

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Women's Herstory Project

Personal Experiences

O. H. 703

SUSAN TAYLOR

Interviewed

by

Joyce Segreto

on

October 2, 1987

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Women's Herstory Project

INTERVIEWEE: SUSAN TAYLOR

INTERVIEWER: Joyce Segreto

SUBJECT: education, volunteering, employment, retirement,
widowhood

DATE: October 2, 1987

S: This is an interview with Susan Taylor on Women's Herstory for the Women's Resource Center in conjunction with the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, by Joyce Segreto. This interview is being conducted on Friday, October 2, 1987, at approximately 5:15 p.m.

What I would like you to do is tell me something about the first job that you had?

T: The very first job that I had was cleaning a friend of my mother's home in return for speech lessons because I wanted to be an actress way back then in high school. I was paid a little, but I went in for speech lessons each week. The first paying job I had was at a women's specialty store in Indianapolis, Indiana; the word for it today would be a "gofer". I guess they did a lot of alterations. I would go out and match thread and match materials. My boss even asked me once to buy a tie for him. I had just finished being a freshman in college. I was pretty inexperienced at buying things. I worked there the Summer after I was a freshman and I enjoyed it very much.

S: Where did you go to college?

T: Ther first year I went to Simpson College, a Methodist college, in Indianola, Iowa, where my dad taught. We were there about five years. Then at the end of that time my dad changed jobs and was in Indianapolis working for the state. That is why I happened to be there in Indianapolis. We then came to Youngstown College. My dad started here in 1927--I was just reading an article on him; it was a short time after the college had been started by the YMCA--and it

was a Y college, two years. My dad could not afford to send me back to Simpson. I went to Youngstown for my second year. Then I went to Kent, where I graduated.

S: What did you take in college?

T: I wanted to be an actress as I said before. Incidentally, I had worked the one Summer when I was in high school. I had been in plays for the Chautauqua Traveling Plays that they put on. I never had a very important part. I was a maid, but I adored it. To follow that was why I was taking speech, and directing, and stage management and production the second Summer I was here. I worked for Lillian Desmond Company that used to put on plays at Idora Park. Once again, I only had very small parts, but it kept the interest there and the excitement.

S: How did your family feel about you doing that?

T: The only thing was, when I went to Kent, my dad said, "Take all of the courses that you can, and that you want to, in your line of what you want to do, but on the other hand, take something practical so you can earn a living." So I majored in speech and I majored in education so I could teach if I had to earn my own living, which sooner or later I had to do.

S: What year was it when you graduated from Kent?

T: It was 1931. I graduated and I could not get a job teaching. There was nothing in my own field in this area. So I worked for the Allied Council, which was the only social agency in Youngstown that gave assistance. That was in 1932. The Depression was just over so there was an awful lot of work to be done. The Allied Council two years later was taken over by WPA, which then became welfare. It was social work. We had our own area. It was interesting. The area that I had was in Youngstown at the end of the bridge between Wilson Avenue and Shehy. It went out like a "V" to Garland Avenue; this is the east side of Youngstown. My next to final job was as principal at Roosevelt School, which is just at the end of that triangle. It was sort of coincidental. I worked at the Allied Council for forty-seven dollars a month, four of which we had to spend on bus passes. You had to go in to the families who were on relief. You didn't not just give them money or food or buy them coal or get them shoes. You went into their home and you visited. You had to visit every so often. You had to get certain proof that they still needed help. You got very well-acquainted with their families. It was a challenging job, one I liked very much. I never felt richer in my whole life with forty-seven dollars a month. Before that closed, I was there about a year and nine months. I got a job with the board of education in Youngstown and taught

at Wood Street School, which is now Choffin Center. They tore down the old school and rebuilt the new one on Elm Street which is now part of the Youngstown University and another on Williamson School on the south side on Williamson Avenue. I went there; we had our choice, the faculty from Wood Street. I was there and in the meantime my husband had died. He died when I was thirty-nine.

S: How old were you when you got married and when in the sequence did you get married?

T: I was married in 1935. I had been living by the board of education and had worked at Hayes Junior High because I had taken my degree in high school education, secondary education. I worked there for a year and two months. That was the first discrimination that I met because when I announced that I was going to get married I could not keep my job. In those days you were not allowed to be married and teach. I was married for fifteen years. My husband died in 1949.

S: During those fifteen years you did not

T: I substituted at Boardman High School and that is about all. I did not do that too often because I had one girl, who is fifty now. She was born in 1937. I had another child just after we moved here. We built a home and moved here. She was born in 1942. So there was five years difference. I had two children at home, so I did not do too much substituting. Then when my husband died, we had only been in the house for nine years. By that time we had put a lot of money into it and we had some savings, but not a whole lot. I looked ahead and saw that I had two children to take care of at least until they were eighteen and then put them through college. I thought I just had to go to work.

S: It must have been a real shock when your husband died.

T: Yes. I was frightened. I have often said that I do not see how men ever have the nerve to get married and take on the responsibility of another person plus others. It petrified me. I was really scared. He died in May. As callous as it seems I went right out looking for a job.

S: How old were your children?

T: Susie was five and Pat was eleven.

S: So they were very young children?

T: Yes. I went looking for a job. The superintendent had no high school jobs open and that is what I was trained for. I had known him and my dad had known him. He said, "If you will go to school this Summer and be trained for elementary,

you will only need eighteen hours, then I will hire you and I will give you a contract right now and you can do your student teaching on the job." Well, that was like they lifted a huge rock off my shoulders except that I was going to have to go to school. You can imagine that emotionally I was really not a good candidate. I guess that it was the best thing that ever happened because I did not have time to cry too much except under the dining room table late at night when the girls would not hear me.

S: Under the dining room table?

T: Yes. That was the protection. That was one large thing that the sound had to go through. They were so badly upset that I really had to control myself as much as I could. I started in Summer school.

S: That was a time when there were not nontraditional students?

T: No, very few.

S: What was it like to be in school then?

T: It was horrible. I looked around in this one class because I was feeling so inferior. I had been out of school for so long. Then I thought--I have an advantage; every one of these young men and every one of these young women are much more interested in the opposite sex than they are in the books. So I have an advantage. I really enjoyed the classes except that I could not take eighteen hours. I ended up with only fifteen, but then I took three the next semester. I took the three hours and my student teaching on the job. I went to work at Wood Street. Then I was transferred to Williamson. Soon I began to feel starved for adult conversation. I had kids all day at school. We had big classes then, between thirty-five and forty. I came home to two children. You did not have much time to socialize when you were just starting to teach and trying to get everything together that you were going to need. Also you had to grade the papers, keep the house, feed the kids, and the whole bit.

Before I get into the job I want to tell you about discrimination. My name is now Mrs. Taylor. It was Bare. I was in a class and the professor asked us to identify ourselves and to tell whether we had a job for that Fall or not. So when he came to me, I did just that. I said that I had a job and that I had a contract. Two young men who later became principals and who I still know to this day were walking down the steps behind me. The one said, "Hey Taylor, why do you have a job when you are a Mrs?" This was June. My husband died May 13. I could not turn around and say that I was a widow because I could not use the word. I could not say that he died. I still had not accepted

the word "die" emotionally or mentally. So I just walked on down the steps. You can see how much it affected me because I remember it, to the word, today. Eventually, I suppose they found out, but I never let on that it had happened. I was angry! I got in the car and I think I cried all the way home.

S: How about in the classroom, how did the professors treat you being a nontraditional student at a time when there were not any and being considerably older than the rest of the students?

T: They treated me very well. I had no problem at all. One advantage I had, of course, was I taught. I had not taught long, but I had taught. And these were educational courses. That gave him something that he could hang his hat on, so to speak. I did not notice that at all. No one in that class objected or thought that I was older. Acceptance all the way through was good. I began to get bored when I had time. I was dissatisfied so I decided to get my Master's. My dad had had three Master's. My brother had his Ph.D. I thought-- I am just as smart as they are. I went to Westminster. I was not doing it at that point to get a new job or anything, but just for my own enjoyment. I took anything and everything that I wanted to and I enjoyed it thoroughly. It took me two years, with Summers too. Of course, I ended up with many more hours than I needed, but I enjoyed it. The same year that I graduated the board of education was giving a test. Ohio State made the test up and brought it over to Youngstown and administered it to anyone who was interested in being an administrator, a guidance counselor, or a supervisor. They had elementary and high school supervisors, who worked with the brand new teachers. The older ones were those who wanted some help or wanted to do a project. I took the test and had my choice at that time of supervision or guidance. In the meantime I talked to some guidance counselors. Since my dad had taught psychology and since my brother had his Ph.D. in psychology, I at first thought that would be wonderful. Then when I talked to people and found out what they did, which was helping with job placement or college placement--usually they did not do more than that--I thought, "This is not what I want to do." So I went into supervision, which I liked. I worked on the north and east side of Youngstown because there were two supervisors and they divided the town. I enjoyed that, but I missed the kids. That was in 1960. I enjoyed it very much. Later I also taught at the university, part-time. The first course that I taught was in the educational department. Then the woman who was the head of the sociology and political science and economics asked if I would like to try that area. I had had a lot of sociology. I said, "Yes, I would like to." They had a required course at that time which every student had--that is why she needed somebody--to take that course, which was one term sociology, another term

economics, and the third term was political science. I found them tremendously interesting, but very challenging. The sociology was fine, that was not constantly changing. In political science, there was a new country every time you opened the newspaper. In economics I had to stay up-to-date on what was going on. I enjoyed that and did it for five years. I enjoyed teaching adults oddly enough. I was working at the board. My office was there and the classes were just right in the back of the board of education building. It was very convenient. I just walked from one to the other at five o'clock. My mother was not too well. Finally I just could not keep up being away from home that long. It would often be from eight in the morning until six-thirty or seven o'clock at night.

S: Was your mother watching your children?

T: No, they were grown by then. This was in 1965. My mother and father were living with me at that time; then my dad died. So mother was here alone. I had to consider her. My oldest girl went to Dennison and my youngest girl went to Miami. Then the next job I had was principalship of Roosevelt School. That was later in 1968 or 1969.

S: In between that you stayed home to take care of your mother?

T: No. I was still working when I taught at the university. It was just part-time. I was still a supervisor. I got someone to stay with her. At first all we needed was just a companion.

Dr. Robert Pegues, then superintendent, called me one day and asked me if I would do him a favor. I said, "I would if I could." That is what you would say to the superintendent. He told me that he wanted a new black principal in Youngstown schools. There were none available and none qualified. In the Spring he had gone down to one of the southern colleges and had hired a young man. He had just received a letter from him breaking his contract. Everybody had been assigned their building and the schools were getting ready for the year. He said, "I do not know what to do. I would hate to move anybody this late in the year. Would you be a principal?" I said, "I do not know. I do not even know whether I could be one or not." The evaluation that my own principal had given me when I went down to the board was he thought that I would do very well in supervision, but he did not think that I would make a good administrator. I wondered if it might be because I'm little. That sticks with you when your boss at that time makes an appraisal. You think--Well, why wouldn't I be? Well maybe he is right. I did not tell Mr. Pegues that. I said that I was not sure and I really liked the job that I was doing. He said, "I would appreciate it." I said, "I do not think that I could

be a principal." He had taught at Lincoln School before he had gone away and come back and had gotten the superintendent job. I had been his supervisor when he taught. He used to always invite me--he had the boy's athletic group there--to their father and son banquet. I used to say, "I really do not fit in either category, but I am glad to be here." He said, "Anybody who can supervise the superintendent can be a principal." So I said, "All right, Bob, I will do it if you will do me a favor. I love my job. Will you let me try it for a year? If you are dissatisfied or if I am dissatisfied we can let each other know well in advance so that you can hire somebody for the school and let me have my job back." He said, "Fine, if I have anybody come in I will do it on a one-year contract." So that is how I became a principal and loved it. Except the first day that I went to work there was a strike. Those teachers I had supervised were really good friends. I had to cross the picket line. It was horrible. It was a poor beginning, but it worked out very well. The only thing was I followed a very handsome young man. He left to become an attorney. He had passed his bar examination. I used to say to him, "You know, it was not a fair exchange. Whenever you had to reprimand or suggest something to a teacher all you had to do was go up and put your arm around her and very gently tease her. I cannot do that." I really enjoyed this job because I was back with kids again. I saw a lot of them. I was still working with teachers, so I liked it. Then I went to resign when I was sixty-six years old. I thought the time had come to retire. Dr. Pegues wanted me to do one more thing for him. He wanted me to go to Bennett School because they had closed Garfield School. Bennett School was going to grow from three hundred to over six hundred, plus the fact that Bennett School had always been almost completely a white school. Garfield was just the opposite. He was worried how the combination would work out. They were bringing all of the teachers from Garfield. He was worried about how they would mesh together. He wondered if I would go there and be an assistant for two years since I was going to retire anyhow. I said, "Yes." It was the hardest job that I ever did in my life.

S: What was hard about it?

T: I imagine you can guess. I was an assistant and I knew I was an assistant. I was not trying to overstep. On the other hand, the principal, in a case like that had no experience in having an assistant. This was rather a new idea in Youngstown; except in high schools, they did not have assistant principals. They might have a teacher on special contract who would help the principal, but he was still completely the boss. I was going in, having been principal. I was well-warned that I would have to do away with my principal attitude. The person who is going to be your boss has to know how to use you. This gentleman did not. I spent most of the first year in the book

room.

S: In the book room?

T: He did not really organize; he did not know what to do with me. He did not know how to delegate anything to me, and I knew this because I had known him for a long time as a brother principal, but I did not dare assert myself. It was very difficult. I stayed the two years and then I retired formally. That is it except for volunteer work.

S: Did you finally get results somehow or did you spend the two years doing things that you felt did not utilize your talents?

T: There is just no way you could insinuate yourself into any kind of position that made you happy with it. I did what I could. I could work with the teachers. I had a lot of spare time so I could go from room to room to get the feel of the problems and help in that way, but nothing that you could look back upon and be very proud of. But it was all right.

S: Did you feel that it was a male-female kind of thing or something else?

T: I am not sure. I think mostly it was just that he did not know how to use me. I just think that he did not know what to do with me. I think that would have been an embarrassment because I am sure that he felt that he was not giving me enough to do. I finally had an office way down at the other end from his office. There was a long hall from his office. At least I had a place where I could go and sit down other than the book room.

S: So you formally retired and did you work after that?

T: I retired in 1978. I have way over two thousand hours at Help Hotline where I volunteer. I enjoy that very much.

S: Can you talk a little bit about what you have done at Help Hotline?

T: Yes. The reason I got interested in it was the fact that, as I said to my daughter, after I retire . . . I have gone to all of these retirement dinners. Everybody is so happy. They just love it and all of the rest of it. I did not. I said to my daughter, "I do not feel important anymore. I do not care what you do, if you have a job that you like and you know that you do well, you feel important. I do not feel needed anymore. I am lonesome." Even before I retired I had said to her, "I need to do something. I am not willing to sit at home and do nothing." What will I do? Where will I volunteer? We went over the different places. Finally she

said, "I know one that I think you would like." She was director of Daybreak, a runaway home, at that time. She said, "I have hired some people who work with the young people. Both of them had been through the training at Help Hotline." She said, "I am so impressed with it and what they tell me about it." I thought--Fine, you go and you take eight to ten weeks of training. That is twice a week for at least three hours. You learn about all of the agencies in Youngstown. As a principal I thought that I knew a lot about the agencies because we had worked with children's services when we had abuse cases with welfare, et cetera. We worked at Salvation Army and the Methodist Community Center. In fact, I was on the board there on the east side. But I had no idea all the agencies there are. I had the training in answering the phone. They have information and referral service. They have a huge rolodex for that. We are the answering service for about nine agencies in Youngstown after hours. You learn all about them and how they want the business conducted. You learn about people in a crisis; you learn crisis intervention. It was wonderful training. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Then you go to the office and spend six to eight weeks on the phone with a supervisor monitoring the way you answer, evaluating you, and making suggestions. After that you are "hired" for four hours a week. You promise to give them four hours a week. After so long you can become a supervisor and then you will train the trainees. I have done a lot of work there outside of just the phone work. I enjoyed that very much, but I also have worked on a lot of committees. For six weeks, I actually worked there and got paid for it. They were in between hiring. I did their scheduling for them. I made sure that we had each of the different shifts covered. So I enjoyed it very much. That is how I got to know Dr. Morrison.

S: Are you still volunteering there?

T: Yes. It has been nine years now.

S: Let us back up a little bit. I am interested in when you were a young widow . . .

T: I was thirty-nine.

S: You had two young children and you went back to work. What was life like then with your kids, the house, and everything?

T: I never read an article and never saw it mentioned about the guilt one feels. It is true, especially if you know child psychology and all of the things that they say can go wrong with kids. Also there was the fact that they had no father figure and the whole bit really worried me. I guess the only thing that kept me from becoming depressed over the thing was that it was sheer necessity. You had to do it.

That was all there was to it. You do feel guilty and you do try to make up for not being there. I have done all of the things that the books said we do, like try to buy to lessen the guilt, and give them everything that they think they want. They could not have that because I did not earn enough. I was so afraid to use any of our savings because I looked ahead at a long road ahead of me. Then my husband was very ill before he died. It was his heart; he took sick just before Thanksgiving. By Christmas I had been told that he could not get better. I had been through some pretty bad times before he died. Then my daughter was killed. She just graduated from Miami. She had a four thousand dollar scholarship to Chicago W. which does not sound like much now, but it was then. It would have taken her through the first two years as far as tuition. I figured that I could give her enough to rent an apartment and move down there after she graduated. She could pick out an apartment. She was to leave in three weeks. She was twenty-one and beautiful. She was a very good student. In fact, she spent the last two years working as the assistant to the head of the sociology department. By assistant I do not mean that she taught. She graded a lot of his papers. He wrote a book and he gave her an original copy of it because she had typed it, reviewed it for him, and that sort of thing. I am very proud of that. After her death he called me and the alumni person who was head of the alumni association called. They wanted to know if I minded if they set up a Suzanne Taylor Memorial Scholarship Fund. All of the sororities there, the Phi Beta Phi's and the other sororities and all the fraternities, plus the Sociology department wanted to do that. I and my friends and my family contributed. The amount of the scholarship remains the same. I am very proud of that. I hear almost every Fall from whomever gets the scholarship. I made no stipulations except that I wanted a girl to have it if possible. I said, "But I do not restrict it." More boys could get scholarships throughout athletics and things like that than girls ever could. A boy has it this year. I met him; some I get to meet and some I do not. I am very proud of that, but the rest was rough.

S: It must have been a very bleak period of your life?

T: It was very rough. I said to my doctor, "I was proud in a way, the way I had taken Sid's death and bounced back and had done all of the things that I was supposed to do. Why do I feel that I cannot really accept this?" He was very wise. I knew it, but I had never had it said to me in that fashion, "Your husband was an adult. Subconsciously you knew that it could have been you, just as well as he. In other words, you both took your chances. A child from the beginning of time, you must protect that child; you must take care of that child; you must shield that child from harm, and part of the days you felt that you did not do it."

That was true because we had bought her a car. She got a job in addition to her scholarship. She was going to help pay for it, but I was mainly going to pay for it. It was a Corvair. In those days they were not like they are today, a luxury car. I used to read all sorts of information after it happened--the police do not know what happened. This make of car had had a great number of accidents. She was coming home from a friend's house who was getting married two weeks later, just a week before Susy was supposed to go to school. She and the bride went out to dinner with the bride's mother. I had the flu. She had said, "I will be home by eleven. If I am going to be home any later than that I will call you." They both felt responsible for me, which was good, but can be bad. I heard from her about a quarter after eleven. She said, "Mom, we have been sitting here gabbing. I will be starting home in about ten minutes." The next thing I knew they were knocking on my door, the police who took me to the hospital. And she never regained consciousness. Of course I felt guilty because I had bought her the car. She was coming home and as far as they know it was a one-car accident. It was on Shields Road. It goes down into a dip. There is the park on both sides. Whether somebody had come out on one of those side streets or whether an animal had, she went off the road into a telephone pole. So I did feel guilty. He said, "That is why it is harder really than your own husband."

- S: Also you expect not to outlive your children. That is the natural course of things. They go on; they carry on, and they are proud of you.
- T: Yes. I am so lucky because I had my dad until he was eighty-nine and my mom until she was eighty-seven. So it was just foreign. Although I lost a daughter, my mother lost a son in World War II.
- S: How old is your other daughter?
- T: She was fifty last February.
- S: That must have been hard for her too losing a sister?
- T: The worst part of it is, and we have talked about it since, is I did not even think about it being hard for her. It is funny how you are so self-centered at a time like that and how self-centered I was that Winter when Sid was sick. I did not even remember the kids during that year that Winter. I am sure that I fed them and dressed them, but I do not remember it.
- Pat has two children. I have two grandchildren. They each have two boys. So I have four great-grandchildren.
- S: First of all, can you tell what it was like to have been

a nontraditional woman? You really were because you started working in the days when not that many women worked when they had children. Include in that any kind of discrimination faced or anything like that.

T: I never thought of myself as being a nontraditional woman. I was doing things that were traditional in one respect. Of all of the jobs that you could have perhaps outside of nursing, it was the one profession where women were accepted. In fact, I saw it go the other way. When I first started teaching there were many more women principals than there are today. Men did not particularly want to be an elementary school principal. Now they are very happy to be because there is very little difference in the pay scale. The thing that did bother me was the fact that you were a working mother, which today is very common. Provisions are made. Luckily, I did not happen to need a nursery or a day care center because the girls were old enough to be in school. That meant that my mother had to substitute for me at PTA and all of the things that traditional mothers were doing. I had a very understanding principal who allowed me to leave when my daughters were initiated into National Honor Society or something like that. If I am deprived sometimes of the things that a more traditional mother can do . . . I think my daughter states it as well as anything. I was so worried about how I was reacting when I was with my children, limited time as it was. We had a fuss at the kitchen table one night when we were eating. The three of us still ate our Sunday dinner at the dining room table because when my husband was alive we ate every evening meal at the dining room table because he believed very strongly that you conducted yourself differently in a dining room than you did in a kitchen. We kept up the tradition on Sundays. Other nights I did not have the time to do it. We were in the kitchen that night for some reason; evidently I was late getting home. The children were quarreling. Somebody said something to me and I got angry. I threw a dish of mashed potatoes on the floor. I said, "Now you clean that up." I stomped upstairs and flung myself on the bed and cried. After I got composed I went downstairs. Everything had been cleaned up. The kitchen had not been that spotless in a long time. They were both sitting there very subdued. I went in and sat down too. I apologized and I said that I had acted very childish and I was ashamed. They were old enough to understand that my patience was limited and I had a temper just like they did. I had done a very stupid thing. I appreciated the fact that they cleaned it up. We talked about it and finally Pat said, "Mom, do you know what the trouble is?" I said, "I know that I am tired." She said, "Well, it is more than that. All day long you give all of your patience and all of your understanding to your pupils which I know you have to do. All you bring home to us is the garbage of you." It was probably the best thing that . . . She has done that to me more than once. It is nice to have kids.

S: They keep you honest.

T: Right. I said, "Pat, I think that you said exactly the thing that I do. I am going to have to try not to do it." You do do that no matter what kind of job that you have. Cream comes off at work.

I told you the only two times that I have really felt discriminated. I had one man on my faculty. I think that he discriminated against me. He did not like working for a woman. We finally came to the point where I thought-- This cannot go on, the sniping at me, the disrupting the staff meetings and the faculty meetings, and the objections that were being raised over things over which I had no control because even the principal does what the superintendent or board of education tells him to do. Finally I called him in and he frankly admitted that he did not like working for a woman. We explored that for quite awhile. I said, "Why don't you ask for a transfer? I will be glad to recommend you." No, he did not want to leave there. He liked the school and he liked everything else, but he did not like working for a woman. I said, "I think it is your problem, not mine." So when people say that women are harder to work for than men, I do not know; I never have had that frank of a conversation with any of my faculty. The hardest thing for me to do, and I don't think that I did it very well, was to be able to separate myself like a parent must from a child. You want to be a friend and you want to be a pal and a teacher for your pupils. There has to be that--I am still the boss. No matter whether you want to say it, you have to believe it and develop that. I am sure that the faculty liked the former principal. They adored him in fact. I did not get that kind of relationship, but we never had any problems. I do not know whether you call that discrimination or not, but there was the difficulty of being a boss over a man. If anything went wrong, it was always my fault. I used to wish that I could show him written orders from the superintendent. The other time maybe I was too wrapped up in my job to even realize it. I did have a case of backstabbing from a fellow worker, another woman. I never took it any higher. She objected to something that I had done and went to the superintendent and also went to my immediate boss. He called me in and told me what had happened. I protested my innocence and said, "If that is what happened, I will apologize and that is all that I know to do although I was unaware that I was doing those things." So I did and at that point I was very tempted to go to the superintendent. I decided that I might get the reaction that, "Two women", they just can't get along. I thought--I am not going to do it. So I did not. I never said another word. Everything went on as though nothing had happened; outwardly I tried although inside of me I was not very happy with the lady. A couple of months later, the superintendent stopped me in the hall and told

me that he really appreciated it. I told him, "You know what I thought you would think--Two women, they just cannot get along. I was not going to let you say that."

S: Did women get paid less than men teachers or principals in those days?

T: No. That is pretty fair because you are paid according to your experience. They have a salary scale. There is nothing on there except that it worked out that way because women principals were not paid as much as high school principals. I never knew the theory that they based that on.

S: The women were mostly elementary principals?

T: Yes. I did not know until recently of any high school principals that were women.

S: How did the women principals at the elementary level feel about the fact that at the high school level there were mostly male principals and at the elementary level there were mostly female principals?

T: I don't think anybody cared very much because most of the elementary principals had been elementary school teachers. The same thing was true with high school. I just think that is where their love was. They might have been unhappy about the discrimination in the pay. They must have been because eventually it was changed. Now it is based more or less on the size of your school. I do not think there was much.

S: What kind of reaction did you get from other women, other mothers, maybe people in your family? There you were, a woman out working with kids.

T: My mother and father were very supportive. In fact, my mother baby-sat a lot for me if the kids got sick. I did have a cleaning lady, Gussy, who helped me raise the two girls. If they were ill and mother had to come over, they were tickled to see me go off to work because she spent a lot of time with them and she had that picture in their minds that here comes mom to play with us. Mother had to do the work in the house.

Parents, as a teacher, I never had too much difficulty with. In fact I did an unforgivable thing once. I thought that I would really be in trouble. I thought that I would maybe even lose my job. I had a young man in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade because Albert was such a problem. I had been able to get along with him. I just inherited him and plus the fact that we changed grades whenever we were needed.

It just happened that I went and he came along with me. (He is in jail now for committing murder). Albert was angry with me for something that had happened. I do not even remember what it was. It was in the days when we lined and went to the restrooms. It was time for us to go. The girls went out first and went down in one line. The boys came out. As Albert went past me, he said something to me that was absolutely obscene. I don't know where my hand came from, but I grabbed him with one hand on his shirt and slapped him in the face with the other. I could have been out on my ear! The hall was filled. There must have been five teachers and all the kids in the world. There was absolute silence. I said, "Albert, I apologize and I will buy you a new shirt." I had torn it. I said, "Don't you ever say that again to any woman in this world." At lunch-time I went down and I called his grandmother who had been sanctified. I really do not know what that means. I used to say, "If being sanctified made her as understanding as she was, I should be sanctified." I told her what had happened. I even told her what he said. I said, "I want you to tell me what size shirt Albert wears although I think I know. I will buy him a new shirt." I had absolutely no business doing either one of those things. I said, "I don't know where my hands came from. I lost my temper." She blessed me a couple of times and told me that she understood completely. She said, "When Albert comes home, he is going to get the worst whipping he has ever had." I said, "Please don't do that. That would make Albert even more angry with me. I would like you to talk to him about it though." I also told the principal. He teased me for years about that. He said, "You are little, but you are mighty."

S: Yes, it is hard to imagine you slapping someone like that.

T: As I said, I did not know what had happened. Normally, I would not touch a child. You do not touch them unless they really invite it or they are sad or you can help them. I did not feel odd being a working mother. I was happy at times and felt guilty.

S: Did you ever think about getting married again during that period?

T: Yes. I dated and it has been hard to even explain it to myself why I did not get married. I think the thing was I was so busy with my career. I hate to say "my career" but that is what you have to say because you have to get ahead, get secure, and put the kids through school and college. I was too busy to be able to devote a whole lot of thought or time to almost any of the men. At times, I do not know whether this is egotistical to say or not, I felt that maybe I intimidated men.

S: How so?

- T: Simply because I have gotten along so long without a man. Each year it became longer. I did not need them. I do not know exactly, but I have that feeling. Would you want to marry a principal?
- S: Did you ever think how your life might have been if you had gone into acting instead?
- T: At first a lot of times, because I dearly loved it. I did do something with it. After I graduated from Kent, I was going to a group at the YWCA called "The Young Businesswomen." It has changed since then and it is quite a big group now. They wanted to put on some plays. We did; we put on five plays for five different years. Of course, we put them on at the Youngstown College. They had a little theater. We have very little in stage settings. We had to pay for them or bring them in. The husband of a friend of mine and my husband were stagehands for us. We were not married then. Then we went to South High and put them on there. We did quite well. I directed them and I dearly loved it. I think, in a way, you have to be an actress to be a teacher. I sort of feel that I have used any of the talent that I might have had. I never see Helen Hayes, or read about her, that I don't think there but for the grace of God . . . That is who my ideal was because she was little and not gorgeously beautiful.
- S: She had presence. You do too.
- T: Thank you.
- S: You have seen a lot of changes. You have been around for a long time. Certainly our culture has changed a lot. If you were talking to young women today, say a woman just coming out of high school and just starting to go to college and thinking about career, marriage, and the world in general, what kind of advice would you give to young women today?
- T: Well I guess the same that I gave to my girls even though it was long ago. I wanted them both to go to college. I said, "I do not care what you take. I would hope for you that somewhere along the line you would take a subject and catch fire. I don't think there is anything more exciting than having something that you are terribly interested in, not that I would want you to give up the idea of getting married or having children. In fact, I would encourage you to." Not when my girls were growing up, but lately it had come about to be sort of that way that young women like to establish themselves, have a career, and to have at least worked and become an identity of their own before they get married. I think that it brings a lot to the marriage. It reinforces what I think a marriage should be: a partnership. When it is not, I think women in particular are apt to be unhappy

sooner or later. Their life becomes empty. I would recommend that after they are married I would like them to be able to do what I was unable to do, stay home when the children are little. That is what my daughter did. She did not take a part-time job until they were both in school. She worked at the hospital on Indianola Road, the mental hospital, Woodside. Then she was at Daybreak. She gave up that job to get her Master's, her MSW. She said, "I don't know enough yet. I am telling people what is wrong and what they should do." Now she works part-time at the Trumbull County Mental Health. She had her own office for awhile. If they are intelligent, I think that they should have a life of their own, not forever, but at least for awhile because I think women are needed in the business world. I think that their talents are needed along with men's talents. That is what I could advise them to do.

S: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW