

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Dorset United Methodist Church

Personal Experience

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GLADYS TOPPIN

Interviewed

by

Patricia Beckwith

on

November 1, 1977

GLADYS TOPPIN

Gladys Virginia Childester was born on November 8, 1902, in Weston county, West Virginia. Her family moved to Dorset, Ohio, when she was five years old. Here, she attended the school and graduated from Dorset High School in 1920. She is the daughter of Scott and Dora Leea (Butcher) Childester.

Gladys was married on May 5, 1921, to Andrew Frederick Toppin. They became the parents of one son, Ray, and one daughter, Doris.

Mrs. Toppin is a former employee of the Dorset Telephone Company, now the Kingsville Telephone Company, where she worked from 1917 to 1921. She is a member of the Dorset United Methodist Church, where she belongs to the United Methodist Women. She is also an active member of the Dorset Albino Rebekah Lodge, #773. She served the lodge as Past Noble Grand and has earned her 55-year membership pin.

Mrs. Toppin is a former member of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, and enjoys reading, tatting, crocheting, and embroidering as her hobbies.

-- Patricia Beckwith

B. This is an interview with Gladys Toppin for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Dorset United Methodist Church, by Patricia Beckwith, on November 1, 1977

The first thing I would be interested in learning about is your childhood. Can you tell me where you were born and your early schooling?

T I was born in West Virginia, but we moved up here when I was five years old. I went to school at Gageville from the first grade until the sixth. And then we moved to Denmark and I went to Pierpont for seventh and eighth grade. And from there up, eighth grade, I came to Dorset and entered the freshman year there and graduated from Dorset School.

B Why did your family move up to this area to begin with?

T You mean from West Virginia?

B Yes.

T Well, because his father and mother came up here first, so they decided the rest of them would come. So we came shortly after they did.

B And why did your family move around?

T Well, we moved around on account of our work. We bought a farm up at Sheffield, and then we came to Pierpont, and then we came to Denmark, and he worked in Reick McJunkin Dairy Company in Dorset, the largest milk receiving station in the world at that time.

B Yes, Leta was telling me about that.

S Then my mother and I worked in the Central Office [Telephone Company] until I graduated from high school.

B At the milk plant?

T. No, at the Central Office here in Dorset, run by McConnel's. I think they owned it then. But there was a number of stock holders, I just do not remember how many there were. And they would not hire a young person. They had to be someone older to be with it. So they had a house and we just moved into it. And we lived in that house until I graduated in 1920.

B From your early schooling and any of the schools that you attended, are there

any special teachers that stand out to you?

T Yes, I believe I do. When I was in the first grade, we had a fellow by the name of Ford, and I was what they call the teacher's pet. And he went from there to Columbus and taught at Ohio State. This was in the agriculture line of work. And then from the seventh and eighth grade, I was teachers' pet because she was Mrs. Cherry Waters from Pierpont and she was the undertaker's wife there. And I would have to go from the school down to the house after her lunch. And then if he wanted her for anything because he would run the undertaker's parlor. And then down here I was never the teacher's pet because we just went through the high school from one year to the next and we had an awful good superintendent. We had a lady superintendent for a number of years.

B What was her name?

T I cannot think of it right now, what her name was.

B I know I have heard it but I cannot remember it. Hickock?

T. Yes, Mrs. Hickock. And she surely taught us manners. She had a way about her, that she knew how to teach us to walk up and down stairs, and how to go from classroom to classroom. And I do not know how many years that she was down there. I do not know whether she was there the year we graduated or not. I think she was, well, in fact, I know she was. We played hookie the last of year of school. We did not play hookie, but there were ten girls and one boy in our class.

B That is pretty lopsided.

T And we wanted to go out to Siam Sapanen's for a steam bath, and we did not know how to get out of school to go there. So we talked to Mrs. Hickock and she said, "Well, I know you are going, just stay out of school and do not show up and I will know where you are at." So that is what we did. But the boy, he fussed all day long to know where we were at, and finally she had to tell him where we were at.

B All the girls had gone and left him?

T Yes, all the girls had gone and left him.

B One of the things that I am always interested in is the Depression. How did your family live through the Depression?

T Well, let us see. I do not know whether I was married or not. What years was it? I really forgot.

B In the 1930's It would be after your high school

T Yes, well, I guess we just got along the best we could I just now do not remember But I know at the time they rationed People would have a spell about it because I argued with one of the clerks up in Ashtabula in one of the stores And she said that she did not see the sense in rationing and all this and that going without things, because she had to work I said, "We all worked and we have to get out and take care of what we raised in order to help us along " And it does not seem to me like it was so bad because I know sugar and stuff, we found substitutes for it And I know we found in the bakery a substitute for sugar And I was demonstrating it down to the church and telling them about it one day And one of the members said, "Oh, she thinks she knows it all " And someone said that got us kind of interested to know that there was a substitute that they could use for sugar

B How many brothers and sisters did you have?

T I had two sisters and three brothers There were six in the family

B But you were married about the time of the Depression?

T Yes, I guess I was according to that because I know we substituted so much different stuff

B How did you meet your husband?

T I would hate to tell you I had this girlfriend here in Dorset, Elsie Brockett And she knew a fellow by the name of Walter Vanzant He was a brother to Leona Meede's sister-in-law in Ashtabula This fellow was from Indiana and was coming back to Ohio, and he met a fellow in Fort Wayne Depot that was coming to Kingsville, Ohio And they came through on the train together And in their talk he said he was in World War I with a fellow from North Kingsville While they were asking who it was, he said, "Albert Olson. He has a bakery in Kingsville and I am going up there to work for him " So Walter asked me when he came to Dorset; he kept after me to go with this fellow and I said, "No, I am not going with any stranger "

So one Sunday afternoon, they brought him down to Brockett's, they lived where Haggerty's are living now I saw him coming down First Street, Elsie and Walter, and I thought that they were up to something So they came down and said that his name was Fred Topping and they wanted me to come up to Elsie's to meet him I said, "Well, he can come down here and meet me if he wants to know me." And he said, "No, we did not know if you were working, whether you could get away or not We better find out " So I had someone to work in my place and I went up to Brockett's Mrs Brockett's and that is where I met him We started going together and then we were married

B What did he do at the time?

T He was a baker by trade.

B He had learned that in the service?

T Yes, he learned that in the service. And he worked at Albert Olson's bakery until he came to Ashtabula and worked at Olson's bakery up there. It was a brother to Albert.

B And when did he open the bakery here in Dorset?

T. Oh, he did not open that until after we were married. And the last place that he worked in Ashtabula was the Purity Bakery. And from there, I do not know what year it was when we moved down here.

B So you lived in Ashtabula for a while?

T Yes, for about two years. But I think Ray was two months old when we moved down here. Fred bought the meat market, and ran the meat market first. I do not know whether he built the bakery in 1928 or before because I think Doris was about two years old. So he had to have started the bakery before that, because she was about two years old when we built up over the bakery and we moved up there.

B And then when did you move to this house?

T. In 1942 we moved over here. I have lived around this corner for over 50 years. Because my mother was sick, that was the reason why we moved from the bakery over here.

B. Oh, your parents lived here?

T Yes, my parents lived here.

B. And then you came back to take care of them?

T Yes.

B What are some of your first memories when you came to Dorset? What were some of your first memories about the town?

T Well, I know when I started the school down here, I lived in Denmark yet. And I had to, my freshman year, you could not get through this road because they were building this road. Route 193, they were building it. And they had built it part way, but they were building it from Dorset up to the Grange Hall. And I had

to walk in bad weather. It took me around to Grif Fairchild's, I do not know where. And he brought me to school in a school bus. Then part of the time I would ride down with Merle Haines and Jim Brockett. And a lot of times, the snow would be so deep that one of the neighbors up in Denmark would come down in a bobsled to get me at school. And the horse would be waiting with snow clear up to his knees. That was the way. Then we moved down here, why, right after that. So I spent the rest of the time just walking to school. But I must have been just out of freshman year because my mother went to the hospital the last of the freshman year and I missed a month of school. And then after that we moved to Dorset.

B That was walking over five miles, was it not?

T Oh, yes. But we had a lot of fun because we had two Dorset people walking to Denmark to teach school. And one was Wade McConnell and one was Billy Robert's daughter and I cannot think of her first name now. I will think of it after a while, probably. And she taught at one school in Denmark and he taught another one. Every morning and every evening we would pass each other. They would be coming home and I would be going home.

B Opposite ways.

T Yes, opposite ways.

B How did you first get to know this church, or did your family attend this church?

T Well, I do not know, really, how I ever did get started there; because I just started, I guess. They had church over at Gould that they went to. The United Brethren or something. When they moved here, of course, they were both working and they did not go very often. But we would go down, I guess I just started Sunday School down here and taught Sunday School class for a number of years.

B This is when you first came here, when you were in high school?

T Yes, when I first came in high school.

B Your family had always gone to church?

T Yes.

B What were some of your first impressions about this church, good and bad?

T Well, I never saw anything wrong with it. We used to have a lot of good times down there. The only thing that I could ever see because I taught Sunday School class and the kids would bring pears and apples and everything. And I

would make them throw them out. And I said, "If your parents knew that you had these in Sunday School, there would be trouble " And I said, "I do not aim for you to bring that " But there were the Harmon boys, well, there was a number of them here But we had quite a Sunday school class.

B What age was that?

T Oh, I think it was about, I imagine, three or four years old, maybe five Around in there And I cannot remember now who all did go down there But I know that the Hylands, were a number of them And I do not know about the Keep boys and some of them like that There were the Kennedy boys, of course, that were down there, some of them

B At this time when you were in high school, did you have a youth group there? Did you have parties?

T Well, yes, we used to have a lot of parties; pie socials, box socials And we used to sell our shadows.

B What was that? I never heard of that

T Well, we would put a sheet or something across the door And some way, they would fix our shadows so that they would show through that, and then somebody on the other side would be bidding on our shadows Just like they did for pies, if it was a pie social, they would bid on the shadows

B So what did you have to do?

T Well, we would have to have a box or pie or something with them to eat Instead of selling them, we would sell our shadows Generally it was a box supper we would have fixed And whoever bought our shadows, why, we ate with them

B So, that was a way to raise money? [Laughter]

T Yes And sometimes they went pretty high, too, if they thought they were bidding for the right girl They went pretty high Because the highest was around 100 dollars our class made on the social And that was a lot of money for that time And everybody would get so excited over it And then I remember one, I guess it was a dinner we had at school Bill Kyle, someone had caught a deer and he furnished it and Fred roasted it up at the bakery in the oven And we had dinner, roast deer, I guess you would call it

B Venison

T Yes, venison That was up at the school

B Did you have these box socials and things to raise money for the church or for

what?

T No, those are for our school That was for each class And then sometimes the church would have them, too But for a long time they had ice cream socials and things around, that made money for the church And it was home-made ice cream And then we had regular aid dinners, you know, like they give them up now That brought in a lot of money

B Bazaars and things like that?

T Bazaars, yes

B What did you do at your youth group party?

T Oh, I do not know. They had all kinds of games to play, and tricks And I could not begin to tell all of the games they did I know we used to draw a chalk line on the floor somewhere and blindfold somebody and make them walk the straight and narrow way Such things as that we would do

B At this time, do you remember feeling that the church was awful strict as regarding the card-playing and dancing and things like that?

T Well, they always were against card-playing and dancing, stricter than they are now A whole lot more, because if you even had a deck of cards in your house. Some people would hide them, but we had a preacher here once, and I think it was Gladys Keep's father He would come to my place so much because I had red hair and he had a daughter that had red hair I put him in mind of I never hid my cards The cards always lay right there, nothing was ever said Someone said to him, "how come you like to go to her place so much?" He said, "Well, she puts me the mind of one of our daughters, and she had red hair " But I cannot think of which one it was now But we used to have a lot of fun at these different socials at the church and at the school It seems to me like we worked together more than what they do now, or got along better I do not know what you would really call it

B Do you remember in your home life, not being able to go to the dances or drinking or smoking?

T Oh, yes Mother and Dad were real strict about it They would not even have cards or drinks or anything, or dancing I never learned to dance on that account Just because I never cared for it. And any way, when I did try to learn to dance, Charlie was too stiff and I was afraid that I would make a mistake and they just could not teach me how to dance

B In your early memories of the church, was there a men's group that was ever active, or a men's Sunday school class, that you remember?

T Well, no We used to all be together, like Fred and Keith and all of the superintendents down there at school. They were together, but they separated them, I do not know how come They separated them there for a while when they had the married couples, after so many of them had begun to get married They had different ones separated like that, I think And I do not remember when they ever separated the men from the ladies, but I think they did have just the men's class that went down in the basement to meet. But I do not remember just when they did do that We used to all be together and I will tell you, we had some arguments, too, sometimes, about things And then we had a big class that met back in the south corner of the church, back in the back there Or it would be the front of it, as you go in there to your right, that is where we met And we always had anywhere from 15 to 20 every Sunday So that class you see has really dwindled.

B Now is that the Friendship class?

T I guess that is what they called it later on I do not know whether we had a name for it or not I suppose we did have -- I do not remember -- but they changed it to the friendship class after that

B And you were a member of the friendship class later on?

T Yes But that would be, I think, when they changed

B Yes, because I know Leta was talking about the friendship class

T Yes, she would know more about that because I taught Sunday school class for a long time down there

B Yes, so it was hard to be at both Sunday school classes At this same time, did you think that the church was more evangelistic in nature then it is today?

T Yes, I think it was And we used to think it was strange Especially Agnes Bouton, because people had not studied their Sunday school lessons We always studied our Sunday school lessons and was up on answering questions or asking questions But I think, nowadays, they get away from a lot of that

B So you think there was more studying Bible-reading and things like that at that time?

T; Yes, but I believe that it is getting back to Bible study now

B What makes you think that?

T, Well, because that class that we had down there this winter, in March, it was on the Bible But not very many came, but it was interesting And they were talking

about getting some books to study this winter They are not going to start it until January

B After Christmas

T. Yes

B At this time, and up through the present, what do you see as the relationship between the community and the church?

T Well, I think since we consolidated with Jefferson, everything is done differently, because the young people now have interest in Jefferson and other places, more than they do at Dorset And I think that is dividing the churches and the schools, too Because they have taken so many of our activities and things away from down there

B Yes, I never saw that before this interview, but a lot of people see to feel that way I know, of course, I was not from here to begin with

T No, you were not from here to begin with Like some of your aunts and you grandmother could tell just the same thing I really think -- and not that I do not think lodge took the place of churches -- but I think our lodge has gotten active again, more so than a lot of things And it used to be pretty active, then it died down I think that is just the way things go Right now it is real active, but just how long is it going to last?

B So you think that there is always ups and downs?

T Yes, in any organization

B What do you see as the relationship between the two churches here in town?

T Well, I think it is much better than it used to be Much better.

B Why is that?

T Well, because I can remember a long time ago when I went down to the Methodist Church Before our daughter was born, I sent Ray down to the Baptist church with his cousins and people caused an uproar And I said, "Well, I could not see any difference " They are all supposed to go to the same place And as long as he could go down there with his cousins I thought it was all right But it did not phase me because when I got able to go back, I went back down to the Methodist Church And to me, it does not make any difference I would go to either one of them The Baptist, Methodist, United Brethren, or any of them And I even enjoy going to a Catholic Church once in a while

B I think that Vacation Bible School, now that they have them together

T Yes, they do They have an awful good Bible program down there I do not know whether everybody thinks it was all right to have that woman or not here But I thought it was because I thought it was something entirely different

B Yes, something unusual.

T Oh, yes, and I thought it was real good. And I think the kids were real interested in it It seemed to be that they were

B I think that it shows pretty good cooperation between the two churches.

T Oh yes, and then when their picnic was together, I think that there was more Baptist than there were Methodist down there

B I imagine

T I am sure that there was

B I think they had some pretty dedicated teachers down there I think it made a big difference In your experiences with this church, what do you see as the power behind the church the minister or the members of the congregation? Who has the last say on things?

T Well, I should say the preacher would, but maybe some of the people would. Say he is not here all the time; it should be the people But as long as the preacher is here, I think they would have a say

B What do you think of the Methodist custom of switching ministers every couple years?

T I think that is a good idea

B Why?

T Oh, it gives them something more interesting They want to go hear this one and the other one and the difference I think it just kind of makes it more interest from different churches

B You mean it keeps the pace kind of going?

T Yes And I think this lady down here, she is talking about First Corinthians She would preach a sermon on it, but I do not know whether she has yet or not But that would be interesting to hear that.

B This was just the last couple Sundays

T Well, Leta has not said anything about it

B About Paul and the people who were criticizing him, and he was writing a letter back to them to defend himself

T Yes, she said that she would preach a sermon on it We did have interesting study down there

B As far as you can remember, has it always been a hardship with this church?

T Yes, it always has been Even when everything was not as high as it is now, the wages and everything, it was always to make up or to do something Of course, our bazaar made an awful lot And years back we used to have it in the church for a long time And it made a big loss on the salary But I guess some of them thought that it was too much work or something, they did not want to keep it up

B Do you think tithing was important to people?

T No, I do not. I do not think, probably, if they would have done all that, why we would have been better off all the way through

B Do you think that it was more prevalent, say, in the 1920's and 1930's, more than it is today?

T Yes, I think so

B I get that idea

T Yes, I think so, too But really, if a person would tithe, I do not think there would be as much hardship all along the way

B For the person and for the church?

T Yes, for the person and for the church. But I know that we had a lady preacher over here in the old Mercantile And when she first came here -- I cannot think of what kind of church it was -- she would come over and visit with my mother, and my mother was well-read on the Bible They would get into some of these arguments And she was wondering one day if people would bring in so many of their chickens and so many of their different things for her, what she would do with it And my mother said, "You will never get that around here " And she said, "Oh yes I will " And she said, "Oh no you will not, because people will not do that " And she said, "Well, if they got to do that they got a salary to give you the money " But my mother told her that she would not get that either Well, she did not have to worry She did not get any chickens or anything to put anywhere

B Now, did she preach at the Baptist church?

T No, she preached at a church over herein the old Mercantile And she lived in the back of it She was an awfully nice lady We liked her awfully well. But my mother was well read on the Bible and they could do a little arguing on different things like that And the time my mother passed away, we tried to get her to be one of the preachers at her funeral, but she had gone somewhere and they could not get a hold of her to get here in time

B I never knew that they had another church here in Dorset

T Yes I cannot think of the name, the Church of Christ or something.

B Now, was this the Agerty store?

T No, the old Mercantile They probably tore it down No, you would not know the old Mercantile The old Mercantile was an awful big store For years and years and years the children used to walk to school and go in there and warm their hands and their feet before they would go on to school And I do not know, it was owned by a number of people The Bostons and I do not know who else And it was a great big store

B And it was converted into a church?

T Yes Then, I guess, they went out of business or sold out or they all passed away, I do not know just how Doc Herst used to have a little store in there for a while They had a variety store for a while And Hetches owned the building and then they rented it to the church There was a lady that lived in the back of it and I think that there used to be a barber shop in there, too, before that But this lady lived in the back and had a church in the front And I just do not know -- the Church of Christ, or the Church of God, or what it was called

B I never heard of that

T Yes But she was a nice person My mother enjoyed her and she enjoyed my mother But they would get into different arguments because Ray and Doris would come over here right from the bakery And they would go into the cupboard and get pie and anything they wanted and she said to my mother, "Oh, I would not allow that " She said, "Just stop and think If your grandchildren do that and do not like your baking, they do not like you " [Laughter] I will never forget that And she said, "I think that is pretty good, they liked my pies better than they did their dad's pies They used to have a lot of fun over that. So they got along good together But they would argue over such things as that

B I never knew that there was another church here That is interesting What were some of the family activities of the church?

T Well, I do not know if they had much of anything then but bazaars and socials
Everybody joined in

B Did they have Sunday school picnics and stuff like we have today?

T Well, you know, I just do not remember I suppose they did Yes, I know now
that they had Sunday school picnics The Baptist and the Methodist used to go
together and we would go to the old Lake Shore Park We would have the
Sunday school picnic

B This was up at Ashtabula?

T Yes But that was about all Of course, WCTU, that was the Women's
Temperance Union or something they called it They used to have suppers
down there, too We always had good crowds and good meals for anything that
we had going on And that was always our social business of it

B So it was social and it made money for the church?

T: Yes

B Did they used to have prayer services or Sunday evening services?

T Yes, we had prayer meetings there, too, and we would have Sunday evening
services But I know Mrs Keep and I would walk down there time and time again
and there would not be anybody to show up but her and I And that is just about
what happened every time So it just seems like they lost interest in it Lots of
cold nights, we would walk down there and nobody else would come but
whoever was supposed to take care of the church And that would be about the
end of it But otherwise, when it came to the church in general, I think we got
along together It seems closer then what they do now The younger people
and the older people, the middle-aged people when they would go there to
anything like that, they would all seem to get along pretty good

B So they all worked hard?

T Yes, and they worked together

B Can you see any reasons for a change?

T No, I cannot see any reasons for a change It is just the way everything
changes, I suppose

B What do you see as this church's purpose? Do you think that it is more
concerned about the people in Dorset here and itself, or is it more concerned
about people outside the church, more mission-centered?

- T Well, there are some missions I think there is more interest in general in the public The people in Dorset and the close connections of others We were talking, I think it was the president of AID, Sue Sharp and I, just some time ago. Like these big meetings that we have to go to in Painesville and Perry and all those places If these ten churches around here would form something like that, (the Council for Dynamic Rural Ministry), we could go to it and would not have to go so far away
- B You could still have a bigger group working
- T. Yes, and I think that the whole ten churches would be better
- B I had not thought of anything like that
- T. And we are talking about it sometimes, because she said, "You are so interested in this lodge organization that you have " The ones that belong, we miss through bad weather And I said to her, I said, "Well, I think that is what brought up the subject " I said, Sure we know all of these people from these seven now " And I said, "We know each other and we can mix and visit and go about our business to benefit the lodge " Where I do still think that if the church would do that, these ten churches, they would get along better
- B Yes, I have not thought of that You should have them bring it up at a meeting to discuss it
- T. Well, that is it, you know, Sue Sharp I do not think is president of the Aid any more And there are such few of us that go to the Aid anyway And I do not know just why I guess the younger ones just are not interested in it or something. I do not know what happened to all that
- B. What do you see for some of the reasons for declining membership in the church?
- T I do not know what it is I think it is just because our schools in general got spread out I still blame it on the schools getting split up like they are. Maybe that had to be, I do not know
- B. I do not think that we are unique I think this is over the whole nation that this is going on
- T Yes, I think it is, too, not just us But down there where Chris and them are teaching, you do not hear so much hard luck as you do up around here in schools and things (Chris Toppin teaches in Mt Vernon, Ohio) It does not seem like it It has not got there yet maybe, I do not know. What is the cause of it?

B I do not know. In interviews that I have been doing, I have been hearing several reasons about TV, people for the prayer meetings and so forth. It is easier to stay home and watch TV. It is easier to stay home on Sunday morning and listen to the sermon on TV. Also, a lot of mothers are working.

T. Yes, there are a lot of working mothers.

B Yes, and also the fact that everybody said that there seems to be more to do now. So on Sundays, either they go camping or other places.

T Yes, camping, you go places, but then it does not seem to me like that. Of course, like me, I do not drive or anything, and I can stay home and watch TV. I get up at 7:00 and I watch Catholic any that comes along. And I watch that because I do not drive and am not in the position to have someone come after me or to take me. But to stay home and hear a good sermon, I do not think very many people would.

B I do not think so either, really. Unless they are really a shut-in or sick, that they cannot. Because your mom was very well-read in the Bible, have you continued this, also?

T Yes, I have read the Bible through, even this winter once already, and I am on the second time.

B Why is this so important to you?

T Oh, it is just really interesting. And although you cannot figure it all out, still it is interesting. Because lots of times I just start to read, and it will be time I should have my breakfast, I sit down with God. I just get interested in reading it and then I have been going to take these Upper Rooms. And, of course, there is a little piece in there and then I read the scripture to them. I did for a long time read to them. But now I have got so to read the Bible and going back over that and reading that. I got to get some new Upper Rooms. And that is one thing down at the Aid that we have been taught, about taking the Upper Rooms, and having that for a Bible study, instead of buying books. I cannot see the sense in spending money for books. They have two books coming that I think we are going to study, but I think that will be at night. Maybe at the aid. But they are always wanting money for something, and we need the money. Ralph knows that they need it now. And I said to Leta, we did bring the subject up at the Aid once. Just take these Upper Rooms, because we are supposed to have so many minutes in the Aid set aside for the religious part and then our meeting, and then if we have a program.

B You just have a special time for studying and so on?

T Yes, that is what our paper said a year or so ago. Yes, it would be like that.

They say even fifteen, twenty minutes, or a half an hour. Not over a half an hour for the scripture part. And then your business part, and then after that everything else

B One of the things that I think is interesting is in 1922, we had four churches together Dorset, Cherry Valley, and Richmond. Do you remember how one minister took care of four churches?

T Now, you know they keep talking about that. When did you say that was?

B It started in 1922

T I just do not remember much about that

B Do you remember later on when there was Dorset, Richmond, and Cherry Valley?

T Yes, but I do not remember much about it because I remember more about Dorset and Cherry Valley. But I do not know Richmond. I just cannot remember much about how long it had been in. But I know Dorset and Cherry Valley were in together for so many years, and then I do not know just what happened. It got so that they got their own minister, I guess, and then this one just went to Richmond and Dorset. That is when I begin to remember more about Richmond being in with us. But I do know, I think Reverend Mayhew had to go to Richmond because Reverend Mayhew was also one of our school teachers.

B Oh, I did not know that

T Yes, and I cannot think how many years that he taught down there. I think it was when I was a junior and senior he was teaching, because his daughter went to school here. I remember he had to go up to Richmond and I believe that he went to Cherry Valley, too, but whenever this all changed, I do not remember.

B How did they space it out on Sunday?

T I do not even remember how that was

B I think it is hard to have two churches. I cannot imagine having four

T I do not either. I just do not remember how they did

B What are some of your memories about the music program of our church?

T Oh my, we used to have good choirs down there. Miss Hickok was quite a singer. And if I could stand by her, I could sing good. But yes, we did have quite a good choir down there for quite a while. I do not know how long, but it just took

anybody that could sing or tried to sing It was not supposed to be experts -- it was just supposed to be people wanting to sing and willing to learn

B Do you remember the quartet Albert was telling me about, a quartet with Dr Keep?

T Yes, but I cannot remember who all was in that. I do not know. But I remember that they had a quartet there, but I just do not remember who sang in it anymore

B How do you think the music has developed?

T Well, I think there are more young people really taking to music And I think that this new organ and everything, it is better

B There was not an organ for a long time, right?

T Not an organ like what you call them now But we had a regular piano, is what we had We had one in the church and one in the classroom back there And I know back in the classroom they could sing You got all sorts of kids who were good singers And they did not have so much trouble with the different ones playing They all seemed to be then, more players then there are nowadays

B You mean on the piano? More people could play the piano?

T Yes

B So you always had somebody that could play?

T Yes.

B Here is a list of some of the old ministers There is Reverend Mayhew that you mentioned Is there any funny story or interesting thing that you can remember about any of the ministers?

T Oh, gracious no Except that Kelly would come to our place so much because I reminded him of his daughter. But, of course, Mayhew, I do not know, he mixed with all of us I do not know why, and even Mrs Mayhew did, too

B Is that the minister that married you?

T Yes

B That is about the same time that Leta and Albert got married, was it not?

T Yes We were married the fifth of May and they were married the first of June And we were not going to be married until the seventh of June and get married

after them. But Fred took sick and was in the hospital and was operated on. And so the doctor would not let him go to a rooming house where he stayed in Ashtabula. So we went to a friend of ours and stayed for a week or two. And then the doctor said, "Well, if you are going to get married, why can you not get married now, and not wait? You cannot go to work for five or six weeks." So we got married the fifth of May and went to Indiana on our honeymoon for two weeks. And then we came back and went to housekeeping at the harbor. And at that time, he was able to go back to work. They do a lot different in operations nowadays.

B: Yes, I know. Even Albert said that he was special to them because that was who married them.

T: Reverend Jones, I always liked him awfully well because he used to come up here and come in, whether I was here or not, and sit and visit for hours with my dad. And he just enjoyed it so much, and so did Reverend Silliman. He would just come in whether I was here or not, just to visit and to make themselves at home, or down to earth like we people are around here.

B: Is there any one of the ministers that really stands out to you, that was very special and important to you?

T: Well, no, because I went to school and I guess, except for Mayhew, he would be the only one. And Kelly.

B: These are the ones that you felt took a special interest in people?

T: Yes, they took a special interest in, yes. And Don Silliman was always real good. He got around and visited a lot of different people. And Shilling, I think he was pretty good. I think he had a number of children, did he not?

B: Yes, I think he did. I think that was the first minister that can really remember, Silliman -- I mean Shilling. He was here until 1964.

T: I think Reverend Briggs was pretty good. Everybody liked him and his wife so well around here.

B: What was your opinion to having a Korean minister here in Dorset?

T: It was perfectly alright with me because he was friendly. And he tried when he came here to do his best, because he tried to meet people and get acquainted with them. In every way, I think it was alright.

B: Can you tell me about the addition to the church? How did the project get started?

T You know, I just do not know. They talked about building on so long and just talked for a long time. And I know that they started raising money for it and I guess they went around and got pledges. I know I paid Betty Keep, I think, every time. And so much a pledge and you paid it so often. And I do not even know how much it was or how much it cost them or anything. But I do think it added on to the church a lot, if they just keep it up.

B Do you remember when Sunday school was so big?

T. Yes, I remember when Sunday school and all those classes were large. Even the elderly people and the middle-aged people, too.

B Why do you think that there was such a big Sunday school at this time? What were some of the things that drew the people in?

T Well, I guess maybe then they did not have so many different places to go is the only thing that I can think of. The roads were not so good that you could go anywhere else. And I think it is more interesting. In Denmark, you know, there was a church up there where a lot of us used to go. And then something happened to it. I do not remember. They all came down here, like the McGrews and them. There were a whole lot of them that came down here for a long time, from Denmark. Well, that is when Haynes and them all got to coming down here. Then after that the McGrews and them. I think that helped out for quite a while.

B How long did you teach Sunday school? You said that you taught it for quite a while.

T Oh, I do not know, probably off and on for five years.

B What do you see as the purpose of Sunday school?

T Oh, I think that teaches the young people a lot of things when you get right down to your lessons and follow rules. They used to have a set rule, something to follow and go by. You cannot skip from here to there. And the classes are like all close to their age and everything. They get together and it is more common. And I think they get more interested in it. Especially the smaller children. If your teachers are good and if they have something interesting, they keep the kids pretty good. And I think we have always had a pretty good bunch of teachers down here because there has never been too much competition in any of the classes, even years ago when we had so many coming and going.

Well, there would be one in this front corner and one of ours in the other front corner. And I know that I taught Sunday school over in the other corner for quite a while. And then there would be some up by the piano and perhaps one or two in the center of the church. They were all close together and still there was not any commotion and each one got something out of their classes. But

there are just so many things to go do, I suppose I do not know I think this school division was the biggest drawback of everything I still will always say that There are two or three families I could mention that would say, "Well, that is because they were so against it " And I know some more around here that are against it too And I think they think the same way that I do because, you know, the children get interested and meet other people and that is alright for them to meet other people and get out and mix like that But I see that it takes them away from their own home town things

B Yes. And I think that several people have told me that it seems like the school is having more functions now

T And then when we had a good high school down here, we had people coming from Cherry Valley down in that way here And that made more interest for them and everything around here, for the people down that way

B So it was not necessarily the people here?

T No, the outlying people made lots of difference in anything like that

B One of the things that I like in the church is the paintings Do you remember Mrs Moses?

T Oh, yes, of course Peggy and Hugh were our neighbors for a long time in Dorset And the two girls grew up together Peggy was an awful good painter

B She is the one that painted them?

T Yes Peggy Moses was he name

B I did not know her first name before

T Well, a lot of others called her different, but that is what we always called her Her and my sister Lucy worked together somewhere

B Do you remember what encouraged her to paint those?

T No, I do not I did not even know until I saw some of them, that she could do things like that. Of course, she was quite a hand to stay at home, not to be on the go or anything much And I think she just got interested in that and started painting But really, I do not know what did really start her, but I just figured that was it But I do not remember of her ever doing any much fancier work, like the rest of us are doing, or anything

B So that was her hobby?

T. But she was on hand to play cards and that was what I could never understand Doing all that when she was so good, when she was a good card layer But she could do that good of work

B I think they are special I really like them

T I do, too I think they add an awful lot to the church It needed something like that But I was really surprised when I saw some of them '

B Who did she dedicate them to? I have gotten different stories about this

T I do not know

B I thought that they were dedicated to her husband and then someone told me that it was to her parents-in-laws, her husbands' parents was who she dedicated them to

T I would say that would be more like it, to A P Moses, because they were well-liked all around here

B So it was probably to his parents?

T Yes

B And they were active in the church, is that why she did this?

T. Yes, they were active in anything, lodge and church and everything And you know, I do not know them, because her folks are not anybody from around here Because my sister and her got acquainted and I think it was at Fairport or Painesville when they worked They way she would come here

B This was before she was married?

T Yes She got acquainted with Hugh because Hugh and Harold ran around together. And that is the way that I always understood that

B Harold?

T Harold Hurst, that is Lucy's husband I will tell you that that is all that I can think of and Fairport somewhere, to work, to Painesville Of course, Lucy would know, probably remember Where she stayed when she first came here, this lady, Mary Hawkins, the lady that ran the store over there, whether she is some relation to her or not, I do not know But Lucy would know I cannot even think of Peggy's last name before she was ever married

B What do you remember, if there was anything, was there a reaction or any

comments when the Methodist Church joined with the EB church? Do you remember any changes that came about then?

T No, I do not remember anything about that

B I think we just changed our name, I think that is all

T Well, just like we did now, it is supposed to be in the aid

B The United Methodist Women?

T Yes, the United Methodist Women And I think that is what the church has to go by now, the United Methodist Church. They just told us to change it and we did That is all that I can think of

B Next year is our hundredth birthday

T Oh, is it?

B Yes What do you think has been the church's main problem?

T Well, just to get people to pay the money to keep it going, I think, financially

B And what are some of the goals that you would like to see our church set up for our next hundred years?

T Oh, gee I do not know

B Are there some changes that you would like to see made?

T I do not really see where there would be many changes in the small rural district that it is, because you have to go out of town to shop, you have to go out of town to get doctors and clothes and everything So I just cannot see it, unless this town itself would build up like it used to be There used to be a dry goods store here, so they said A clothing store, the one Brostings had And we did have a good mercantile store here That is what the name of that one was You could buy everything there, even material if you wanted to make a dress or clothing of any kind It just takes some great big boom to build it up again, that is all there is to it

B So you think that, probably, the church will remain stable?

T Yes, just about the way it is, I would wonder

B What are your feelings toward the clothing center in our church?

T Well, I did not vote against it or vote for it I sat there and kept my mouth shut and tried not to say anything about it because, in a way, the way it has turned out, I think it has turned out pretty good But I know that some of them are terribly opposed to it

B I know

T And to me, I said to Doris, I did not say anything much about it or for it because I said that I do not go regular enough and I am not going to complain It can do good, just so it does not get a lot of junky stuff in there I know at a sale you have to watch everything like that People bring stuff that we ordinarily, around here, would take and burn up And somebody has to take it and burn it up

B Well, we sort the clothes out

T Well, that is what someone said, and they sent it to Goodwill That is what you have to do And I think it is all right, as far as I am concerned. But I would not say one way or the other on that because I would get into trouble I know who is all opposed to it [Laughter]

B What is your reaction to us having a woman minister?

T You know, I think it is a good thing I know I have not heard very many comments on it But I think it is a good thing, it is all right

B. Do you think that having Reverend Wong here and Reverend Mann, do you think that this has been a good broadening experience for us?

T I think it is good, yes, to have an idea of what other people are doing and can do and things like that, because you got to go fight with these other countries and for them You might as well mix with them in ordinary life And I know when Wong first came here, the young people thought lots of him But they were gone And like he could not understand the christening Well, they had to go away to school because he just thought they got down there playing ball and they had such good times, and they had to go away to school But I think he mixed pretty good with any of them

B What are some of the ideas that you might have towards how we could have a hundredth birthday party? Do you have any good suggestions?

T Well, that will be an awful thing. We will just have to do it like the bi-centennial, I guess, and have a big celebration of some kind That bi-centennial is about the best thing we have had since the street fairs around here They started out good until someone began to block them

B Did the church play a part in street fairs?

T I think they did, I just do not remember, but I think they did I would not say for sure The community in general took a hold of everything and they did at the bi-centennial

B. Yes, they cooperated very well

T Yes, I thought they did good And I think this last time that we had it over here, if they would have had a supper on a Saturday evening or something -- or maybe even a Friday evening -- to start it off, it might have worked better They would get more crowds, I believe, in the evening But then they had such a big doings the year before why, I suppose you could not expect it again

B Yes, I think it was hard to live up to everybody's expectations

T Oh yes, because that turned out so good You would go down there to the church and eat, and people would say that so and so was here, not that they were And they keep telling you about different people that moved away from Dorset and always acted like they were glad to get out, then they are glad to get back. [Laughter]

B. So there were people that you had not expected to hear from?

T Yes

B How would you describe your experiences with this church as a whole? Has it been rewarding?

T Oh yes, my, yes "I would not want to live in a town where there was not a church " I have heard that said, and you have too, lots of times. And both churches, we have had lots of friends, not just everyday friends -- good friends, real friends -- in both churches. And, of course, on our business, we had friends in all kinds of churches But even for a small town, I think these two churches have done pretty good for what few people there is to keep it going And to me, why, nobody ever preferenced either one of them myself W have always had to watch everything like that in our business.

B You mean being friends?

T Yes, to being friendly with everyone and to keep our mouths shut about different nationalities, because one person's money was just as good as anybody else's And I have heard it all my life and had to, and it is just like being the Dorset operator You had to answer calls for anybody and everything Just like this police call here now You had to show them some respect You had to take his word that he was You knew how because that has always been down there I know Fred used to get so made at one of our truck drivers' wives In the bakery, she used to come in there, especially if she smelled a farmer She would stick

up her nose. He would give her the "dickens" a time or two because she would do something. I said, "You know, your husband is making his living off of these farmers. You learn to keep your mouth shut when you come in here." So you just have to learn these things. And so the Central Office has taught me a lot.

B You mean when you were working for the telephone?

T Yes, to just listen to them and say "yes" and "no."

B So you think that the church had been a part of this friendliness?

T Oh yes, I should say no. Both churches -- not just one church, but both of them -- have been.

B And that is important to you?

T Yes, that is important. I think that is important to any community. And, of course, the school is the next. And I think that is where we really fell down, by losing our high school. Maybe there were not enough people around here, but I still do not know.

B And you will never find out now, right?

T No, I'll never know.

B Is there any particular hymn or sermon that you especially remember?

T Well, I just do not know how to express it. My sister and I used to sing the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" a lot when we washed the dishes because we did not like to wash the dishes. But I like "The Old Rugged Cross," and my mother sang so many of those songs. I cannot think of them, only when they come on television. I think that is why I listen to Rex Humbard, because his wife sings so many of the old songs that my mother sang, and I can just see her sit down and play the organ and sing. But "The Old Rugged Cross" and "the Church in the Wildwood" -- or I mean "The Little Brown Church in the Wildwood" -- I like, that and I like most any of those older religious songs. And I think they are coming back to them, too. A lot of them.

B I think people like the faster, happier songs. A lot of the songs we have now are slower.

T I heard a sermon preached on the 23rd Psalm. I could not repeat it after him, but I thought that was awfully good.

B Do you remember who it was?

T Yes, it was Reverend Humbard That is his special psalm, and his wife's is the 121st And I like that, too

B How did you get interested in your hobbies?

T That was because, I guess, the veterinarian told me once that he never saw me unless I was busy Now, when I worked at the Central Office, my mother crocheted She taught me how to crochet and as I worked there, why, I was crocheting in between times And I do not know, I have done a lot of tatting, too And some of our neighbors around here that showed me how to tat because my mother did not know how to tat And as far as embroidering, I took that up myself, from your mother-in-law So that is all I know about crocheting, embroidering and tatting

B So that is kind of a family tradition?

T Yes, oh yes

B Why have you not kept that up?

T Oh, I do not like to quilt alone and I do not have any frames But we had quilting parties, the Aid did, and we met around at different homes, especially where they had room to put up their quilts We did a lot of quilting, and I loved it. But to quilt at home, it takes up too much room and I do not have any frames

B Is there anybody else that you think I should interview, either in the church or out?

T How about Forest Keep?

B Okay. Or maybe somebody that does not even go to church that might be able to give me a different perspective on it?

T I cannot think of any of those ladies down at the lodge I know Marjorie Stainfield has been there quite a while I cannot think of anybody else around here because there are so many new people that have moved in

B Is there anything, any memories or anything, that you would like to add before we close?

T Well, I do not know The only thing that Fred always said was that Dorset was always a good place to live You could not find a better place to live than Dorset.

B And you think the church has added to that?

T Yes And we got a pretty good grade school here, even if we did lose our high

school That helps sometimes We could have a lot of improvement, but the way things are nowadays, you do not know what could be That is all there is to it.

B Okay, thank you

End of Interview