: Yes. There I was at the eighth grade level and I had the newspaper, which I had been the editor of when I was in high school, and then the yearbook.

O: Oh. What was the name of the newspaper?

H: The East High Echo and the Janus were the names of the yearbook, which, if you remember, looking ahead and looking back, Janus had two faces.

O: Right.

H: At least one outstanding thing there that I look back on with fondness was, I had the Girl Reserves. At that time they were known as that. These were the girls who would meet at the YWCA. We developed a program of interest groups. I had been in modern dance at Reserve, so I worked with these different groups and we developed in the modern dance group, a dance routine and we presented our routine with the orchestra, the East High Orchestra, playing the music for our presentation. I still remember that experience. It was a good one. It was a great experience because it was a cooperative kind of thing. Those kids got a lot out of the group because of this common interest idea. Again, that was extracurricular, no pay, but it was fun.

O: How much money would you be making in the first year?

H: The very first year of teaching at Leesville Jefferson Rural down in Leesville near Crestline, Ohio . . .

O: Where is Crestline, Ohio?

H: Crestline is a little . . . I can't remember if it is north of Mansfield.

O: Is it by Bucyrus?

H: Bucyrus, exactly, it's quite close. Okay, the first year I worked for \$1,150 and in ten years that rose to \$2,160. That's what the going pay was at that point for beginning teachers.

O: What would you be making at East High?

H: That was including Youngstown East where I went from Leesville Jefferson. I left for about \$220 more. The first year at East High was \$1,381 and then it went up to \$1,421. It went up \$100 each year, that was the annual increase.

O: What would be about the most then, that a teacher could make at this time when you were starting out? Do you know?

H: Yes, see I was a beginning teacher.

O: Do you have any idea?

- H: I don't know, maybe they'd be up into \$8,000 if they had been teaching, maybe not. That's being optimistic.
- O: Would the administrative staff then be making more than the teachers?
- H: Oh yes.
- O: This would be in the 1930's then again, that you were teaching at East, right?
- H: Well, yes, it was 1939. I left Leesville about January of 1939, and I started at East High in February, whenever the semester break would have been.
- O: How many students, do you recall, would be going to East at this time, the total enrollment?
- H: Gee, I'm not sure. I don't have an idea about the total enrollment, but it was a pretty full capacity school at that time.
- O: How about your classes then? Tell me a little bit about them.
- H: Now, they would range into the 30's, 33 to 35 students and they were trying to keep classes not to exceed 35. That's a good size class, especially in English because you're grading papers, compositions, all the time.
- O: How many classes would you have a day?
- H: We usually ranged about five a day. Now, if I had the newspaper, then I'd have four classes and the newspaper. Then a teacher usually had a studyhall assignment or an assignment of some sort. Instead of that, I would have the yearbook.
- O: I should have asked you this in the beginning, but why did you want to become a teacher?
- H: Oh! I always wanted to be a teacher. I never had a career problem, never.
- O: Really? Do you think a teacher influenced you when you were in high school or grade school?
- H: No, I wanted to be a teacher before I was even in school. I think I am about the only person that I've ever known who never seemed to have gone through, "Do I want to be this or do I want to be that?" I've always wanted to be a teacher. I never had any problem making this decision.

- O: Throughout this time, many times, women didn't have many opportunities other than teaching or nursing. Did you find this to be true in your own family, with your sisters or with your mother? Did they ever want to do something other than . . . ?
- H: My mother always thought she'd like to be a nurse, but that is one profession that never appealed to me. Now, as I see the career choices today, I had thought maybe I'd like to have done something in law. Of course, what I'm doing now is vastly interesting, I think, the museum work.
- O: Can you tell me a little bit about the status of women during this time, even women teachers?
- H: Yes, now I never felt too much oppression in terms of being a woman. I know of systems where women did resent that the men were given extracurricular chores and paid for them. I'm referring to collecting tickets at games and this kind of thing, or they were even given the big study halls. Of course, some women wouldn't object to that. But as far as being a woman, I did feel some discrimination in the area of being married because I was married during the 1940's. Well, when I was married, it was just automatic that I could not have a contract. Now, because it was the war period, there was a shortage of teachers, so the Board, for at least Youngstown, adopted what they called the permanent substitute kind of thing, but still the teacher wasn't on a contract. This was, of course, all directed at women.
- O: What was the rationale behind it?
- H: I think that there was a shortage of jobs prior to the war.
- O: I mean, why were women chosen that once they got married they couldn't teach?
- H: I don't know, unless it was that if the husband was working, then the wife didn't need to, sort of a distribution of jobs, an attempt to control that. I don't know what the motives were, but at any rate, I did feel then that I was penalized for being a woman.
- O: Did any women ever protest this? Do you know? Women teachers?
- H: No, I think the biggest protest that I knew was a very silent, quiet one. We were all just amazed one year when this very fine teacher, a solid citizen, when it was revealed that she had been married for quite a long time and had been teaching, under contract, as a single teacher. She did her own little protest

- in a quiet way. She just got married and didn't tell anybody about it. I suppose that happened more than once.
- O: How did they find out about her?
- H: I can't remember the details on that.
- O: Was she fired?
- H: I think it didn't come out until after married women were not discriminated against. She was an excellent teacher. The kids were really the benefactors in that situation. What a shock we all had when we learned that she had been married.
- O: Did you see it negatively or positively?
- H: Well, I'm sort of forthright and I'm looking at it from that standpoint. Now, from the total picture, I think, as I said, the students benefited and she got what she wanted and really, nobody was hurt. The only thing was that it wasn't quite an honest move, but that's her problem.
- O: Okay, going back to why you first started to teach the eighth grade at East, could you tell me what a typical day would be like teaching? When would you start, the time of day that you could start? Did you have homerooms?
- H: Yes, we had homerooms.

Another innovation, Mr. J.W. Smith was principal there for years, quite a pioneer in education here, he set up what he called a club period. This was in the regular schedule of the day and then everybody would choose a club that we would go to during school time and that would be a club period. That club might be a variety of things. It could be the newspaper; it could be not just clubs per se, but activities, kind of an activity period. I thought that was quite creative. Things come and go, fads, in education, as in everything else, and that fell by the wayside.

Also, they did allow released time for religious education. First, they had the ministers and the priests and the rabbis come to the school, that was at the end of the day and the kids would sign up to go to whatever class they wanted to. Well, then that began to be frowned upon, they gave the kids released time to leave the school and go to the churches. That was an interesting episode in the history of education and that, again, passed by.

- O: Speaking of religion, did you ever start a class with a prayer or did religion have any part in your teaching?
- H: Oh yes, during the homeroom period, we always read from the Bible.
- O: You would read it?
- H: Oh, yes, I would read it, the teachers would read it. I don't say that other people did it that way, maybe they had students read it. We always started the day with that and then there would be announcements, which is not unknown today.
- O: When did this stop then?
- H: When the legal battles started.
- O: Did you notice any change then? Do you think the absence of religion had any change on education?
- H: I think it took more than that to change education. That might have been a contributing factor, but I think that's too simplistic an answer.
- O: All right, going back, what time would your first class start?
- H: About a quarter of nine. I think the last bells rang at 8:30, then we had homeroom. All the teachers were supposed to be there at 8:00 and then the children would start to come in at the first bell at 8:15. At a quarter of nine would be the classes.
- O: And you taught strictly English then, in the beginning?
- H: Yes, with the journalism.
- O: All the time then?
- H: No, I have taught other things, but at that point it was English.
- O: How would you teach English when you first started out?
- H: Oh, I tried all sorts of things.
- O: Like what?

H: What was it we used to pass around? Some little gimmick, I forget what it was. If somebody made a grammatical error, then that person would get this, I can't remember what it was, probably a ceramic dog. He was doggone wrong and so he had this on his desk. Little games like that we'd try. Then I used to have spelldowns, we'd work on vocabulary and we'd memorize.

O: It would be strictly grammar then that you would be doing? Would it be literature also?

H: Yes, you took turns, a siege of grammar, a siege of literature and then go back and circle it.

O: What was the hardest thing to teach?

H: The hardest thing to teach was the correct use of 'lie' and 'lay', and the correct use of 'I' and 'me'. It's so simple and yet it was so difficult to get across to the kids. I taught diagramming and, of course, that is taboo today. You don't learn grammar by diagramming, but I thought it was a great way, graphically, for the kids to see how sentences were put together.

O: How would you teach children to use 'I' and 'me', and 'lie' and 'lay'?

H: I tried to use a pencil and demonstrate putting it down. I would lay it down, but once it was there it was lying there. I'd go into these dramatics in an effort to make it clear and I guess I won a few converts, but it was an uphill battle.

And then compositions, I graded more compositions. Weekends, Sunday afternoons, I would spend doing compositions. That's a great way to spend your weekend isn't it, but that's what I did.

O: It sounds like writing history reviews.

H: Right. I made big long notations on them, and then I wasn't sure if the kids ever read them. I'd have the students rewrite their essays, doing the same one over 'til it was right. They got bored, but how do you learn if you don't redo what you did wrong? Anyway, those were some of the problems.

O: What would you have them write compositions on?

H: Almost anything, and I never made it a hard-and-fast rule that it had to be this or that. I always gave them leeway to be creative, and that was interesting.

O: Can you think of any topics just off hand?

H: No, I can't. It has been a long time because I was the senior counselor at Fitch for twelve years. My English is a little further back. For instance, let me mention this, this one boy was spelling a bass singer, and he spelled it b-a-s-s, which is correct, and I guess maybe I learned more than he did because I wanted to spell it b-a-s-e. It's a funny thing how you learn as well as they.

O: When you first started teaching then at East, did you see any difference in your students in comparison to when you were a student there?

H: Yes, I think when I went there, maybe I just went with a certain group, but I don't think so, I think I was pretty democratic. There were more ethnic groups represented when I went back to teach.

O: Like what kind of groups?

H: The Hungarian and Slovak. When I went there, there were a lot of Irish, Italian, and Jewish; the Jewish population dwindled. I think many moved to the North Side and some to the South Side. The Anglo-Saxons were leaving and so on. It became more of a European mix. Of course, as the years went by, we had more of the Blacks. Now today, they have Puerto Ricans.

O: Would these be first generation students that would be coming in when you were starting to teach then at East?

H: Yes. There were quite a few first generation students. We tried to encourage college, particularly for girls. I saw a lot of discrimination against women in terms of parents' feelings, that it wasn't so important for the daughters to have an education. This has been pretty typical of my teaching, even in later years out at Austintown Fitch.

O: Well, then, did you have contact, I guess, with parents?

H: Oh yes.

O: How?

H: There was a big thrust, at one time, in the years that I was in Youngstown when you had to visit the home of every child in your homeroom. This especially happened when it came time for school levies. We were sort of goodwill ambassadors.

- O: What would you talk about when you would go?
- H: Oh, I always had a good time.
- O: Really?
- H: Oh sure. I could see good things in their children. Parents love to talk about their children, and I was a good listener. I always enjoyed that.
- O: Did they have times when the parents could come to the school? Did they have parent-teacher meetings or whatever they are?
- H: I think they had PTA. I'm sure they did, but it wasn't at the high school level that much. They did at the elementary level and so on, and that would bring the parents to the school, but mostly we went into the homes during that particular period. I found that interesting.
- O: Did you have to drive?
- H: Sure, when you're doing a high school clientele, you're covering a big geographic area.
- O: What elementary schools would be in that area?
- H: Well, Roosevelt, Lincoln, Oak Street, which isn't even a school anymore, and Madison. We had students from Madison, Shehy, of course, and that's long gone.
- O: How long did you teach at East? How long were you there?
- H: About ten years.
- O: Then you were there during World War II, right, like you said?
- H: Yes.
- O: How did the current events, such as World War II, affect the students or affect your teaching? Did you talk about it during the time? Did it affect the students personally? I just want your impression of what was going on in education during World War II. I'd like you to talk a little bit about this, like gas rationing. Were there air raid warnings?
- H: Yes, we had air raid drills. The children would line up in the halls with their heads protected under their arms leaning against the wall.
- O: Did they understand what was going on? Did they know?

H: I think that was one year that I taught elementary, the one and only year that I have a vague recollection of that. That would have been in 1950, in the early 1950's. There's one thing that I want to mention, and I'm trying to get it into place. You talked about the effect of World War II. It was interesting that our principal would come in and talk to the children about education in Russia. At that time it was a plus, a positive talk, and then we went through the period of 'hate Russia' and it was reflected, the differences in attitude, and I could sense it in what was going on in the school.

O: Why Russis? Why did they talk about Russia?

H: Because, I think, Russia was going through its revolution and this was when they were having their five-year programs and at that time it was a friendly thing. I think it was because we were fighting with them in World War II and so it was all plus. Now, it's 'hate Russia, hate Russia'. It's interesting how attitudes changed and maybe justifiably so, I don't know.

O: How about war bonds and rationing, how were teachers involved with that?

H: Well, we were like other employees, we could have these bonds taken out of our salaries and accumulating.

O: Did you sell them at all?

H: This is World War II, I don't have any recollection of being involved in that. As far as rationing goes, yes. I remember that. We all had ration books and so on. One thing that would tie into how the world affairs affected what was happening in the schools, was the shortage of teachers. I remember Mr. Smith got in touch with me. I had had our baby daughter and was not teaching at that point and I did go back to teach quite a long time for that period of time. Today teachers go on teaching, even though they're pregnant until almost . . .

O: The ninth month.

H: At that time it was rather unusual.

O: When did you stop?

H: I think because I was doing the yearbook and the newspaper, these were sort of special things, and to find people to replace that was not easy. I was tied into that. I taught through to December and the baby was born in February. That was a kind of good time, but I quit after the Christmas vacation, I didn't go back. What happened was, after she was born, he still didn't have anybody to do the newspaper,

so I went up to the school half a day and I worked with the newspaper and maybe taught one or two classes.

O: You got paid for this though, right?

H: Oh sure, but this was a permanent substitute salary because remember, I was married. I thought that was a little unusual. I taught a half day as a permanent substitute through the war period, then I substituted at Hillman.

O: What did you do with your daughter?

H: Well, I lived at home because my husband was in the Navy and I'd just give her her bath and put her to bed and then go up to school and do my little thing at school. By that time I got back, maybe she was up from her nap or maybe she was still napping. My mother and maiden aunt were there if needed.

O: Were you asked to be involved in the school's newspaper again?

H: Oh yes. I had done it when I was in school. I think I was the editor of the yearbook as well, so I had a lot of experience.

O: Why did you enjoy doing this?

H: I don't know, I like to work with words and I like to work with people and there's a certain amount of routine and regimentation, but it's also creative.

O: Were the kids interested in it too?

H: Oh yes, they loved it. In fact, Jenny D'Alessandro, who is currently on the Youngstown Board of Education, was an editor when I was the supervisor.

O: Did you have any problems at all?

H: No, the kids felt that East High was the poor cousin, the poor sister of the high schools and they always wanted to do something great so that East High could get its proper recognition. Jenny was a really big leader in this kind of thing, she really felt that East High was getting the short end.

O: How about sports? Was East a leader in sports, in football or basketball?

- H: When Dick Barrett came as the coach there, East High did very well in sports. My husband was one of his assistant coaches. When my husband played, things weren't too good. I remember we'd follow the team all over the area and I remember we went to Girard and they played a zero-zero score. But East came up under Dick Barrett.
- O: You met your husband at East?
- H: Yes, as a student, and then he became a principal there.
- O: Oh, I didn't know that.
- H: Yes, he was principal there for a very long time.
- O: When was this?
- H: I think through the 1950's and into the 1960's.
- O: Okay, going back into World War II, were there children or students of yours that had brothers or fathers that were fighting in the war? Did they ever have any personal tragedies?
- H: Yes, I think so. I remember, not so much students in school, but I remember getting news about some most promising kids that had gotten into the service and were killed. That's a very, very distressing thing that a person with so much ability, or any human being, should be cannon fodder.
- O: Did the parents, when you'd go to visit them at their homes, did they ever talk about things like this, like Roosevelt, politics, or was it purely school?
- H: It was pretty much school related.
- I remember the WPA (Works Progress Administration). That was really a savior for a lot of the families.
- O: Oh, really? In what way?
- H: Because the families had nothing and at least through WPA they were drawing some money to live on. That goes back to the Depression period, but that saved a lot of people from starving.
- O: Did the school ever do anything to help the students, like lunches or breakfasts?
- H: They do now, I mean they have in recent years, but I don't think so in that time. I do think that in the kindergartens they served graham crackers and milk

and that sort of thing, but as far as the schools, at least I wasn't aware of it.

I know that our principal, J.W., used to give money from his pocket and he'd go home without any money because he had been feeling sorry for kids who didn't have enough to eat.

O: He sounds like a remarkable man.

H: He was, he was an amazing man.

O: Is he still living?

H: No. He has a daughter. I'm not sure whether his son is still living or not, but his daughter taught at Chaney.

O: Do you remember any of the other teachers that you worked with at East?

H: Oh yes.

O: Can you tell me some of their names and what they taught? Do you remember?

H: Arthur Schwartz just died not too long ago and he taught the government and the social studies. J.L. Higgs was in the social studies and history. Mr. Shepard was a tall, deep-voiced man whom the kids just really looked up to, in the social studies.

O: Why did they look up to him?

H: I could say because he was so tall. He was, but I don't know, he had a strong personality. We had a very handsome teacher, a lady teacher, Julia Woodsmith, who just dressed exquisitely and was an outstanding teacher, too. We had some excellent English teachers, Elva Morris, Ella Philps, Alice Weber. Elva Morris is still living, the other two are dead.

O: Did you work with any of the tour guides from the Arms Museum? Did they teach at all up there?

H: Interestingly, no, a lot of them taught at Wilson and I never did teach at Wilson.

O: Where did you go then from East?

H: From East I went out to New Springfield for two reasons: One, I was married and I couldn't get a contract; two, a married couple never taught in the same system. That's

when I went over to substitute teach at Hillman; when Burt came back I had to leave. That was a discriminating kind of thing, too. Then, I had decided that I had had enough of this permanent substitute bit so I went out to the county and I was assigned to New Springfield.

O: It didn't matter then that you were married?

H: No, because at this point the rural systems needed teachers. That was an interesting situation because there I taught both English and physical education. I guess I did teach a class or two of physical education at Leesville, and then I didn't do any physical education at East High. As a matter of fact, I was the Dean of Girls at East High.

O: What would you have to do then?

H: If any of the girls in school time became ill, they came to me. I would talk with girls about their excessive absence, excessive tardiness; in a sense, a counselor of sort.

O: What would you do with discipline problems at East?

H: I didn't get involved in discipline. I did work with, when they were graduating, in those days the girls wore white dresses, and I would talk to them about their graduation clothing and I would have girl's assemblies, emphasizing what would be good manners or what is good etiquette. I was busy with that kind of thing and I had a girl's service club.

I didn't get involved in the discipline. Once in a while, if somebody was absent excessively, I would try to talk with the person or if there was excessive tardiness on the part of someone. I didn't do any hard and stern disciplining except to try to understand.

Out at this other school, I did get involved in both English and physical education. That school was unbelievable. The gym was in the center and all the classrooms were around and you'd be teaching some dramatic scene from Shakespeare and the basketball would bang on the door. That was disruptive, for sure.

I remember that they had good basketball teams out there and they had these tall boys and they'd come into class and I was fairly young in that day and they weren't the easiest persons in the world to discipline in the classroom. They were very independent. They were farmers.

I taught economic geography out there, too, and I know was trying to present ideas about primitive farming conditions in India and this kind of thing. Frequently the question would come, this was true particularly about English, "Why do we have to study English? It isn't that important." I sensed a provincialism out there that I tried to deal with.

- O: How did you respond to questions like that?
- H: It wasn't easy, but as far as English went, I spent a lot of time justifying how every time you open your mouth you're using English. Every time you open your mouth you're selling yourself. I tried to make it seem practical and useful, studying India just to compare our culture and how we approach life as compared with how they do. That was dealing with ideas, and some people can't deal with ideas.
- O: Was there a difference between teaching in Youngstown and teaching in New Springfield?
- H: Yes, they were very independent out there and I think maybe that's a farmer's way. He has to make his way, he has to plan. That idea of independence permeates to the family.
- O: How long did you teach at New Springfield?
- H: At New Springfield I taught about, maybe four years.
- O: And then what did you do after that?
- H: I guess it wasn't quite four, it was more in between two and three. My tenure there had a rather unhappy ending. I suspect that we were maybe the first teachers in the area to go on strike. We didn't call it 'on strike', but for all intents and purposes, that's what it was. It happened this way, one of the young teachers was disciplining one of the students in the hall and he hit her, smacked her right in the face. The boy was taken to the principal and the principal isolated him for the rest of the day.
- O: Oh, the student hit the teacher?
- H: Yes, the student hit the woman teacher, the young woman teacher. Well, the assistant principal and that young teacher were dating. The assistant principal saw this as a horrible affront, and it was. I'm not taking away from the boldness of the deed, but he did not agree with the way the problem was handled. He talked with all of

of the teachers the next morning and said, "I think this was a miserable way to have this handled. This boy should have been sent home immediately and should have been disciplined in a much more effective way." He said, "I think we should go down to the superintendent and discuss the whole thing with him." This was the county superintendent, and so we did.

O: Who was that? Do you remember his name?

H: Yes, Leroy Hoskins, and he has since been a teacher in Lakewood, on the west side of Cleveland. He was an excellent teacher and was very good, but I think he was carried away with the fact that his friend . . . and he ultimately married this teacher. He was quite emotionally involved in this situation. At any rate, we all went down to the county office, except for the superintendent there. Meanwhile, all of the children had come to school and there was no staff. In a sense, it was a strike, but we didn't think of it that way because we were in the company of the County Superintendent of Schools. His name was Salsman, by the way.

I can't remember exactly how that came out. I think the boy came back to school, but he had been suspended for awhile and then returned. Ultimately, those of us who had been involved, and most of us were involved in that episode, were released from our contracts. My tenure there . . .

A new superintendent had come in and I got a letter of commendation, so that when I applied for a job again, I had myself protected. At that point I thought I might try something else. I went into the public library and I was named the manager or the librarian at the Poland Library and that was where we were living, in Poland, at the time so it was kind of a handy situation. I enjoyed that work.

O: Wouldn't you need a degree in library science?

H: Not at that time, because they also were hard-up for personnel and they had instituted a program that was interesting. One of the well-trained staff members had set up a library study program for all of us. There were several of us in the same category. Having an English major was a really big help; it was really a big help. We had to go down for our course of study and we had really good training.

O: Where did you go?

H: To the main library. We went through this course, this indoctrination. It was excellent and I had really good training there. I worked at the Poland Library and part of my program was to go into the schools and give book talks. Another part was the entire class would come down to the library and I would tell them stories. Having my English training and so on, I enjoyed it; it was great. I had a circulation you wouldn't believe in that Poland Library. These kids would come down and they'd take out books and we'd have stacks of book cards from the books that we'd checked out to the children. We had a tremendous circulation.

O: Do you remember what some of the more popular books were?

H: Wind in the Willows was a big one; the British writer A.A. Milne and his Winnie the Pooh; and Paul Bunyan. Paul Bunyan with the bacon slices on his feet to skate over the griddle to get it ready for the pancakes; and Babar the Elephant, oh my, they loved that. We really had a fun time when the kids would come down.

I was so entranced with the way I could entertain these kids I thought, well, maybe I should try elementary school teaching. I had my youngster and the school hours would coincide with hers, as a librarian, this wasn't true. I had to work evenings at the branch library. I thought I'll try. I went out to Fitch for an interview, this was in September, so the school year had started, everything was set up.

O: What year would this be then?

H: October of 1952, so there wasn't much of 1952 left.

O: Why did you choose Fitch?

H: I heard they had an opening there. I had gone down, I'm sure, to the County Superintendent and he had directed me from there. Actually, it wasn't an opening, but what they had was an unprecedented number of first graders. This was what happened to me. The teachers were told that there would be a new first grade started. I'm sure that what the teachers did was take their five problem students from each teacher. What a conglomeration of kids and what problems they had. That was my first classroom experience at the elementary level, so it was really an experience.

One of the boys was with the Youngstown Guidance Center and they would call and want to know how he was doing and give me tips on how to handle him. The little boys were

so immature if they were not fully six years old. One little boy was a twin and the other twin, the girl, was so great and he was so immature, he was picking and poking at all the children. It was just a horrendous year. I gained new respect for first grade teachers. Anyway, they needed somebody at the high school level the next year and I was happy to move up.

I might say that while I was at Springfield, I did the plays and it was interesting because after doing a days work of teaching in the classroom, it was almost a refreshing kind of thing to go into the auditorium and work with the kids in a play atmosphere, theater atmosphere. I really enjoyed that. And again, no pay, no extra pay. That was all time that you gave to your job.

O: Did you do this at Fitch, too, then?

H: No, I did newspaper and yearbook at Fitch, but not any theater. When I went out to Fitch that first year I was at the elementary level and I gained new respect, as I said, for the first grade teachers. Then I went to the high school level. There again, I tried experimental things because I had the business English courses. These were the kids that were not college bound. That was when I began justifying the teaching of English because that was their big question. It wasn't "What is the proper form of 'I' in this sentence?" But it was "Why do I have to learn this?"

Reading, trying to get kids to read and doing book reports, that has always been a problem, trying to find novel ways of having kids report on their readings. We'd do dramatic kinds of things, I've had panels set up.

O: What did they discuss?

H: A panel, for instance, to discuss the main character in the book that you read, and what the person was like in the book that you read, and this kind of thing, or humorous incidents. I did that because I thought sometimes kids are shy and maybe it would give them some support, psychological support, if several were in front of the class together.

O: Were any books ever censored when you were teaching?

H: No, it was pretty open.

O: Was there any complaint from any of the parents?

H: I never had too much feedback or criticism from the parents on that. I had a few retakes on some of them myself.

O: What do you mean?

H: I'm trying to think of this one book which had been questioned by some.

O: Catcher in the Rye?

H: Yes, exactly, Catcher in the Rye. I guess I'm not very sophisticated myself.

O: Did you assign that book?

H: Oh sure. I never assigned, again, I tried to develop freedom of choice, but I think I gave more points if they read books that I recommended, a kind of a sneaky sort of thing. I did graphs to encourage kids to read. I tried all sorts of ways to lure them into the joys of the printed word.

O: Do you remember what the kids response was to Catcher in the Rye?

H: I had some pretty good students and some not so interested. One of the things I learned, I guess, in those years with those students was, they might not be high IQ people, but the Lord gave them insights. I tried to work with kids in terms of, not factual stuff as much as possible, but people and how they relate to each other and this sort of thing. They had tremendous insights, instincts about things. Maybe they couldn't rattle off dates and that kind of thing, but to live, this is kind of what you need, understanding and precepts. This is what I tried to work with.

O: Did you notice any difference between the students that you taught at East and the ones you taught at Austintown?

H: It's amazing, I had the children of the people that I taught at East or went to school with at East High because many of the East Siders moved to Austintown.

Then, I went into counseling out there after so many years and I'll never forget the era when the beehive hairdo was so big. I had a principal, Mr. Wagner, who was so against this kind of thing, and he would talk with the kids and tell them that this was not the proper way to dress and so on.

I'll never forget, I went out to the Post Office in Austintown or off to one of the stores out there and I saw the parents with these huge beehive things. I thought, why are we fighting this thing at the school level when it's already in fashion and worn by the parents? I can't forget that reaction in terms of what you expect of the kids and the parents are in to it.

- O: Was there a difference, do you think, in the size of towns, in the way the children acted in school, like the east side as compared to the west side of Austintown?
- H: I don't see too much difference in those years. Actually, I suspect basically, kids are the same all over and what changes have taken place are not so much this side and that side as it is generally.
- O: We were talking a little bit about the heritage, were there dress codes at East then?
- H: Oh yes, and I remember we had . . .
- O: Is this at East?
- H: No, I'm talking about Fitch. We didn't need dress codes at East in those days.
- O: Why not?
- H: You went to school trying to look your best. I remember, even as a kid, I wore tennis shoes to school, but I polished them with white shoe polish, so I had white shoe-polished tennis shoes and wore dresses. Girls didn't wear jeans. They just wore pretty little dresses, pretty skirts and blouses, sweaters and this kind of thing.
- We were really hard on a dress code at Fitch. During one period, and particularly with one assistant principal, I remember in those years, at least at one occasion, they wouldn't let the kids in school. Here are all these kids standing outside the school and the Vindicator photographer came out and took pictures of these kids that hadn't been admitted to school because they weren't dressed properly. That would be the blue jeans, when the girls started to wear slacks. We were so "anti-slacks" out there.
- O: Really?
- H: We had to have the girls in their little dresses and they had to be a certain length. That all went by the board.
- O: What length did they have to be?
- H: Below the knee. And of course, this is going, I think to the ridiculous; something about if you knelt down and the skirt touched the floor. I'm not sure we ever tried that, really enforced that, but that was really getting to be a little absurd, on the absurd side. I have to say, there were really some pretty bad cases. I remember kids were sent home; girls were sent home because of their see-through blouses or whatever; they were just too sheer.

O: Were any of them ever sent to you when you were a counselor?

H: Oh yes, a lot of them.

O: How long were you a counselor?

H: I was a counselor there for about twelve years. There were personal problems, but I also did college recommendations and tried to find jobs for the students.

O: What was there in your own educational training that allowed you to teach grade school, high school, do counseling?

H: When I did that grade school stint I had to take the Teaching of Reading at the University at the same time because I had no training in that. I was on a . . . well, there was a temporary certificate. There were quite a few temporary certificates through the shortage-of-teachers period. Then, after teachers became numerous and plentiful they pushed getting teachers off temporary certificates and into getting further education. One year in elementary was accompanied by taking this Teaching of Reading course at the University to help me be qualified. I didn't continue any of that elementary work because I got back into the high school. After that I went on for my master's degree, and at that point I took counseling and went into work in counseling and that qualified me for my counseling certificate.

O: How about field trips at East and at Fitch, too. Do you remember them?

H: Oh yes. I took my journalism kids down to the Vindicator.

O: This was at East?

H: Yes.

O: How did you get them down there?

H: Gosh, I think we went in cars. I don't think we used the school busses at that time. In fact, I don't know that there were any busses at that time.

O: What was it like? Where did you go first or what did show them at the Vindicator? What did you do?

H: We went into the different business departments, the editorial rooms, and then we saw the big presses and saw the long sheet, the long winding sheet of newspaper, saw the folding machine and the machine that got them ready for mailing. Let's see, what else did we do? Not so much with classes as with, again, the Girl Reserve group. We went to the Arms Museum when it opened. I remember taking groups up there and it was just brand new at that time.

O: Do you remember who the guide was?

H: I think it was either Miss Molly Russell or it was Miss Marion Maiden. They were both retired schoolteachers at that time. Miss Russell is still living at Park Vista and Miss Maiden is dead.

Now, at Fitch I'm trying to think what we did in terms of field trips. Again, we went to the Vindicator. Of course, it was a new story . . . printing presses were stories high. It was a highly technical and refined kind of operation. Then I became a counselor. Now, it's computer at the Vindicator.

O: Oh really?

H: Yes, and it's such a different kind of thing. When we went, the printers would print some of the students' names on a slug and the kids would have that to take home.

O: Did you know people at the Vindicator?

H: Yes.

O: Who was down there? Do you remember names?

H: Esther Hamilton was a big name down there at that time, and the different sports editors like Ward, I can't think of his first name, he was the sports editor for a long time. I remember the city editor, oh, I can't think of his name.

O: He's new there now, right?

H: No, no, he has been there for a while and, of course, he moved up. I remember Mansell, Charlie Leedy, some of those old names in connection with the newspaper.

O: You mentioned about the so-called strike in Springfield. Were you involved or were there any strikes at East or at Fitch when you were there?

H: No, but I was scared to death at Fitch because we were getting mighty close to one and I was really in the middle because I didn't know what I would do. Some of the fellows would kid me, "We've got a real big sign all ready for you to carry." They were just teasing me, but I never did, I never had to.

Now one day, I guess for all intents and purposes it was a strike, but we called it a professional day and we met over at the big church there at the corner of Kirk and Raccoon.

O: Oh, this was when you were at Fitch?

H: Yes, at Fitch. We met there, all of the Austintown teachers.

O: Why did you call it a professional day?

H: I guess they were talking about some of the things that they would have wanted. I'm sort of vague on it now. We called it a professional day so we didn't have to call it a strike. I was never really involved in a clear-cut strike, and I'm so thankful.

O: Have you seen any major changes in the educational system here in Youngstown? Can you even compare it to when you were teaching in Austintown Fitch? You mentioned about Smith, who was a pioneer in education.

H: Yes, for having the clubs. I just hesitate to make any vague statements about the changes. I hate to be caught in the trap of saying, "The kids are worse. The teachers are more lenient," and this kind of thing. There are changes and I guess the kids are just . . . I'm really not into it that much because we have kids that come through the museum that are really listening and interested.

I'd like to cite maybe an incident or two in my counseling experiences. For sure, the language is different. The use of earthy, basic Anglo-Saxon terms is just like common speech today. It's evident in the movies. If you go to the movies, 'hell' is like . . . And to me, this marks a limitation in vocabulary, but it's accepted and it's done and it's widespread and maybe it will swing the other direction. I'm talking in terms of speech. When the kids would come in to talk with me, I would make a very great effort not to appear shocked. They were very frank, many of them were quite frank, and they were much more open. There's nothing all bad about that. I think there isn't anything all good about it, but that's my personal feeling. Maybe this kind of honesty is what we want, but my personal feeling is, there are some things that are private.

Talking about dress codes, I remember a boy coming in and he had a red handkerchief tied in pirate style around his head and a great gold earring on one ear. I didn't laugh, I accepted him as he was. I didn't appear surprised or shocked or impressed or whatever, just as if every kid in the school comes in with his hair all done up in a pirate's handkerchief, but it was unbelievable.

O: What advice would you give a teacher starting out today?

H: I think really, it's important to accept the kids as they are with the hope of, and having expectation of, being honest. I always felt that being honest with the kids was basic to building a trust relationship.

O: Would you teach again if you were starting out all over?

- H: I might. I'm just not quite sure how the classroom would be, because, see, I haven't been in it for twelve years. Now, with retiring for seven years, it would have been about twenty years since I've been in a classroom. I'm not quite sure because there are classes that are good, there are classes that are difficult, and no matter how hard you try, you get that kind of structure.
- O: Looking back over your career as a teacher, were there any changes you would like to have seen occur in your schools?
- H: There are many bad things that happened in terms of sarcastic comments to kids. There are many bad things that happened in terms of put-downs with kids. This, I have a hard time dealing with. None of us deserve this kind of put-down because life is tough enough. My feeling would be to accept him as he is and try to take him where you want him to be, but cutting him down and slicing him up is . . . Try to convey some sense of, "I think you're a good guy."
- O: Is there anything else that you would like to add that I may not have covered or any other incidents that you can think of?
- H: I think that we have covered everything pretty well.
- O: What was your favorite thing about teaching? What did you enjoy most about teaching?
- H: Being with the kids. I really enjoyed that and I miss the kids. The first few years after retiring I really missed them because they would come in and we would talk about problems, we would talk about their ambitions, and I just really have missed being with the younger people.
- O: Can you think of anything else then that you want to talk about, whether it be at East or Fitch or even, in a way, I guess, you're a teacher too at the Arms Museum when you take the kids on tour.
- H: I think that I've said pretty much all I have to say.
- O: Okay, thank you very much.
- H: You bet.

END OF INTERVIEW