

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Jackson Milton Schools

Personal Experience

O.H. 902

SALLY LUTES

Interviewed

by

John Gulgas

on

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YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: SALLY LUTES

INTERVIEWER: John Gulgas

SUBJECT: high school in 1950s, school activities in
1950s, rural high school in 1950s, high school
experiences

DATE: May 1, 1985

G: This is an interview with Sally Lutes for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on Jackson Milton Schools in the 1950s, by John Gulgas, on May 1, 1985 at 4:00p.m.

If you had to pick a favorite subject or a favorite teacher, whichever you want to talk about, who or what would you pick and why?

L: I always like Mr. Maluso. I respected him. He demanded your attention when you talked. You could walk in his class and all he had to do was look at you and you knew he meant business. But you could have a good time with him. I just respected him. I also like Mr. Keppner.

G: I know he was the superintendent, right?

L: Right. He was another one when you walked into his class you knew he meant business. I learned a lot from him. He was my algebra teacher. His son was in my class.

I liked Mr. Francis. He was a coach up there. He taught science, if I'm not mistaken. He was another one when you walked into his class . . . but you could have a good time. You knew that when you walked into his class there was no goofing off. He was one that all he had to do was look at you and you knew [you were in trouble].

G: You have got a list of extracurricular activities here that are pretty long. If you had to pick one of those that was a favorite extracurricular activity, what would you pick?

L: I liked chorus. I was in a couple of plays, which I enjoyed.

G: What did the plays demand of you? Tell me what was involved in that in terms of time and work that you had to do. what did it demand of you?

L: We had play practice every evening. It was a lot of fun. Mrs. Slavin directed it and there was no horseplay there either. You came and you knew your part. We all enjoyed it.

G: Tell me about school social functions like the dances. You were the May Queen, tell me about that.

L: When I was a junior and senior everybody in our class attended prom. I can also remember Mrs. Slavin was our sponsor when I was a senior. There was an alumni banquet. Every senior that graduated from that school attended that alumni banquet. If you did not attend that alumni banquet you did not get your diploma. We were taught respect; this was something that was expected of us because the Alumni Association paid for it.

I can remember that I attended the junior and senior prom, but there wasn't so much money involved in it. The boys all wore white dinner jackets, and I think it cost them five dollars to rent it. The girls all wore formals. Our proms were all at the school. There was none of this after-prom where you have to have the expense of buying this formal and everything that goes with it. Then you have to go home and have new clothes to go to after-prom, and the money for breakfast, an the money for this and that. But when I was a junior and senior, I don't remember anyone in the class who didn't attend.

- G: What made the May Dance so special? Was it because of the time of year?
- L: I think it was a big dance at that time. I think now homecoming is the big dance. We went on our senior trip, and I think every one of us went. We worked for that, I think from the time we were in the ninth grade. We saved for it.
- G: Was there anything about the senior trip that strikes a chord with you that was really pleasant or unusual or funny?
- L: We just had a good time, that was all. We were like a big happy family. Our classes were small. The kids today, they don't even know half their classmates names.
- G: What about the fads? Did you like the fads, the hairdos and dresses? A lot of people aren't happy with the fads sometimes, even though they wear them. What were some of the fads?
- L: We always wore dresses to school. I can remember we were not allowed to wear slacks, and no jeans for the girls. I can remember once or twice a year they had a day that they set aside for the girls to wear slacks. I remember that was a big day.
- G: Hairdos were different, too.
- L: Yes. Also, when we went to school and went out on a date, we used to dress up. I never would think of going out on a date in a pair of slacks, let alone a pair of blue jeans.
- G: What was a typical day like when you came in in the morning?
- L: We always started the day with a salute to the flag and "The Lord's Prayer", which I am very much for. I think it is showing respect for you God and your country. There were a few in our class who didn't salute the flag; nobody made a big fuss over it. I can't remember anybody that wouldn't say "The Lord's Prayer". I oppose what they did about "The Lord's Prayer".
- G: What was lunch time like? Were you a packer or a buyer?
- L: I walked home. I was never a buyer because I could never afford it. I was either a packer or walked home.

G: As I understand it, if you lived close enough you were allowed to do that. Is that how it worked?

L: When I started up there I lived right across from the school. Then we moved across from Anderson's Appliance, and I walked all that way.

G: That's a healthy walk. Did you make it back in time?

L: Oh yes. We walked to school every day and walked home every night.

G: No school bus, right?

L: I never rode the school bus, no.

G: How about weekends or after-school hangouts?

L: I always had to go home right after school. That eliminated after-school hangouts. I had work to do when I got home. I had ironing and cleaning and there were younger brothers and sisters that I had to take care of. There was an Isley store right up here, but I was never allowed in that Isley store.

When we went to school there was always friction between Lake Milton and North Jackson. I am a North Jackson girl and the people from North Jackson always thought they were better than the people from Lake Milton. My father was one that opposed Lake Milton and the Isley store. I was never allowed near Lake Milton; I was never allowed in the Isley store. I ended up over in the Isaly store and living in Lake Milton. My father used to tell me all the time, "Why don't you move back to Jackson and raise your children right?" All his son-in-laws came from Lake Milton.

G: What was his reaction when he found out you became the owner of Isaly's?

L: He didn't say too much. If I wanted to go to Isley's or to Lake Milton Skating Rink I snuck. That was the big hangout.

G: Was Rod, your husband, from the Lake originally?

L: He was from Lake Milton, yes.

G: So he was a no-no, too. As you look back on the high school days, could there have been anything done to make it better?

L: I enjoyed my high school days. They aren't like anything today. I think there was more respect when I was younger, more people respected their high school and teachers. When I went to school the teachers were allowed to paddle, and I'm all for that. You never sassed a teacher when I went to school and got away with it. The teachers had the upper hand, which I think they should have today.

G: What was the end of the year like? Were there any senior farewell activities like a senior skip day or something like that?

L: I can't ever remember skipping school.

G: You have to do that now if you want to be a senior.

L: We went to Idora Park.

G: Was that a school function?

L: I can't remember.

G: What were some of the memorable moments in high school?

L: When I was May Queen. I was proud.

G: Is that like picking a homecoming queen today, same procedure? Was it voting? How did they do that?

L: I think the boys in the senior class set the girls up and the school voted.

G: That's about it, unless there is something else you want to say about high school.

L: I am proud that I graduated from Jackson High School. I don't think I remember the problems that there are today, maybe because there are more people than what there were. The respect for the teachers is different. I have a lot of respect for a lot of the teachers that I had up at school. I knew that I had to listen to them and respect them.

G: Thank you.

L: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW