

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

YSU History

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April Caruso
Interviewed
by
Noelle Kauffman
on
April 14, 2005

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INTERVIEWEE: April Caruso

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SUBJECT: YSU History

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P: This is an interview with April Caruso for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on YSU History, by Noelle Kauffman, at the YSU History Department, on April 14, 2005.

K: First and foremost, April, I would like to thank you for your time in doing this interview for the Oral History Program. I'm going to start with some background information. April, would you tell me where and when you were born?

C: Yes, I was born at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, in Youngstown, Ohio, in 1982. That would be April 23, 1982.

K: Oh, so you have a birthday coming up.

C: Yes I do.

K: And how old will you be?

C: I will be 23.

K: Okay. Tell me a little bit about your childhood.

C: Well, I originally lived in Struthers. I went there from Kindergarten through fourth grade, and then in fifth grade we moved to Lordstown, Ohio, for my dad's job in North Jackson, which was at the ASC Convertible Plant. They put the convertible tops on the Z-24's that came out of GM. My childhood was pretty normal. I rode my bike, played sports; I did all kinds of fun stuff. I went to Lordstown elementary when we moved out there, and then Lordstown High School. I was very active in high school. I played sports, I was in student government, I was a part of the yearbook, it's not a club, but we put the yearbook together, a lot of various activities.

K: Good, tell me a little bit about your parents growing up.

C: My mom is Pam Caruso. She's an interesting character, I love her very much, always funny, always insightful, a little more open-minded than most people. Always fun to be around and my friends always loved her too growing up. We did all kinds of fun stuff. My dad, his name is Frank Caruso. He's another interesting character, but in the opposite direction. I love him very much as well, but I don't know what to say about my parents, I mean, I love them very much. We didn't always do the family vacation things, but we did a lot of picnicking, and we'd go to the lake every summer, family events, you know, they were always very active in my life and very supportive, always at my softball games, very influential in that way. Coming from a working class background they always instilled in me that education was important, and I think that's a very good lesson. And they always instilled in me this idea that you should always help other people. That's a lot of the reason why I do the things that I do.

K: It sounds like you have very good parents.

C: I do have very good parents.

K: It's nice that you're so close to them. You told me that you went to Lordstown Elementary School and High School, any favorite teachers growing up?

C: Yes, when I was in elementary school my favorite teacher was Mr. Tammaro. He was really cool, he liked hockey, so I got into hockey a lot because he always talked about the Pittsburgh Penguins, and I always underestimated hockey because my parents were more into football and stuff, so I never really paid attention. I still like ice hockey; it's too bad they're on strike right now. In high school I really liked all of my teachers; there really weren't teachers I didn't like. There was one particular teacher, I won't say his name, but I called him a sexist pig in eighth grade gym class. That's really the only teacher that I could not stand. Favorites? Mrs. Landy, the Spanish teacher, she was very influential. Mr. Rahde, he was very influential, he attended YSU in the seventies. In fact, a lot of our teachers attended YSU. He was particularly influential because in college I lost sight of the fact that I really loved History in high school, and part of the reason was that he

always encouraged you to write papers about stuff that you wanted to write about. So for example, with the ice-hockey thing, Mario Lemieux of the Pittsburgh Penguins is Canadian, not American; however, in American History he let me write a biography of Mario Lemieux. So he was always very accommodating and he always wanted student to do what they liked. But those were probably my two favorites.

K: What about your favorite subjects?

C: Oh, gosh, in high school I was one of the all-around people. I graduated as valedictorian of my class in 2000. So as far as favorite subjects, I really didn't have a favorite because I liked them all. I've always loved school. I've always loved to learn. That comes from my parents too. Spanish was always one of my top classes, and Math, I liked History, but then it was just I liked History because I liked History, it wasn't something I thought about as a profession or anything. It seemed like I was going to be either a Spanish or a Math teacher. That was the way it seemed like I was going to go, but I didn't.

K: Aside from extracurricular activities related to your school and education, what were some of your after school activities?

C: Well, in Lordstown, you don't have much. It's a very small community, we have about 3,500 people, so after school activities is school activities. It's sports, or it's student government, everything seems to revolve around school there. Dances were really big; we always had a lot of dances. I never missed a dance, not one in six years. Keep in mind Lordstown High School is grades seven through twelve, I didn't flunk two years. So those were our big activities. Going to Perkins, I worked there when I was sixteen, and a lot of us in Lordstown, it seemed like we overtook the restaurant on Route 46 in Austintown. So that was always a popular hang out, and it still is with all of us. It's just a small community, there's not much there. We finally have a Subway and a Dollar General. It's not a real hopping town. Maybe when we get the Casino, if we get it.

K: You said that it was a small community of about 3,500 people, what was your neighborhood like?

C: Actually we really didn't associate with my neighbors that much, there weren't any kids my age on my street. My friend Shanna Richards lived nearby, so I hung out with her a lot. Where I live it's not real neighborly, it's just not, and we're so close together you would think, you know, housing wise, that we would be but we're not. But it was always very nice. The kid that lives next door to me is two years younger, and we would play roller hockey and stuff, and baseball, and things like that. And another issue with Lordstown is that you have a concentrated area of housing, but then you'll have another development away, further away in Lordstown, and it's not that big, but the way the housing is set up, it's kind of strange. Really the neighborhood is just...we just don't talk to anybody, it's nothing against those people, it's just there weren't really kids my age.

K: As a child, why don't you tell me your most memorable experience growing up. If there's more than one?

C: Oh gosh, my most memorable experience growing up? Most of my most memorable experiences revolve around sports, because that seems like that's what I always did in the summer. One thing that was really funny was in kindergarten, I was in gymnastics, and we were doing the little summersaults, or tumbling, and I tumbled right into the wall, it was interesting. That was funny, I still laugh about that. I was playing t-ball, I was playing third base, and someone hit a line drive into my mouth and I lost a tooth, but I still caught the ball, which everyone thought was awesome. Meanwhile I'm running across the field crying, "I lost my tooth!" And the coach is saying, "Get back on the field!" Other childhood memories with the sports in high school. It's a small school, so we really always didn't have a good sports team, but we had a really good pitcher. The one year we had a twenty-one inning game, we didn't beat the state record for the longest game, but our pitcher actually got the record for the most strikeouts in a game because, I mean, twenty-one innings is a lot, we had to continue it over two days. I was the last batter in the game, which was good and bad at the same time. I'm trying to think. My sister threw me in a pool the one time. That was not so fun because it was a little kiddie pool, you know how the algae and the scum gets on there? That was in Struthers, oh my gosh, I said, "Ha ha, you can't get me!" And she caught me and threw me in that pool, I'll never forget that. It's funny now but it wasn't at the time. I don't know, it was just a normal childhood. Of course you can't really say what is normal now, but, you know, pretty typical.

K: You mentioned you had a sister, any other siblings?

C: Yea I have two half-sisters, and three step siblings, because my dad was married before and his wife had passed away from breast cancer. They're all older than me, so I really don't have a relationship with them, they were still in the house when I was eight, so that's really the only relationship that I have with them.

K: I'm going to start transitioning from your high school, after graduating from high school into college. Did you immediately go right into college after high school?

C: Yes I did, I went straight in. My first choice was Mount Union, but it turns out YSU was a better pick. At the time I was going to go into education, and the placement rate at Mount Union was the same as YSU, and I couldn't see paying over \$20,000 a year for an education, and it wasn't going to get me a better job or anything, so I just couldn't see that, and my parents could not afford that type of money even with a scholarship, because I did get a scholarship to go there, but it wasn't enough because you're required to live on campus your first year.

K: Not to backtrack, but what about after-school jobs?

C: Oh yea, after-school jobs. I'd worked since I was 16 years old. My first job was actually at Taco Bell. Horrific experience. I must say, I don't quit much, but I quit that

job after a month. Oh my gosh, I will never work fast-food again. I also worked at Perkins Family Restaurant, and my senior year I worked for Spitzer's Auto World in North Jackson. And all the while working these jobs I played softball and I juggled everything, and I also babysat every Friday night for three years, and that continued into college. I worked at Cadle Company, I got an internship the summer after my senior year there. After that pretty much I've worked for the University, I've never had other jobs. I had a job at Dollar General over the summer, I worked two jobs plus went to school in the summer.

K: You were always pretty busy.

C: Yea, always.

K: When you first came to YSU, what did you major in and why?

C: I went into education and I was concentrating in Spanish, because, well, I liked Spanish, always have, I still do. Mrs. Landy, whom I had mentioned earlier, she was really influential in that because she felt that out of a lot of people at Lordstown I really did have the potential to be a Spanish teacher and do a good job at it, and she was very encouraging. Unfortunately, I didn't particularly care for Spanish at YSU.

K: If you don't mind my asking, how did you pay for school?

C: I had received a scholarship. It was the Trustee Scholarship. At YSU if you graduate as valedictorian, and I believe also as salutatorian, you have the opportunity for the Trustees Scholarship, which is \$3,000 a year. My first year the \$3,000 went very far. That was the only year that \$3,000 went far, and after that it was student loans and working. That's all you can do because unfortunately Financial Aid can only help you so much. The folks over there really feel bad for people who have parents who can't really afford it, and have a scholarship, and have the type of grades that you should not have to worry about paying for school, but you still do. That's mostly how I funded it was through that scholarship and through the loans because the tuition and fees kept going up.

K: What kind of activities as an undergraduate were you involved in?

C: My first two years at YSU I mostly focused on coming to school and going home and going to work. I wasn't very active at all, in fact I like YSU now, but my first two years I really didn't particularly care for it, because it is so much of a commuter college its very hard to meet people. You know, you're friends with somebody for a semester and then you don't see them again a lot of times. But my junior and senior years here I switched my major to History, and concentrated in Historic Preservation, and I got involved with History Club, and the Historic Preservation Club. My senior year I became president of the Historic Preservation Club and secretary of Phi Alpha Theta. Activity wise I'm also a member of the Lions Club, that's more recent, that was this year that I joined that. I also do a lot with Toys for Tots, and I'm more of a donator when it comes to volunteer work because I don't have that much time, but I give to Toys for Tots and the Gift Tree, and it

seems like every month I'm at the Rescue Mission giving them clothes and stuff. I go to conferences a lot; I just recently presented a paper in Indianapolis. So that's usually the activities.

K: You said you would come to school, go to work, was that a typical day?

C: Yea, well, for the first two years, yes it was. My third year – I was working for the YSU Metro College, so I wasn't really employed on campus, so I had to drive to Niles or Austintown, you know, since it is the Metro College. The one at the Eastwood Mall is now closed, but essentially when I was a junior – and that was my first year as a History Major, I did pretty much just commute, but by that point I had started to incorporate more of these activities with the different History organizations that we have. That's pretty much a typical day, and the rest of the time is filled with homework.

K: When you initially started school as an undergraduate, what did the campus look like?

C: Pretty much the same as it does now. Honestly I don't think we've really had any changes, this has been almost five years since I've been here, and we may have gotten a couple of new trees. In terms of how it's changed; we have the University Courtyard Apartments now, those are new, and the Rec. Center is going up now, that's new, Little Jimmy's has now closed, which that's sad because a lot of people around here liked Little Jimmy's. Campus-wise it really hasn't changed, it seems those two buildings were the biggest changes, and outside the periphery has changed a bit as far as what's available to students.

K: How do you think those few changes have impacted the University?

C: Well, I haven't seen the impact yet of the Rec. Center. I do know that they prided themselves on the fact that students wouldn't have to pay for this, which is true; we didn't have to pay for the building of the Rec. Center. However, we do have to pay more in our tuition so that they can staff it. That's okay, I don't complain as much about that because it gives other people jobs, and seeing as how I was one of those campus employees, that's a good thing. The biggest complaint about the Rec. Center was by the faculty, who lost their parking lot, boo hoo, folks, sorry, but we've had to walk across campus from far, far away for many years, you can do it too. And it's not that far away because Youngstown State is not that big. As far as the University Apartments; they're apart of the campus, but they're far away, you can't even really see them. There's really no impact, I've heard that they're shoddily constructed and not that great. That's about it; I know I couldn't afford to live there though.

K: How has the area around the campus changed as an undergraduate?

C: Well, really just businesses. Little Jimmy's closed, we now have Subway. As far as housing goes, I don't know that that's even really changed, I mean, it's mainly just the businesses around here that have changed it seems; we don't have Pogo's anymore, Ernie McDougal's is gone. I never frequented them, however, they were still here, and I know a

lot of people really enjoyed going there. Oh! And we now can drink on Campus, that's right, Peaberry's, that's an extreme change. I don't think it really affected anybody though because whenever I go by there it doesn't seem like there's any drunken brawls or anything. It's interesting because Mr. Rahde would tell us how there was drinking on campus, and it was allowed, and it wasn't a big deal, and then they stopped it, and now it's back, so it's like moved in a cycle.

K: What did you think of student publications?

C: Oh, The Jambar.

K: It still exists?

C: It still exists.

K: So what do you think of that?

C: My minor was in Professional Writing and Editing, and we had to take Journalism, and we wrote articles. I had an article appear in there about the English Festival, which...it was actually quite the accomplishment because not that many people's articles from their journalism class get in to the paper, and my professor was very happy when he saw that. But The Jambar staff, I'm really not trying to knock them or anything, but it's just not a quality publication. It really isn't. If you look at other University's newspapers, I mean, they are awesome, I mean really good. We have trouble even putting the right page number to jump to. It's called a jump, when it tells you "Continued on page," that's what it's officially called, a jump. You know, it'll say jump to page five, and there's no page five, you know, it's just little things. Poor editing, you know, I've never been impressed with The Jambar, I think if they had...there is a Jambar staff, but I honestly think that the paper would be better if they actually had the students in the Journalism classes, in the editing classes, to do this. I actually think that it would be a better paper because, I mean, all the people that I went through the program with, they were phenomenal, really good writers. It just seems like The Jambar hires people to do this. Some of them are involved with journalism, but it just isn't...because I've read other school's newspapers, and it just doesn't seem to be as top notch. And part of that could be because it is a commuter campus; we don't have this invested interest in YSU I don't feel.

K: What was the gender ratio of male to female students when you first started school?

C: Well, seeing as how I started school in 2000, it's pretty equal. I know in a lot of my classes it seemed like there were more girls than guys. Fortunately in this day and age we don't face that problem with the gender ratio as much, it's pretty equal in most cases.

K: How about the racial ratio?

C: Actually I can honestly say that that's the biggest gulf. It's not gender, it's racial, because I can honestly say even in my larger classes, my gen-ed requirements, there were few African Americans in there, and I always thought that was strange, because it is a public university, and it's Youngstown. It seems like there is...I mean, they're pushing this diversity issue, and saying we're diverse, but honestly, my experience, I didn't see the diversity at all. Even with Kilcawley Center, one thing I noticed was how different races actually kind of separate. I notice that a lot, and I thought that that was just something...when I went to Mt. Union and toured their campus that's one thing I noticed; you had the Asian kids sitting together, the white kids, actually I don't think I saw any African American kids at Mt. Union to be honest, when I was in the dining hall. But you could see that, and for a public university I guess I just expected it to be different, but it's not. You still see that. Technically speaking we may have a diverse campus, but I don't feel the interaction is there in terms of diversity. I'm sure there are in some departments or some people; it just depends on the situation. Even in our program we don't have a huge amount of diversity, and that's sad because it's History, many people make up history.

K: What about the average class size?

C: For the general ed. requirements it depended on the class. Sometimes you could have ten people, sometimes 20, sometimes over 100, it really depended on the class. But for history classes, very small. That's one thing I really like about YSU is the fact that even though it's a large campus and there are a lot of people here, the class sizes are actually quite small, comparatively speaking. I'm sure if you go to Ohio State, in an upper division history class you might have 50 or 100 people. I'm not sure, there's a lot more people there too, but I like the fact that we have the smaller class sizes. It is nice because it's more of a relaxed atmosphere.

K: I know you had mentioned earlier basically you went to school, went to work, went to school, went to work. Any social life aside from that?

C: Yea, just basically hung out with friends, my friend Shanna, she goes to YSU as well and we hung out together. My friend, Nicole, she went to the College of Wooster, so I didn't see her as much. I have many acquaintances, but a few specific friends. A lot of my time was taken up by my boyfriend, who is now my fiancé, and from there we won't know where...there may be a wedding impending, I don't know, we'll see.

K: How did you get to school?

C: By car, Noelle. (laughter).

K: Where did you park?

C: Well, my freshman year I really didn't realize how we had all these different decks, so I'd park over in the Wick deck and walk over to DeBartolo because I didn't realize. For one thing I didn't know how to get to the other Deck by DeBartolo. (End of side A of

tape). (Beginning of side B). And now I park wherever, usually DeBartolo because that's where all of my classes are now that I'm a grad student.

K: As an undergraduate, what was student political involvement like?

C: I really didn't see that much until the war in Iraq, then you tended to see a little bit more of political tensions and different sides that people were on. I know we have...there're a few groups that protested but it wasn't like huge, it's not like Kent State. It seems like they have more of a political outlook or whatever, around here it's just...it didn't seem like it was present. I had a friend that did run for state congress as a Republican; he was real big in the Political Science area.

K: Do you recall if the administration placed any limit on those few student protests that you remember?

C: Honestly I don't remember, I honestly don't think they did. I really don't know, and I had a friend that was involved with it, and he never mentioned anything about there being any limitations, but it wouldn't surprise me if there were. I never really heard of anything, and part of the reason might be because I don't read The Jambar that often, because every time I do I'm disappointed, so that could have something to do with it.

K: As an undergraduate were there any faculty or friends of yours that inspired you?

C: Inspired? Gave me a kick in the butt maybe, but never inspired. I'm joking. Let's see, Dr. Leary, he's been very influential. He's a good professor, I'd say he's a great professor; I've always enjoyed his classes. I'm very interested in architecture now, when I originally had Dr. Leary - he knows this so it won't matter if he hears it, I thought he was kind of boring, and very monotonous, and I wanted to fall asleep every time I had that class. That was Intro to Historic Preservation. I mean you learned a lot, but oh I was bored. And you know I just didn't hold out great hope. Then I had his Architecture class and once again, not disappointed, I learned a lot and he's been very influential, very supportive of my research. As far as inspiring, not really, it's more influence than inspiration around here, it seems all the professors are very supportive.

K: How well did YSU prepare you for your next step after graduation?

C: Seeing as how I'm still at YSU as a graduate student I guess it prepared me pretty darn well. I think it did a good job, I mean fortunately I didn't have too much of a problem coming to YSU, Lordstown prepared me well, and I think YSU prepares you well for grad school as well. It is a huge transition though because of the fact that you're in grad school for a different reason, you're not really here to learn, you're here to analyze and learn how to skim a book, so I've been told. Which I still have not conquered the skimming of the book. I'll go on record saying that, and they'll say, "Yea I remember that," because it's true, I'm always reading the whole book, and professors laugh.

K: After graduation did you begin working at any particular job? Or did you go straight into graduate school?

C: I went straight into grad school and I'm a graduate assistant here, I'm Dr. DeBlasio's graduate assistant this year. So yea, I went straight in.

K: Coming into your Master's, what do you plan to do with your Master's?

C: Ah, the obvious question that all of us hope to find the answer to. I plan to graduate and most importantly I would like to find a job, but I might go on to get my PhD in Nineteenth Century American History, because I've been warned that there are too many Twentieth Century historians. I'm also very interested in urban planning and how that relates to Historic Preservation, so also that's another area that I'm interested in, and I haven't quite decided which way I'm going to go, or if I'm just going to go ahead and work in a museum, most likely that's what I will do is eventually work at a museum or work for a cultural resource management firm, because I'd like to be an Architectural Historian.

K: Currently how far along are you as a grad student?

C: Well, I'll be finishing up my first year in May.

K: Why did you choose YSU as a graduate school?

C: Good question. I really didn't want to come here for grad school for various reasons, things that go on inside this department. But ultimately it comes down to the fact that you have to look at it like, how are they going to prepare you? How are the professors? Ultimately what one me over, why I stayed here is because I love the professors here. I mean you could not ask for a better group of professors. They are knowledgeable, they know they're stuff. We have ivy leaguers here. We really have great professors, and I just couldn't see letting anything else get in the way of that. I can honestly say that I really haven't had a bad professor in History. Now, you know I really haven't had a bad professor in any of the other departments either, I mean there have been a few that have been just incredibly mean, but as far as History goes we have an excellent department, and nobody should ever knock it down, no one should ever say one bad thing. We have an awesome Chair, very supportive, she has very good relations with other departments too, so that helps. But that was the big thing was the professors, because I knew I'd get a quality education still, you know, I did as an undergrad, and I knew I would as a grad student. They're very honest, so that also helps because when they're honest with you, you kind of know what your limits are, and whether or not your great plans are *great plans* or just really bad ones.

K: How are you currently paying for school?

C: Because I'm a graduate assistant, my tuition is paid for. My fees are not, and basically I just...I have a stipend, so I can pay for my fees, and I still took out more loans because

it's impossible to live on...there's no way you can live on \$5,000, which this year I have the Terry Lynch Scholarship, so I only got a stipend of \$5,000 plus my tuition. So you can't live off of that. But that's how I'm paying for it, I've been very fortunate and I just got a scholarship through my mom's work, so that'll pay for my fees next year.

K: What kind of activities are you involved in as a graduate student?

C: Same old same old. Historic Preservation Club, I'm president again this year, fortunately or unfortunately, depending on how one looks at it. I hope to pass that on to other folks. I've loved it very much, but you know what? As president for two years, it's very hard to think of new things to do in this area because there's not a lot of people to talk to you. I mean there are, but I've exhausted them all. I think we need fresh ideas for that organization that I haven't been able to provide, and a lot of it is because of grad school, it's very time consuming. I'm still involved with Phi Alpha Theta; I'm Treasurer this year, I'm running for president next year.

K: Good luck with that.

C: Thank you.

K: How do these activities impact your studies?

C: Well, they interrupt them quite frequently, especially at this time of the year with the Phi Alpha Theta Banquet. It's not a tremendous amount of work, but it's just enough to take away from your schoolwork. And we have a trip tomorrow to Belmont Technical College, and I'm going to lose a whole day, and in grad school when you lose a whole day at the end of the semester, you'd better hope and pray that your brain functions very well in order to get everything out in time.

K: I agree with you. As a graduate student describe a typical day.

C: A typical day I wake up at 6:30 in the morning probably three days a week because you've got to sleep in sometimes, and I usually sleep in until 8:00 on those days. Then I come in to school, and I do schoolwork, and I do work for Dr. DeBlasio, and then I do more schoolwork, and then I go to class, and then I go home and I do more schoolwork. I don't have much of a social life right now, so that's pretty much the typical day. You know, we'll go out to lunch and things like that, converse, there's always great conversation during the day. Also distracting you from your schoolwork.

K: You mentioned that you were a graduate assistant, are you working anywhere else aside from that?

C: No, I get called to substitute teach every now and then, but because my schedule is so crazy I usually tell them no. I usually turn them down for subbing, and that's usually Lordstown that calls and they're very...the school system has been very kind because they realize that I'm a grad student, and normally after three calls of you saying no a

school will not call you back because it's not worth their time. But fortunately they've been very supportive and realistic of the fact that I am a grad student and that I most likely will not be able to sub on the days that they call. So that's a very insignificant amount of work as far as subbing goes because I usually turn it down.

K: What changes would you like to see happen here? Not necessarily with the University itself, but with the History Department?

C: With the History Department? Wow, you might have to stop the tape for that one because I think I have to think about that for a while. I don't know, I guess more student involvement, coming from my perspective with organizations and stuff. The most frustrating thing about YSU, and part of it is because it's a commuter college, but the most frustrating thing is the fact that as hard as you try, you don't have student participation in organizations. It's very, very difficult to get people to meetings and keep them interested and keep them coming back. That needs to be improved. The Department itself? They should put restrictions on this tape, because honestly the infighting needs to change. The students know about it, we feel the tension a lot. Like I said they're great professors, but sometimes they let other things get in the way of seeing each other's strengths, and that's a real issue they need to fix, they need to get past that because ultimately they are not here for infighting or bickering, they are here for the students. They truly are, and we pay they're salary dammit. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to swear but I mean, you know, they do need to fix that. But I mean the professors are all great, and you know, we have a lot retiring, and I'm sure they'll find really good professors to take their place. I think our department is fairly strong academically, and as far as classes go it's just the political stuff that every university has that is a real issue.

K: So it's not actually education problems, it's just more politics as usual.

C: Yea it's the politics. It's not the education because we have great professors, they all know their stuff, and no one can say they don't.

K: Throughout your schooling, both undergraduate and graduate schooling, any regrets?

C: No, you know what? When I first came to YSU I was so pissed off that I didn't get to go to Mount Union, and that I didn't get to go to a private school because my parents couldn't afford it, but ultimately I don't regret it because I've had a damn good education. I'm sorry for swearing, but you know what? People really criticize YSU, and you know, out in Lordstown especially; "Youngstown? That's a bad area, oh my gosh, it's Youngstown!" It's a city, okay, you know, it's not bad down here, I have walked to downtown to go to the courthouse to do research and I have never gotten bothered. You know, it's a good area, and I don't regret it because I've had a top-notch education, and you know what? We've had people in this Department who have been getting into awesome schools, you know, for their PhD's and stuff. We have a really good school and a really good department, and I don't regret it, not one bit, because I've had great experiences here, even with all the political bull crap that goes on that we shouldn't know about as students. It's still an awesome University and I don't regret it one bit. I don't

think I would take anything back, I'm ultimately happy that I chose YSU as an undergrad and a grad student.

K: Subsequent to your graduating with your Master's Degree, do you plan on remaining active with any University Alumni activities?

C: I don't see why I wouldn't, I've always been a very active person and I'm very pro-YSU, so I would. It would only make sense to do so because so many people leave and then they don't even think about YSU, and I've done phone-a-thons, and oh my gosh, people are...once they leave YSU they really don't want to hear that phone call from the phone-a-thon people saying, "Will you donate money?" And some people will say, "I had a crappy university experience, don't call me again." So I mean my experience wasn't so bad that I wouldn't want to be involved, and I hope to stay in the area, in Cleveland or somewhere nearby. I would like to stay but if I don't that will be okay, but they could still mail me letters and I'll still send the money back if I make a decent amount of money.

K: With the exception of diversity and politics, what would you like to see happen with the University?

C: Essentially it's the student involvement thing again. It's so much of a commuter campus, I really think that it would be beneficial for them to have more housing, more dorms, and not only that, but have them cheaper, because I'd live on campus if it weren't so expensive. I honestly do not think that room and board needs to be that expensive on any university campus because not only – the buildings are forever, they keep capitalizing on students. I mean it's ridiculous how much they charge, so I'd like to see more...

K: I've been inside University Courtyard and for lack of better words it's junk.

C: Oh, I've heard.

K: And so expensive.

C: Oh it's ridiculously expensive. When they told me how much I laughed, I said there's no way in hell. The fact that they have that many people over there in those apartments really astonishes me. Either they're really dumb, or they have some stored money that I certainly don't have, because they are just extremely expensive and I'm sure a lot of them – some of them I do know, they're taking out loans for this. Students shouldn't have to take out loans to live on campus because they want to come to YSU and live here, I mean if you have somebody coming from, say, Seattle, there should be affordable housing available because let me tell you something, how many people want to come to YSU from Seattle? It's not that many. It is mostly a regional school, most of us are from PA and Ohio, so I think that's the biggest thing, I think they need to have more student housing, have more people on campus and get these kids involved. And yea I know there's departments that will say, "Well, kids are involved, we have the student activity center." And yea, there are a lot of organizations that have involvement, but I just...the

first two years I was here no one bothered to ask me. I got asked to join a sorority, and I had this thing against them, not that they're bad, however I do not want to pay people to make friends. I don't need to pay \$125.00 a semester to make friends. Sorry, don't need it. I have a good personality, I can make friends on my own, you know, and the whole aspect of, "Oh join! It'll be great for networking!" Well guess what? I can network through faculty, I can network through Phi Alpha Theta, I can network through a lot of other things other than a sorority because when it comes right down to it, employers aren't going to give a shit what sorority you belong to. They're not, they truly are not. They're going to want to know that you're qualified. They're not going to say, "Oh, wow, you were a part of Alpha Beta Gamma Lamda!" You know? They're not going to care. They truly aren't, they're not going to know that you were a sister. It's stupid to think...I mean I'm sure that they provide great experiences for the people who belong, but I just – I don't need to pay my money to somebody for that, especially when I don't have the money to begin with.

K: April that wraps up my questions in this interview. Is there anything at all that you would like to add?

C: No, not really.

K: Are you sure? Take a moment to think about it.

C: Let's see...I think I pretty much covered everything. I don't think I could reiterate again that YSU is a really good school, people should come here. Not just because it's inexpensive, but because it is a good school. I mean you get the bang for your buck when you come to YSU.

K: Especially in the History Department.

C: *Especially* in the History Department, this is true. So, yea, that's really the biggest thing is people just make fun of YSU too much, and it's not true because I've met a lot of people here who are very intelligent graduated top of their class, and they came to YSU. And a lot of the times it's because of economic reasons, because they can't afford to go to those private schools. And people do – one thing I hate, people say "You Suck University," you know, I'm sorry, I don't suck. I didn't come here because I have sub-par intelligence, or I didn't hack it in high school. I hate when people say that, because it's ignorant.

K: It is ignorant.

C: It's very ignorant and it's insulting.

K: For as hard as I work they have no idea.

C: That's right. And then I'm over here I always say, "Kan't read, kan't write, Kent state," but in that case I have a little tidbit for you; my fiancé's sister goes to Kent State

University. She has many people that she has come into contact with that actually transferred to Kent State University because they could not hack it at YSU, it was too hard. So when people dog YSU, just keep that little tidbit in mind folks. When you read this online someday, just remember that; people left YSU to go to Kent State because they couldn't hack it here. That's all I'm going to say.

K: Well I'm glad I know that, I'm sure I'll be relaying that more than once coming up here.

C: Yea, I mean, because people think, "Oh, yea." And some people think Kent State is better than YSU, and they may be in some areas, but if you can't hack it at YSU and you're going to Kent State, obviously we have something going on here. Obviously we have a really good school if people feel the need to leave because it's too hard. And that's sad. It truly is, because it's hard enough, but it's not overly hard, especially when you're a freshman.

K: It's challenging, and it should be.

C: And you know what? That's probably the greatest thing about YSU is that it is challenging. I guess I was a little surprised by that too because it is a public university, and some people really don't expect much from them. But it's always been very challenging, and I think part of the reason why I like the history Department the most is because they are the most challenging. They make you work for your grades more than any other department I've ever been in. They're very critical, and it's probably a weeding out process, like they want to make sure they get out the people who aren't really interested in history because there are so many people who go into it because they think it's more marketable. That's probably why I like history because I'm not trying to gloat or brag or anything but I do pretty well in all subjects, and I think that's part of the reason why I like History the most is it provides the most intellectual stimulation. It's the most challenging because I hate to write, so that makes it really challenging. I'm not a bad writer, but I hate to do it. So that helps to make things more worthwhile when you actually have to earn something. That's about it. I just went on and on.

K: Well thank you very much. That was a very interesting interview. I'm very impressed with all of the things that you've done, that you're involved in, and I wish you luck on anything that you plan to do.

C: Well thank you Noelle. I wish you luck.

K: And I feel like I'm in such good company. Thank you once again both from myself and from the Oral History Project.

C: You're welcome very much.