

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Niles, Ohio

Personal Experience

O.H. 1078

NAOMI M. HUMRICK

Interviewed

by

Beth M. Kantor

on

February 2, 1984

NAOMI M. HUMRICK

Naomi M. Humrick was born on July 19, 1908, in Butler, Pennsylvania. Her father was Charles and her mother Audrey Shay McDonald. When she was a little girl, her family moved to Niles, so most of her schooling took place in the Niles School system. She graduated from Niles McKinley High School in 1926. She did attend Youngstown State University (Youngstown College at the time) from 1926 until 1931. She never did complete her degree.

In February of 1933 she married William Humrick. She has a stepson, William Humrick, Jr., who is fifty-nine years old. Mrs. Humrick has never really worked a job, but has been a volunteer for the Red Cross, where she received the Clara Barton Award. She has also been a member of Family Service's, where she received the Family Service's Committee Service Award, and recently she was honored with the National Association of Social Workers Citizen of the year award.

Her interests also include Eastern Star. R.O.A.L., and the Trumbull Memorial Hospital Corporation. She attends the First Christian Church of Niles. Her hobbies are being very active in her church and she has taught Sunday school for fifty years.

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Niles, Ohio

INTERVIEWEE: Naomi M. Humrick
INTERVIEWER: Beth M. Kantor
SUBJECT: fashion, downtown, school, war
DATE: February 2, 1984

K: This is an interview with Naomi M. Humrick for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Niles, Ohio, by Beth M. Kantor, at Mrs. Humrick's home, on February 2, 1984, at 10:00 a.m.

First of all, I need to know when you were born and where and a little bit about your early childhood.

H: I was born in Butler, Pennsylvania on July 19, 1908. I started school, first grade, in Butler, Pennsylvania and then my family moved a number of times finally coming to Lowellville, Ohio where we lived for a few years. Then we lived in Struthers, Ohio for a few years and then to Youngstown, Ohio where we lived for a few years, and finally when I was thirteen we moved to Niles, Ohio, and I've been here ever since.

K: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

H: Yes, I have five brothers and five sisters.

K: What was school like when you were thirteen in Niles, Ohio? You moved around so much. Was it any different?

H: Yes, it was different. This was a smaller town than I had lived in when I was old enough to be more aware of the surroundings. My high school period here in Niles, Ohio was a most delightful one. I had a very, very good time. I was not an "A" student, I don't even know if I could have been, I never tried. I had a very good time

and was very active in high school, made very lasting friends that I still have, and altogether my life in Niles has been a very happy one.

K: What kind of clubs did you belong to?

H: In school? Most of the clubs that we had, dramatic clubs. . . I took a commercial course, so I belonged to the clubs in the commercial area. I also belonged to all the clubs my girl friends belonged to, also teachers' club. We were very active and I spent a very great deal of time at the school having a very good time.

K: Where did you live in relationship to the high school? Was it in walking distance?

H: I lived within a block or two at all times.

K: What kind of dresses did you go to school in?

H: Horrible ones, really. They were long and below the knee, at least halfway down the calf. They were long waisted and when I was in high school it was the long waisted period. Then the dresses got shorter and shorter and the uneven hem lengths and that long waisted style, that they sometimes copy at the present time, were very much in vogue. It was really a very horrible period in fashion.

K: Was it hard to wear that kind of dress to high school everyday?

H: No, I wore a lot of skirts, sweaters, and blouses. We didn't wear dresses to school that much. Fashions were not particularly attractive. I guess at that time they were, but they are horrible now as you look back on them.

K: What were high school dance like? Were they fun or did you ever go?

H: Oh, yes. I took in all the social events. They were fun and we had a very good time. Mostly, they were held in the gymnasium at the high school at that time and we always had a good time. Girls then, as now perhaps, were better dancers than the boys. At that time, boys were mostly just learning to dance when they were in high school and girls are (inclined to dance around more by themselves, so I suppose the girls were the better

dancers. There were a few good dancers that everyone like to dance with, but we had a very, very good time.

K: Do you remember what graduation day was like?

H: Well, I don't remember anything outstanding about graduation day, except it was in the early days of when you graduated from high school. Back in the early part of the century, graduating from high school was not a must, it was a privilege, I guess. I can remember that I always kind of towed the line, because I was always afraid that if I didn't my parents would take me out of school and I would have to go to work. I was the oldest of a large family. A lot of people went to high school for two years and then went to business college for a year and went to work. There was not the age limit that came on later. I felt a little privileged, being the oldest of a large family, that I had been privileged to graduate from high school.

K: What year was that?

H: 1926.

K: Did you ever go to a sporting event?

H: Football games. I came to Niles in the spring of 1922 and started to go to football games in the fall. I went into high school then, into what is now the ninth grade. I started to go to football games and, of course, the rivalry between Warren and Niles has always been very great, and in those days was even greater--Warren Harding High School and Niles. I started to go to the football games that fall, the fall of 1922, and to this day I have never missed a Warren-Niles football game that has been played. I'm a great high school football fan.

K: Did you have cheerleaders?

H: Oh, yes.

K: Were they guys or were they girls?

H: Both. We had a boy and a girl always.

K: From high school you graduated and went to Youngstown?

H: I went to Youngstown to night school. I started to work the summer I graduated from high school and by fall or

late summer I worked for a photographer here in Niles for a short time. He had come to the school and asked for someone to set up a bookkeeping system for him. I worked for him for a little while and then I worked at a small industrial plant for awhile. Then I went to my church to be secretary of the church, and I stayed there until about 1930. Right after the Depression started, just before the banks closed, I think that was in 1930 or 1929. Then I went to work for the Metal Products Company for Niles, for Jerome Franklin of Youngstown, and I worked there until I was married.

K: Would you mind telling the tape about Youngstown not being Youngstown State University when you went there?

H: When I went to Youngstown, it was the YMCA School in Youngstown. It was know as the YMCA School. They were located in two buildings. I think one may have been torn down, right on the corner where they are now of Wick Avenue and I don't remember the name of that street. One building is still there, right on the corner, the original house that was there. There were two old houses and the original house was there, but it was torn down, and that building that is on that corner was built. That was the administration buiding and the other building housed the classrooms. I think that is still standing, I had not noticed lately.

K: What was the curriculum at that time?

H: Well, it was a liberal arts school, and they had a law school, and they had accountants courses. I know because I was in that, and I know they had law and liberal arts.

K: You had to quit school because of the Depression, can you tell me a little bit about that?

H: Well, it just became impossible for me to continue to ride back and forth to Youngstown. In the meantime, my family moved back to Youngstown but I stayed here in Niles to work. You had to ride the bus and I would get down from work and go to school until 10:00 and come back. It was just too expensive. I had to help with my family.

K: What was the reaction to the Depression in the Niles area, just in the city?

H: Niles had gone through a couple of periods of

depression. We have a General Electric Glass Plant here, and not too many years before, just before we moved to Niles, they had put in the machines to blow the glass for the bulbs at the Niles Glass Plant and all of the glassblowers were laid off. Niles experienced having a good many of their well-paid people--it was a well paid trade--out of work and some of those glassblowers never did go back to work again. Then, Niles was full of rolling mills. I think there was the Thomas Mill, Mahoning Valley Steel, Waddell Street, and Empire Steel. These plants were all rolling mills. The rollers were very highly paid, highly skilled people, and when the plants all went down, many of these rollers never went back to work again either. It was not a very diversified community; this was about what we had, the glass plant. . . So over a period of ten, fifteen, twenty years prior to the Depression, Niles had experienced some depression of its own because of this. At that time and for many years, we remained at about 16,000 people. Not until about fifteen years ago did we begin to grow at all. The census, I think, will show that over a long, long period we just remained at about 16,000.

K: What effect did it have on the commerce within the city?

H: Most of our merchants in the city, it seemed to me, were able to get through the Depression. There were enough people who had made very good money and were able to save enough. I don't remember any stores ever closing because of the Depression. People were not buying very much but they were able to struggle along some way or other. They were mostly businesses that had been there for a long time and there was not too much in the way of closing businesses. We did get to the place where we had soup lines. There were people who did not have enough money to eat. There were no social service agencies of any kind that were giving any kind of relief. The only relief was that the people that did have, donated their time and effort. I don't remember whether the city itself or. . . I'm sure the government didn't step in and do anything very much. I don't remember that soup kitchens were subsidized, but people just struggled and managed and got along and helped everyone else. I have some friends whose mothers were cooking at the soup kitchens, and many people were eating just what was given to them from soup kitchens. People were generous. Those who had, gave. It was a very difficult time for everybody. It didn't seem to me that we didn't have any of the social problems that we now have connected with people being out of work.

K: Where were the soup kitchens located? Do you remember?

H: I don't know. They made soup up here at this junior high school because I remember them talking about going up there, and there was one downtown someplace where they would go and get it. I don't know where the soup kitchens were--I think probably through the churches mostly.

K: How did you meet you husband?

H: I was working at the Metal Products Company on Erie Street in Niles, and my husband came to Niles from Toledo to work at the Stevens Metal Products which was across the street. He came while I was on vacation. I came back from vacation and I would have to meet the new man across the street; and I did, and that was it.

K: Love at first sight?

H: Pretty much. We were married, I think that was the summertime, August perhaps, and we were married a year from next February.

K: Did you have a big wedding?

H: No, a small wedding in a home. Some of the members of my family were there, the older ones, and a few friends, probably thirty people.

K: Did you have a reception type thing?

H: No, we were married in the home, and yes, we had a dinner.

K: You said your husband was with the Army. What effect did that have on you as a couple.

H: Well, my husband left for the service in 1941 and I was here with Bill Jr. and Mary Lou. Bill Jr. went to military school that year. Then the next year he went into the service. In the meantime, his father had gone overseas. He left here and was gone for forty-two months in the South Pacific, before he came back after the war was over in Japan.

K: What did you during that time?

H: I lived here and I went to work at Lordstown Ordnance Depot after Bill Jr. went to school and went into the service. I had my husband, my son, five brothers, a sister, and three brother-in-laws in the service at one time.

K: Who came back, did everybody?

H: They all came back.

K: What was your job over at Lordstown?

H: I was in the personnel department.

K: What happened to Niles during the war, will all the men gone? There were a lot of men gone. . .

H: Well, I don't remember. . . Yes, men were gone from everywhere. I don't remember that anything particular happened, I was busy. I was leaving town six days a week and going out to Lordstown. But again, people just managed. Everybody, almost everybody, had someone in the service in their family. Of course, everyone was working and I don't remember that anything unusual happened in the community.

K: What was Niles like after the war?

H: I suppose it was like most any town. People came back, and after the war there is an adjustment period that people have to go through. They have to make adjustments in their work world. If they had been working before, then, by law, they could get their job back. There were many, of course, that came back who had never worked. So, it was a lot of people coming back and I suppose that the. . . Getting to work, I don't remember that it was a particular depression area, but there were a lot of people who didn't go to work immediately. Although, there seemed to be plenty of work in the area and eventually they did. There is always a terrific adjustment period, not only for the individuals but for the community, for industry, for anything after a war that lasted this long and people were gone as long.

K: How did you get to Lordstown from Niles?

H: I drove back and forth everyday.

K: When did you get your first car, when did you have it?

H: When I married Bill, he always had a car.

K: Do you remember what kind it was?

H: At that time, it was a Desoto.

K: How much was gas? Was it rationed?

H: Gas was rationed. It was around. . . I think gasoline on my recollection, was always around 30¢ or 32¢, something like that. Gas was rationed, you only had. . . I had enough to get back and forth to work. I had to take other people, in order to provide transportation for people that worked in Lordstown, but I had ration stamps. Aside from that, I think you only got four gallons a week or two weeks. I know you had four gallons that you could drive to go to the store and do the things that you wanted to do, which was very little. They would give you enough to get you back and forth to work.

K: What kind of stores were in downtown Niles?

H: All our stores were full. We had dress shops, and we always had a very good Woolworth Five and Dime here. We had a racket store; Rubenstein's, well it was like a Five and Dime. They had just a little bit of everything. We had grocery stores downtown. There were sporting goods stores, a sporting goods store. There was. . . Almost anything you wanted you could get downtown in Niles--a large department store, not a large one, but for Niles it was a fairly good sized one. You could buy anything you wanted in downtown Niles. Once in a while you might feel the need to go to Youngstown. Some people went to Warren to shop, but you could get everything you wanted right downtown in Niles.

K: Did you make most of your clothes during this time?

H: Most of my life I made most of my clothes.

K: Did you get the patterns at Woolworth's or. . .

H: No, Hoffman's Store was here and you could get any pattern that you wanted there and any yard bits that you wanted, and it was adequate.

K: Did most people make their clothes, do you think?

H: No, not a lot of people made their clothes. There were a number of people who made their living making clothes for other people. This was in the early days of the ready-made clothing. It wasn't that many years before; twenty years before that there were not very many ready-made clothes. Then in the late 1800's and at the turn of the century, I think most clothes were made by

hand. I think a lot of people still sewed, a lot of people still liked to have their clothes made. I sewed mine because of necessity because I didn't have very much money to come and go on. I know my mother sewed for other people, so there were still a great many clothes made by hand.

K: What were the 1950s like?

H: I think they were pretty good times. In the meantime, Niles had undergone quite a change. The rolling mills had closed down and, as I said, our industry was not very diversified. Niles began to get other types of smaller plants in, and they were really pretty good time. It was in the late 1950s that Niles began to grow a little bit, but it never has been a community that has attracted people coming into the area, like when people came into Lordstown and people have come into the area. It isn't a community that attracts a great many of them. I suppose part of that is our reputation and I never could understand why, but for a long time there was not too much building in Niles. There was a lot of building in the 1950s. I think Niles was a fairly prosperous community, at that time.

K: So, it was almost a town bypassed.

H: It really was, it really was a town that was bypassed.

K: Was it too far to drive, was that maybe the . . .

H: Well no, because it isn't really very far. I don't think. . .As I said we really did have a reputation from the Prohibition days, and it was looked upon by a great many as the other side of the tracks. The people here, many old, old families are very loyal to one another. Those of us who live here like it very much. We have not as many false standards as a lot of communities, and people are accepted pretty much for the same basis. We do have an element, a foreign element here, that took many years to overcome. When I was in high school, the parents of the people that I went to high school with were not English speaking, for the most part. From that time on they began to be ambitious for their children to graduate from high school and to go to college.

That part of the community changed a great deal. Niles grew, it seems. Someone came here and established a foundry, so a lot of Welsh people came into the community to work in the foundry. Then the community

began to grow a little bit and other industries came in; they put the railroad through, and when the railroad went through a lot of Irish came here to lay the railroad. Then the mills began to work, the plants began to work. We had the Niles Fired Brick and a number of places, and it was a very good spot for a great many people who were immigrating to this country to come to live, and they did.

I suppose today that the background of fifty to sixty percent of the people in Niles is just a generation or two removed from some foreign country. For the most part, I think that we have come to live together very well. We understand one another, and I think we get along extremely well. We don't have an area in this town that is ethnic in anyway. We all seem to be a family.

K: What was the reaction to the 1960s, because Niles is kind of a quiet town I would think?

H: The 1960s, I can't think of what might have happened in the 1960s.

K: I guess, mostly the rise or the rebelliousness of teenagers then.

H: We had an element of that here, perhaps not as great as in larger communities, but we had it. The people here are the same as they are everywhere else. Percentagewise, though, being a small community, percentagewise it's very small. A community like Cleveland, you know, a few thousand people who became hippies and so forth spread around and made a great deal of noise. Here, we might have had a few, but it didn't get the notoriety. Percentagewise, probably about the same as anyplace else. But we went through that along with the rest of the world, not as bad though. We didn't have the real bad hippie situations that they had in New York and in those places, nothing like that.

K: What happened to the downtown area?

H: When the mall came to Niles. . . Well, in the first place, they were small stores and as business began to grow and be taken over by larger stores and larger places, it became difficult to maintain a small store to compete with the prices and so forth. Then they built the Eastwood Mall in the 1970s and that did a great deal to do away with the stores that we had in Niles. Small businesses just do not have the chance to compete

against large stores like JC Penney's, Sears and Robuck, Montgomery Ward, and these places. You just can't compete in the type of thing that you sell everyday to housewives and for households in a small community. The small businessman just went out.

We were a town that was full of wonderful, small grocery stores with wonderful service, much better service than you would receive in the markets today and much finer quality goods than you would receive in the markets today. You really haven't much choice anymore when you go into the large markets to buy. I suppose that this is what is wrong. The large conglomerates buy these places and it is simply a business proposition as far as they are concerned. They don't care what they sell to the public, and it is very difficult today to find quality merchandise.

I do very little shopping in the stores, I have come to shop in small shops outside of the community. I send away for things because I have very little choice. I have the choice of going into Carlisle's or Strouss Hirshberg's, either out here at the mall or down in Youngstown. Other than that, there are very few quality places, even moderate quality, no high quality places, in the area that you can buy things.

K: So, definitely the quality of goods was a lot better in small. . .

H: Oh, I think so. You could get a better quality. I have difficulty buying the kinds of casual clothes that I want, because you can't go into a store today. . . You used to be able to go into Strouss', Livingston's, Abraham's, McKelvey's in Youngstown, and they all had a different line of merchandise. You had a choice. Today, you don't find much better choice at Carlisle's and Strouss' than you do in Sears or one of the old line cheaper stores, and the merchandise in those stores is not cheaper. By cheap, I don't mean just exactly price, but goods that have some quality to them.

You don't go into the grocery stores today and find high quality foods on the shelves. You find their own personal line that they have, and most of them are not good. You have difficulty finding quality foods. I am having difficulty at my store. They sell their own brand of food and I don't like it and I won't buy it. I have difficulty finding the things I want. All these companies used to be in every commercial area and there

was a competition. They came around and there was competition as far as prices are concerned; there was competition as far as quality. You weren't selling it if you didn't have quality foods. Now, the type of merchandise that you buy in most of these places is what we used to be able to buy in the bargain basements of the good stores. You just don't find that.

K: Did you also enjoy the fact that it was personal, the personal service of the grocer? Did they know you?

H: Yes, you enjoyed that because you enjoyed them. They were people you knew, they were friends of yours. I also enjoyed the fact that I knew I was getting what I was paying for. I wasn't going to be cheated by these people. I would say today that you really don't get any type of service to be grateful or otherwise for, in any store that you go in. It is a chore to go into a store; you stand in line to get out, it is very impersonal, and you get no help through the store.

When you go into a department store and tell them what you are looking for, you are lucky if you can find a clerk that can tell you the department that you can find it in. You go to a rack and you don't have anyone help you find what you want; they don't even put the sizes on top of the rack anymore. So, you have to stand there and go through and by the time those things have been mauled 100 times or so they are, as far as I am concerned, merchandise that has been used rather badly. You can't find anything, and if you do find a rack with something, there will be one in every color and every size in the same style. There is nothing that gives you any incentive to want to dress up and be any different.

K: Can you describe what Hoffman's was like?

H: It was a delightful store. They had a little bit of everything in the way of dried goods. One of the delightful things was that it was a store that still had a, for all the years it was there, type of change thing that you put on a little wire and sent up to the cashier and then they sent your change back. But, if you wanted to get: a child a pair of socks, a yard of material, a bath towel, a sheet, a spool of thread, embroidery floss, a shirt for your husband, a dress for yourself, a hat or wallpaper, it was all there. You could find something.

K: Was the cost of merchandise expensive for the time?

H: No, it was a very moderately priced store that had fairly good merchandise. It wasn't top rate, but it was an average.

K: When did Hoffman's burn?

H: I don't remember what year that burned. It must have burned in the 1940s or 1950s--in the 1950s sometime, maybe. I'm not very good at remembering dates.

K: Was it a shock?

H: A tremendous shock. I think it was really the beginning of it running downhill of the downtown section. It was never replaced as a department store. Rubenstein's went out of business, which was kind of a little racket store. Then it seemed just one after the other. . . At one time we had a couple of good hardware stores downtown; the hardware stores disappeared. It got to the place where we had a couple of men's clothing stores, the Five and Dime, a couple furniture stores, and a lot of bars. That was about the downtown section.

K: What is Niles like in 1984?

H: Well, I have been here so long and I like it so well. I think it is still a delightful place to live. In many ways we are fortunate. It is hard for some of the older people to become adjusted to the idea that there isn't a downtown section as it used to be and that people do their shopping at the Eastwood Mall, and in the plaza that is there, and in the surrounding area. I personally hate the mall because I think it is big and you have to cover too much territory. I am not a shopper, I never was. The Woolworth store there is not to be compared to the type of Woolworth store we had down here where you could go in, in a few minutes, and buy those little, tiny things that you wanted around the house and so forth. It is a real chore to go into any of them. They are not convenient. When you find what you want. . . They are big; you have a long walk and I do not walk very well because I am arthritic, and I just hate them.

The older people probably will never become adjusted; young people have grown up in this type of thing. I don't like to go into stores where things are all packaged. I want to look at what I am getting. You can't do that anymore. Everything is packaged and it is almost impossible to go out and buy things that are

things that are good. There are many, many more things for sale. For instance, if you want a toy there are piles of them. If you want something, once you find it in the store. . . I find this type of shopping very frustrating and I do not like it, never will like it. I do very little of it, and if it is something I really want, then I send someplace where I know I am going to get quality merchandise.

K: Do you think Niles has kind of declined and has come back several times in its decline? At this moment, do you think it is going to come back out of the slump that this whole area is in?

H: Yes, I think Niles will come back fairly well. The one thing about a small community, though, that is very difficult is that small industry has a very difficult time existing today. But, I think for small industry, that Niles is the type of place that would really be a haven because that is what we exist on. I hope we never get any bigger, any great big plans. I want it to remain a small community. I think children need to be raised in a small community. There is a tendency today to herd everything into great, big places and as individuals you are just not an individual. I think we are pushing to that end in many areas. It is the same thing that is true with out schools. They fight for smaller classes but they are still a part of a very large school. In a large school you don't really become very much of an entity, you are sort of part of the whole blob. I don't think this is good. I hope Niles remains. . . Well, we are pretty well hemmed in. We never can grow very far because we have Warren on the north. We can grow out to the west a little bit, but we can't grow east or south. So, we will always remain a small community.

K: I guess you would say that Niles is a typical, small town in the USA, wouldn't you?

H: I would say it was a typical, small town in an industrial area. It is not a typical, small, rural community because we are not rural, but it's a typical, small, industrial town.

K: It has gone through all the changes.

H: Very much so.

K: Just like the country, I guess you would say.

H: Yes, we have gone through them all and weathered them all. I think Niles people will adjust. Instead of thinking that you have to go down Robbins Avenue, go downtown--what we call downtown in Niles--people will do anyway, go that way to shop, you drive.

One of the things that I think is a great handicap to Niles, and to the area, is public transportation. I also know that public transportation is a real problem because there aren't that many people who want to use public transportation. It is not a very profitable thing. I have never been able to understand why these bus companies don't come up with small buses, rather than these great big buses that they never fill. Why don't they use small buses and provide a few trips a day into a community? For instance, Warren is Trumbull County's county seat and there is no public transportation from Niles to Warren. Most people drive where they want to go. We are like the rest of the country, on wheels, and I guess you don't have to have. .

K: Were the buses used a lot when they were here, when you like. . .

H: At one time they were the main. . . I can remember many times going to Youngstown and having to stand on the bus all the way home, they would be so crowded. People used the buses up until the war, I guess.

K: There was a lack of cars in general, is that why?

H: Yes, more people began to get automobiles and drive. This was what everybody wanted, a little car to drive. Roads improved, and so forth, and it just did away with it. I realize it is not profitable, but it is also a handicap to a community like this in case. . .

K: About the "Strip", how do the residents of Niles feel about the 422 area?

H: Well, I think they are rather proud of the 422 area in many respects. It offers the finest selection of outstanding restaurants of anyplace, that I know of, in the country. There are excellent places to eat. I think that this makes it an outstanding area. You can get anything to eat at almost any price range that you want. Many of them are chains, but many of them are individually owned. The fine ones are individually owned and they're very good; they are outstanding.

I think that there is a sense of pride that the mall is in Niles, that we have it. We went to a great deal of trouble to get it from Warren, but I think it has been very worthwhile for us. I think, eventually, it will prove to be an asset, as far as the reputation of Niles is concerned. When I say I don't like the mall, I personally don't like it. Many people do, I suppose most people do. To me, it is just too big, and there is too much walking, and it is a handicap to me. It is an asset, of course, to have it here and have the stores in it that we have; it is very good.

K: You have mentioned, when we asked you questions about your background, that you worked with the Red Cross. How long have you worked with the Red Cross?

H: Thirty or thirty-five years.

K: What changes have you seen in the Red Cross, has there been any?

H: Yes, a lot of changes in the Red Cross. I wasn't too active in Red Cross before the war. I became active during the war, I guess, to some extent, until I went to work, then went back with it. There are many changes in the Red Cross. There was a time when the Red Cross took care of disaster and the service to the military families which are two things that they must do in any community to be a chapter.

Today, the Red Cross does a great many more things. They teach a great many things to a great many people. Their safety department and their volunteer department teach many courses in many things. They seem to step in and it is one organization, that I feel, that steps in and kind of picks up the slack where many other organizations can not reach or do not reach.

There have been a lot of changes. The Trumbull County chapter of Red Cross offers a great many services to the community. Of course, the one that everybody benefits from is the blood program. They have a very fine service to military families department and a very fine disaster department. Their service to military families is tops; it is outstanding in the state and in the (northeastern area for the programs that they have in teaching the handicap children to swim, teaching swimming, lifeguard training, boating training, CPR, and the first aid courses that they give. This has become a very great part of the Red Cross. They have branched

out and do a great many more things in the community than they used to do.

K: So, there has been a general improvement?

H: Yes, this is true in almost every Red Cross chapter. There are many that do not do all the things that we do here. This area is very fortunate. Youngstown has a very active Red Cross. Now that they have brought in the blood program there, they cover most of the same things that we do, but very active.

K: In your living in Niles, has the family unit changed a lot? Has it gone through. . .

H: Yes, the family unit here is changing like it is everywhere else, since women are working and out of the home. When I was first married you didn't work out of the home, unless it was an economic necessity. Many people are working today, and it isn't an economic necessity, except to have luxuries. Many people say they both have to work in order to make ends meet in a family. This is true because they are buying very expensive homes. And they haven't much choice in that either. If you want to buy a home and have one that's adequate for your family, they are very expensive. It is true that it is very difficult to get by, I suppose, on one salary. It can be done, but your wants have to be tapered accordingly. We have undergone the same type of changes that every community does when both parents are out of the home.

We have a pretty high percentage, though, of people who are in the home here. We are a middle class community and we don't have a lot of the striving to get more and have more, but you have that everywhere, to a large extent, and we have it here. I believe, in a smaller community there is a little bit more family cohesiveness than there is in large communities. Many people are becoming aware that this is a very important part of their life, and they are working very hard at it. Even those where both the mother and father work, they still are. . . Families are smaller, we do not have large families anymore. Parents, I think, are really trying very hard to give and provide for their children as they would like.

K: Do you think parents are trying too hard to provide, whereas maybe in the past, it was enough to be a family unit?

H: Well, just enough to be a family unit was pretty far in the past. You see, there was a generation that grew up that had it a little tough; those people who came through the Depression really did without anything. You didn't buy new clothes, you didn't get things, you just didn't have things. My mother sewed and I sewed, so I don't know that I experienced that part of it. There was just no money for anyone to do anything with. People grew up thinking, "My child is not going to have to put up with that," so, they bent over backwards. That was when we had the great surge that everybody had to go to college.

I think now that many people are realizing that everyone isn't cut out to go to college unless you want. College, instead of being considered something that is a status of some sort, should be considered training for whatever the person wants to do in their life. I think people are becoming more aware, because out of this, we came up with a generation of pretty spoiled kids. In the tail end of that were the hippies and this sort of thing. Now people are not going to do that. I think they are coming to the place where they realize that it is much more important to give children values than it is to give them things. I think there is a great trend in that direction, and there is a great many things directing people in that direction. Values are much more important than things.

K: Great.

END OF INTERVIEW