

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Salem Schools Project

Personal Experience

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MARGARET AND WILLIAM BAKER

Interviewed

by

James McNeal

on

November 3, 1975

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INTERVIEWEE: MARGARET AND WILLIAM BAKER  
INTERVIEWER: James McNeal  
SUBJECT: Childhood years in Salem schools, changes over time in the schools, and staff and education in general.  
DATE: November 3, 1975

M: This is an interview with Margaret and William Baker for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Salem Schools, by James McNeal, at 559 Euclid Street, Salem, Ohio, on November 3, 1975, at 3:30 p.m.

The first thing I would like to ask both of you, and Mrs. Baker if you would could respond first, is how and why you decided to go into education?

MB: I have always wanted to be a teacher as long as I can remember and when I was a little youngster I always played school and gathered all the small youngsters in the neighborhood who would play with me. I was the teacher. Also, my mother always wanted to be a teacher and never could and I think maybe that influenced me.

WB: I had no idea of becoming a teacher until I was a senior in college. Erik Eckler, who was the chairman of the English Department at Mount Union, asked me to tutor a couple of freshman boys who were students of his in freshman class. I discovered that I liked that and consequently by the spring of my senior year I was beginning to think seriously about teaching. After I graduated I took the necessary courses to enable me to have a teaching certificate. It wasn't of the type that lead immediately to a life certificate as they were called in those days. It was enough to enable me to start teaching.

M: Mrs. Baker, when and where did you receive your training in education?

MB: I started out in 1927 at Kent State. I had two years, in those days you could teach on two years. Then, I continued teaching and going to summer school at Ohio University for two more years. Well, not two years, enough to fulfill the requirement for two years. Then after that I took another year at the University of Minnesota in library work. I used my library work part time in Salem.

M: Mr. Baker?

WB: I didn't start my graduate work until I had been teaching for five years. The reason for that was that salaries were extremely low. I graduated from college in 1929 and by fall the Great Depression began. My beginning salary was \$1,025. By my fourth year of teaching the salary was down to \$904.75. Still, I was able to start graduate work in the summer of 1934 and I had several summers of graduate study. I had two leaves of absence, one for a semester and one for a full year. In which I completed the work for my M.A. and completed the course work for the PhD, which I never received after all. The war was the main thing that interfered with that. I spent three years in the Army Air Corps and Army Air Force. Soon after I came out of the Army I started to teach at the University of Pittsburgh. I taught there for six years, six and a half years, and then taught for, thereafter, at YSU.

M: Now back to you Mrs. Baker, how did you become involved with Salem and Salem Schools?

MB: Well, I was hired in Salem without even filling out an application blank when Mr. Allen was principal.

WB: Superintendent.

MB: Superintendent rather. I came and he offered me the position and it was about five or six years before I even filled out an application blank for Mr. Kerr. If I taught one year . . . I taught a half a year in Niles before I came to Salem and then I started in fifth and sixth grade at McKinley for one year. Mr. Allen came to me one afternoon and sat . . . On Friday afternoon and sat the whole afternoon and then when he was finished he offered me the job to teach English in the seventh grade in the junior high at that time.

M: So, somewhat of an evaluation.

MB: Yes, a half day evaluation.

M: We get about five minutes now; step in, step out, and fill the form out. Mr. Baker, I understand you have taught in the Salem Schools. How did that come about and when?

WB: Salem was my home and in the spring of 1929 I went to see Mr. Allen. He didn't know of any opening for the fall at that moment, but shortly after I began in my summer work at Mount Union he called me in and asked me to take a job teaching history in the junior high school. English was my major but I had a very strong minor in history.

M: When you say junior high school, this would have been the Fourth Street building?

WB: That is right.

M: You both mentioned Mr. Allen. You began to work toward the end of his tenure as superintendent.

WB: In the last two years of his tenure.

M: I'm curious, even though you would have worked for him for a relatively short time, did you know of him before or did you get to know him very well?

MB: I did. I went to school in Salem all twelve years and I knew him as a superintendent. When he walked into the room everybody stood and said, "Good morning, Mr. Allen," or, "Good afternoon, Mr. Allen," when he came to visit our rooms. He came regularly. He made visits regularly to our buildings. It was as a Salem background, with a Salem background, that I started in the Salem Schools too.

M: You are from Salem too?

MB: Yes, originally.

M: You mention having gone through Salem School. You both would have gone through Salem Schools.

WB: Not all together. I lived in Youngstown before for three and a half years and completed four and a half of schooling in that time there. I came back to Salem, or my family came back to Salem, when I was in the eighth grade. I can supplement what Mrs. Baker said about Mr. Allen's visits to the school. He had become superintendent when I was in second grade. A man named Johnson, whose first name I can't remember, had been superintendent here for a number of years. In 1913 he left Salem. I think he became the assistant superintendent of schools in Saint Louis after he left Salem, but I'm not sure. Mr. Allen seemed to have a kind of personal

acquaintance with virtually every pupil in the entire system. We came to feel that we knew him, although we were afraid of him, and he seemed to give indications that he was acquainted with us as well.

MB: Our high school principal was much like that too when I was in high school; Mr. Simpson, Fletcher Simpson. He died just recently. He named every graduate in a graduating class and there were 113. He named each one of us without any paper, or without any prompting, an entire graduation ceremony.

M: Since you both went through early grades, or you went through all the early grades and you went through several, do you have any recollections of the grade school buildings that you were in? Surely would have been in Columbia Street.

MB: I was in Columbia.

WB: I had my first three years in what was called the Pioneer Block. That was a building which is where Kelly's Sohio Station is now. The schools in Salem were crowded until the present Union High School was completed in 1917. Some of the elementary schools had portable buildings and in addition three rooms were on the second floor of the Pioneer Building that were used as classrooms. Fire escapes had been added to those rooms for the use of pupils. The three, really four teachers, because I had in those three years . . . Well, for the first grade Hiram Field. For the second grade Vernice Platt was the teacher but she became sick barely a month after the beginning of the school year. Miss Barkoff, I can't remember her first name now, substituted for the remainder of the year. Her father-in-law is Doctor Barkoff and her married name later was Mullons. For the third grade I had Frieda Smith, who later was an employee of the First National Bank for a great many years.

M: Do you have any recollections Mrs. Baker, even though you would have been quite young, of the Columbia Street School? Which, of course, is no longer with us like so many other structures.

MB: Yes, we had one portable at our building. Nobody wanted to go to the portable building. They said it was cold. I don't know, I didn't go to it. My first grade teacher was Emma Cook, Miss Emma Cook. She lived on west Eight Street for years. She was a rotund person and she treated us all like her own youngsters. Ella Snider, a rather famous teacher in our Salem Schools at that time, was the principal. She was a Miss Ella Snider. My mother had also gone to school with her. Didn't make any difference to her though, as far as the way she treated me. I think perhaps it was partly her influence

too that made me decide definitely to be a teacher. She was the sixth grade teacher. They had six grades and the seventh and eighth was the junior high at old Fourth Street Building. She used to have students tutor the other students who needed extra help and I got to tutor several different Salemites. The Corso brothers happened to be two that I helped tutor in my time in sixth grade, when I was in sixth grade. I can remember many of the things we used to have to do there that wouldn't be thought of nowadays. One of them was marching in the Armistice Parade. As youngsters we had to march through the streets of Salem and . . . Packed just so. Also, at the end of school we had a May Day festival that everyone took part in. They got us all out on Riley Field and two or three youngsters got up and led the exercises. The whole system, all of us youngster in the system, including high school, went through that one set of exercises. Then that . . .

WB: Cut the high school.

MB: What?

WB: At that time including only the seventh and eighth grades.

MB: That went through also through the first years of my teaching because I can remember when Mrs. Gale Harrium was one chosen from my room the first year I taught at McKinley. I was real happy because they had one of the youngsters to lead that program. They used to have May poles and we had to drill for weeks to get them to do everything just so-so for that program.

M: One thing again, staying with this topic of Columbia Street School, I recall as a youngster being abandoned and then, of course, I remember it being torn down, the A & P being built. I was never in that building. That is to me just an image like Fourth Street was for so many years as an abandoned building. Can you remember anything about the building inside as to how it looked or anything unusual about it?

MB: Well, it had four rooms on each floor and then the principal's office was on the second floor. It had a big open space in the center and it had fire places in each room. When it got to cold and the furnaces didn't work, which happened every once in awhile, they put fires in the fireplaces and we would all huddle around the fireplace. Then, it also had the wooden stair ways that the old junior high building had. I guess that is all I can remember about it.

M: Both of you have mentioned portables, of course that is a touchy topic the last few years. McKinley first and

then at the high school they had portables and over at prospect I believe. When you say portables, now we are talking about a good many years ago. What does portable mean in that context?

WB: Exactly what it means today.

MB: It is a little more substantial though, than the ones that we had at the high school recently. It was a wooden building with a foundation under it, more of a foundation under it than these things are that they have nowadays. Of course it did have its own heating system. It was not connected with the regular heating system.

M: This thing moved around or they built them on sight.

MB: They built them on sight.

M: This was all because of, again, the same situation today; just pressure of students and facilities.

MB: Yes.

M: That is interesting. Now, one other item having to do with school buildings and this has come about through other people I've interviewed and other tapes. There seems to be very strong feelings about the Fourth Street Building. I interviewed Frank Hoopes and he uses the expression that the Fourth Street Building had a personality. He is very, very sorry to have seen it torn down. I just wondered what your feelings are about that building. What do you remember of it and what impressed you about it? What feelings and thoughts you might have concerning it?

MB: I went to school there for two years and then I taught there for a number of years. There was a feeling there that there isn't in these hard brick and concrete buildings that they have nowadays. The old wooden floors seemed softer and the big windows and the bay windows made for much lighter rooms. Of course, there was more glass there than they put in any one building nowadays. Of course, the open floor, the open stairways, and the wooden stairways rocked when we marched out in step. We had fire drills. We also had to line up to march out to go home. We used to line up, align the youngsters up to go home. They had to march out two by two.

WB: In the first three years that we taught in the junior high school.

MB: Yes.

M: They did away with that later?

MB: Yes.

WB: Yes.

M: What accounted for that?

WB: A greater freedom of the greater flexibility according to pupils.

MB: The old building and the old steps used to rock when we would go down there and step in unison.

M: Changes like that came from the top down. Is that correct? Was it decided upon by superintendents or principals rather than pressure from beneath, which seems to be today responsible for so many changes?

WB: Yes.

MB: They didn't have nearly the pressure from beneath in those days, that we do nowadays. We were more contented to do things, extra things, and spend many extra hours without pay. Nowadays they either strike for more money or negotiate.

WB: Not necessarily.

M: Not yet anyway and I hope not.

MB: No, not strike in Salem but they do negotiate. We had clubs and all the other kinds of things that we never got paid for. We went Saturdays and we spent many extra hours working on those things where nowadays they get for a very. . . A club I had the last year I taught, I got \$50 for. I never would have gotten. . . Never got anything for the clubs that you sponsored or I sponsored in junior high. They had a club program there that had enough of clubs, and a variety of clubs, that they had almost everybody in some kind of an activity that met once a week on Friday afternoon. Well, you know Mrs. Kline?

M: Yes.

MB: She and I used to have a nature club, and she did the indoor work and I did the outdoor work. Every Friday afternoon the last period, I would take a carload of youngsters out to the woods somewhere; all boys or all girls. I never mixed them. We would go hiking while Mrs. Kline had an indoor program for them. I can remember frying peanuts a whole Saturday and then the youngster coming and begging them to sell. Mrs. Kline popped corn the whole Saturday and sacked it so we could raise \$10 to get Lindley Vickers to come bring his snakes and his program to the junior high for an assembly.



- M: Do you have any other recollections of interesting items like those that went on?
- MB: I can remember many of the youngsters come back nowadays and tell us what they remember on those hikes rather than what they remembered from your class. From my class I should say.
- WB: I have been interested in birds from the time I was a youngster. During most of my growing years the only people I knew who knew more about bird than I did were my mother and father. By the time I was a senior in college I knew more than they did. Still, it wasn't until my senior year in college that I really took fire when I met the young man who was a sophomore, who knew much more about birds than I did. His name was Amos Emilicker, who intended to become a professional ornithologist and who did become a professional biologist. One of the first purchases I made after I started to teach was a good pair of binoculars. Even during the first year I taught I would take small groups of youngsters on field trips. In the spring of my first year of teaching I took all six Seventh Grade sections out at six thirty in the morning. Not all the youngsters were interested in going out of course but I had a good many. I relatively quickly discovered that even with twelve year olds it wasn't a good idea to have boys and girls together. They made much more noise in mixed groups than they did in unmixed groups. So, I started taking only groups of girls or groups of boys with me. After Mr. Kerr became superintendent he asked me to sponsor a junior Autobon club, in which I did. Of course there I had youngsters who were likely to be much more interested in birds so that I didn't have the same kind of difficulty with boys and girls. I was able to take mixed groups of those youngsters without their making too much noise to be able to see the birds. I kept that up throughout the years that I taught in the junior high school; up to the time when I went into the Army.
- MB: We spent a good many Saturdays taking youngsters on field trips. I would take a lunch and we would spend the whole day. We didn't also have to take care of all the permits in those days, that we do nowadays when we take anybody off school property. I also can remember the time you helped the girl across . . . Carried the girl across creek and dropped her just before you got over into the water.
- WB: Only because my boots slipped on a slippery rock.
- M: I was going to ask the very thing that you touched on Mrs. Baker. About securing permits today to get a bus to go for a field trip, or leave town, or even go across

the street, requires all sorts of forms and red tape and permission and insurance considerations and what not. What all is involved in say the two of you, or either one of you, deciding that next Saturday you wanted to take some boys or some girls out? What would be the extent of the preparations?

MB: None, for you but nowadays there certainly would.

M: Yes, I mean in the past when you did do this.

MB: Oh, none whatsoever. Just parental permission and I can remember getting a little . . . What was Hanbone? How old was Hanbone when he went with us?

WB: About eight.

MB: He had a brother who was in our group or in your group. I don't remember.

WB: No, yours.

MB: My group was it. Alright, he had a brother and his brother didn't come on the trip but little Hanbone, eight years old, came with us. Most of the time, I suppose, they had parental permission. We didn't even know that for sure really.

M: If they showed up, they went.

MB: That is right. Who ever came, went, even Hanbone. He was one of the Allisons, by the way, that lived out on the hill out by Country Club. We got into all kinds of trouble after that though, poor Hanbone.

M: You mean Blackbird Hill, out that area of town?

MB: Well, the opposite side of the road. Behind the Hump Club.

M: Salem Heights area.

WB: Salem Heights, that is right.

M: Both of you have touched on another subject, an individual, Mr. Kerr. Again in the previous tapes that I have done, and in just conversations with so many other people, this name comes up. As it should I am sure. I would like to spend a few minutes if you would with your comments on Mr. Kerr. Your remembrances of him and you other thoughts or feelings about the gentlemen.

MB: Mr. Kerr was a very human superintendent and he was very considerate in case of illness. He made sure that you didn't come back to school before time. He took a very

personal interest in every teacher. More so than they do now. Now it is more or less of a package deal but he knew you personally and he worked with you where ever you needed help.

WB: My sentiments about the man echo hers. He was very human. He had a great deal of personality and simply by personality he often times could win teachers over to points of view that were diametrically opposed to their original views. You could disagree with him but you would never have any hard feelings against him and you were sure that he would not have any hard feelings against you for disagreeing with him. I could go back to one previous superintendent. William Hard, who was nicknamed Mike, who was the superintendent here for perhaps ten years before 1900. He was the author of a book on mushrooms. I don't know whether a copy of that book exists in the Salem Book Library but one does exist in the Mount Union Library. He discovered when he was superintendent that in Salem that a great many bohemi-ans, as he called them--Czechs--were interested in picking mushrooms to eat. Up to that time he thought that all mushrooms were poisonous. By having his interest awakened by these Salem people he became an authority on the subject. He too became an assistant superintendent of schools in Saint Louis after he left Salem. I think that he was Mr. Johnsons immediate predecessor.

MB: Where does Mr. Hard come into the picture? Was he a high school principal?

WB: No, superintendent.

MB: Superintendent. Well, is he the one that was related to Miss Heart?

WB: Hard, H-A-R-D.

MB: Heart, who was the one related to Maude Heart?

WB: Oh, that was Mr. Leese, who was the principal of a high school. You probably heard that his insane brother-in-law shot and killed him while he was a principal here.

M: I understand that from other teachers that--since you have mentioned what you were paid the first few years--that negotiations with Mr. Kerr was a one-on-one situation. That you worked with him in determining individual salary. Am I correctly informed on that?

WB: No, there was a salary schedule but it wasn't a single salary schedule. The junior high school was classified by the state as simply as a departmentalized elementary school. So, no matter how much training you had had you were still paid on the elementary school basis. This

was changed, I think, during, or just after, the end of the Second World War.

M: Any other recollections about . . .

WB: When I started, the maximum salary in the elementary and junior high school was \$1,500. It reduced to \$1,200 during the Depression. The maximum in the senior high school was \$2,000, reduced \$1,500 during the Depression. Even after I had had three years of graduate school I was still paid on the same basis as elementary teachers.

M: If teachers have anything to complain about today, they should have had plenty to complain about then. That was it.

MB: Yes, but we still went to school. Even though we had all of \$900 the first year I payed board at home and still saved enough to keep on going to school. Of course that was the times. Other things weren't as expensive in those days either. Of course, I went to a state school that didn't require the tuition that some of the other schools did.

M: Just a general question--which you can respond to during any particular time period you wish to or under any circumstances that you were involved in any particular building--was there a chance to get to know staff members? Was there a comradery, let's say, among the staff and the various buildings as you taught at different locations and at different times? Staff seem to get along together? Was there a common ground among those staff members?

MB: There was in the junior high. We had regular parties and wiener roasts and we had a general good time, and had general good feeling among us as a rule. Also, in the junior high . . . Of course when you got to high school we were a larger group and we were not as friendly. You didn't know everybody like you did in the junior high and the . . . Well, just the junior high.

WB: There were only twelve teachers in the junior high school at the first year that I taught. The principal taught a full load in addition to being the principal of the school. So that it was easy to become acquainted with the teachers. Two of the teachers in the junior high school when I started teaching--Ann Connors and Effie Cameron--had taught there in the half years that I had attended during my eighth year of school. The first year I taught there was only other man teaching in that school; Walter Regal. The second year that I taught there we had increased that to three with the advent of Herbert Kelley. As the years passed there gradually became an increase to the ratio of men to women.

M: On my conversations with Laura Mae Whinnery just this week . . . Well, I'm sorry, last week. Of course the major reason for talking to her was to go over the history of the Quaker and the publishing of the various school papers and what not. Did either of you have anything to do with that, I guess we could call it, extracurricular business? Either the paper or the school yearbook?

MB: Yes, we had a school yearbook in junior high in those days. It was called The Mirror and Effie Cameron was . . .

WB: No, not The Mirror, that was when you were . . .

MB: Oh, that was when I was as a pupil. What was it called then?

WB: Quakerette.

MB: Quakerette, and Effie sponsored it for awhile. She was the eighth grade teacher and I taught seventh grade. I worked with her then. Then, various people sponsored it. Mrs. McCarthy sponsored it for a good number of years. She was then, she is Mrs. Seagal now. I always helped with it. I never sponsored it outright. We published it about three or four times a year.

WB: At least that.

M: Published monthly?

MB: No, it was by holiday usually. Usually for each holiday we had . . . We would start out with Halloween and then Thanksgiving and then Christmas issue and then Valentine's and then Easter at the end of year. It was a manual like affair because I remember trying to get the covers that were appropriate for the season.

WB: In the beginning this was simply mimeographed. By the time that she entered her junior high school career it was partly mimeographed and partly letter pressed with photographs in the letter press section.

M: Did you have involvement in any another extra curricular activities? You mentioned the hobby area with the Friday afternoon hobby sections. We touched on the Quakerette or junior high versions of the same. You mentioned The Mirror, you say when you were in school?

MB: Yes, it was a magazine that they put out. It was printed.

WB: It was letter pressed.

MB: Well, I don't know enough about printing but it was printed and it also contained pictures I believe. It wasn't published as regularly as the old Quakerette was. It was more or less an annual at the end of the year.

M: When you say it was published while you were in school, does this mean junior high, high school?

MB: Junior high. It was seventh and eighth grade junior high in those days too. I don't know when that first started in Salem, the separation of seventh and eighth grade into junior high. We had departmentalized work to do as a student.

WB: That started in Salem in 1917, at the time the present junior high school building was completed. It was one of the earliest so called junior high schools in the United States. It seems to me that there was only one other school system that had used the departmentalized seventh and eighth grade or seventh, eighth, and ninth grade system at all.

MB: We used to get quite a number of teachers who came to visit to see what the system was like. I can remember even as a student we had a good many visitors, other teachers from other systems around us, to observe what was going on in our junior high.

WB: Up to that time the pupils, even in the eighth grade, had only a single teacher, except for as such auxiliary teachers as the music supervisor and drawing and writing supervisor. When I started to school in Salem in 1912, Grace Orr was the music supervisor. Miss Helen Lowry was the art and writing supervisor. When I returned to Salem in the eighth grade Miss Orr, of course, was still music supervisor and I don't believe that there was a writing supervisor at that time. At least if there was, she did not visit the junior high school. By the time I started to teach in the junior high school Mrs. Annie Sapp, S-A-P-P, was the sister of Grace Orr, was the writing and art supervisor for the elementary grades and the junior high school grades.

M: You say writing supervisor, now what function did she perform?

WB: She would visit the school each period, better say it that way. In the writing workbooks that youngsters use she would assign certain lessons to be worked on in homeroom periods, under the supervision of the homeroom teacher, for the next week or two weeks.

MB: Good old Zinger-Blosser Copy Books.

M: Are those the ones that I made into little . . .

WB: That is right.

M: . . . Circles and Circles to make A's and O's. I remember those at prospect in elementary grade with Edith Goodman and I think her name was Janet Thomas even up through fifth grade we still had those. That would be in the mid-1950's. They have done away with that to some extent. I think it just began to blossom and show the results of that in some of the handwriting that you can see in the seventh grade and on through.

MB: They teach them, I think, to print nowadays to start off with. They taught us some script right from the very beginning. We used to have to go to the blackboard and they would have the spaces gone on the blackboard, the lines. We used to have to make our ovals on the blackboard and some of our other exercises that we practiced in those famous copy books.

M: You both had a goodly number of years in many of the buildings in the Salem school system over those years. Just a question on some general thoughts any of you might have, what changes were apparent to you so far as I say attitude? I mean attitudes with regard to administration, staff members, other teachers that you worked with, attitudes of students, changes in dress, changes in speech. Both of you, of course, are very much involved with the English aspect of education. Would you care to speak to that, that is a wide topic? Changes over the years in any or all of those areas.

MB: Student attitude has been the most noticeable change. In the early days when a teacher reprimanded a student or corrected him, he went home . . . He begged that they wouldn't tell his parents because if you spanked him in school he would get another spanking at home. The parents also cooperated to a greater extent than they do now. They had much more respect for a teacher. He was looked up to and respected in the community. Nowadays you are just one of the mob. The parents are ready to fight for their youngsters when you ask them to write a story and correct it even. They say, "Well, it is what the youngster wants to write, it isn't what you want him to write or the way you want him to write it." It is what he wants and that is what counts.

WB: I doubt that you ever spanked anyone. I know that I never spanked any youngster. I did have to shake youngsters occasionally. The principal kept a paddle on which had been printed in pencil, "Love conquers all things." Which, presumably, was an acclimation against using the paddle because occasionally she did use it. She used it much less, I know, than her successor did.

Harold Williams was her successor, he later became the principal to the high school. Harold Williams's successor was Beeman Ludwig, who also became the principal of the high school. Beeman Ludwig's successor was Loren Early, who became the Dean of Boys in the high school and later superintendent of schools in Lisbon and in a number of other communities. The principal always had another teacher come into his office to witness any physical punishment administered to the youngster. Such punishment was never given to girls.

MB: I can remember shaking the buttons of the fronts of two or three big boys. I couldn't lift them up but I could shake the button off. Then I asked the boy the next morning if he told his mother how he lost the buttons on his shirt. He said, "No, I was afraid to."

M: What about other changes that you noticed over the years? I mentioned a number of areas; dress, speech, not only attitudes of students but attitudes, let's say, of staff and administration.

WB: In those days, of course, girls didn't wear pants. Except for school pants, in which they removed when they reached school. Boys were ordinarily expected to be presentable in the school. When I was in the junior high school, a pupil in the junior school and in the senior high school here, boys always wore neckties. This was a custom that began to be relaxed during the Depression. Youngsters who came to school in extremely worn cloths were frequently given clothes by the board of education. The principals also asked for donations of clothing for youngsters who needed clothes. The presentation of the clothes was always done in such a manner that, other youngsters, they would not know that the pupils clothes were donated. So, by in large, the clothing of youngsters was pretty well taken care of.

MB: I can remember a youngster coming to school in the spring with a dress that I had discarded in the fall; wearing the same dress that I had had on because I had given some of my clothing, used clothing, to some of the youngsters.

M: I understand that practice of making clothing, so forth, available still goes on. Of course, there are more agencies now that . . . In talking with Dean Phillips, this type of thing still does go on.

MB: That is right.

M: The school doesn't necessarily provide the funds or the actual articles, that there are other agencies now that take care of that sort of thing.



MB: That is correct.

M: So, it has been the case for a good many years then.

MB: That and some of the dental programs. The various clubs in town have sponsored dental programs for the students from time to time. I don't know whether there is a dental program right now but I know that at one time clubs, certain service clubs, gave money for the dental program. I think too, the speech of the youngsters has changed greatly over the years. They used to be interested in speaking more properly, more formally. When you tried to teach them that they were interested in learning that. Nowadays some of them, even though they are in an English class, couldn't care less the way they speak. Of course, I noticed a big change in their language among the students standing in the halls, at the door in the halls. In the high school is a shocking experience nowadays compared to what used to be when you stood in the halls and listened to the other students or the students passing in the older days.

WB: Of course, in regard to language practice, fifty years ago when we were teaching youngsters to use an old fashioned grammar that was really out worn. Formal grammar in English didn't come into existence until the middle of the 1700's. Because there was no English grammar, the early "grammarians" believed that Latin grammar should be the model for English grammar. As a result there were certain prohibitions crept into the use of English that had no precedent in history.

M: We talked about changes in school policy coming from the top down and the bottom up. I wonder, if in the general sense, changes in language must come from the common use of the words and misuse, and eventually over time become standardized and acceptable. Would that not be correct?

WB: That is right, because language isn't a static thing at all. It changes. Now, a person living in the 17th century suddenly transported into the 20th would be able to communicate. It would be with some difficulty because words change their meanings over the . . . Long ago and fashions in speech change too. We are likely to pick up a phrase such as, "At this point in time," and it becomes a part of the language for a little while. Then perhaps is dropped as suddenly as it began. By in large the language of 1975 is pretty much what it was in 1925.

M: I keep thinking now in terms of high school years--this all ties in with English and use of words and students speaking correctly--that is the area of debate. I know Mr. Guyler, for example, was very much involved with that and I know now that there is absolutely no involve-

ment with debate. Do either of you or both of you have any recollections of the debate organization in the high school, Salem High School.

MB: It is taken care of in the speech department. They do have . . . They have had debates, even within the last four or five years, depending on who the speech teacher was. That is part of their speech program but not carried on to the various debates for the various schools, like we used to do.

M: I understand Mr. Guyler took debate teams all around the state and out of the state. It was quite a large undertaking. Where today, as you say, it is more or less engraved inside one building and part of a regular curricular area. Well, you both had rich teaching experiences. Perhaps Mrs. Baker more so from actual number of years in the Salem school system.

MB: And actual number of students handled. (laughter)

M: I envy your university position. I often wonder after ten years of teaching public school whether or not twenty years from now, when I am fifty-three instead of thirty-three, and the students are still twelve, that that might not begin to take its toll. I guess I will have to find out. Mrs. Baker, on one final item if we could. You eventually wound up at the new high school. Would you care to speak to any thoughts or feelings about the differences in that particular environment as far as your teaching there and your last years of teaching?

MB: Yes, I went into the senior high school as a part time librarian. Which I hadn't done for about fifteen years because I had been just an English teacher. Then gradually, when Mr. Paul Smith the superintendent left, they eased me back into the English field; just teaching English. Then, when Miss Thorp left they drafted me as chairman of the English Department. I spent seven years as chairman of the English Department before I left and I enjoyed it very much. I enjoyed working with the members of the English Department. We had our agreements and disagreements and yet we did accomplish quite a few things. We went through two North Central evaluations. We wrote two different curriculums and we also introduced the semester program to seniors and juniors and probably, if I had stayed on, I had hoped . . .

WB: Senior elective program.

MB: Yes. If I had stayed on we hopefully would have gone down . . . Taken that elective program down into the sophomore and freshman. In some schools, of course,

they do it in seventh and eighth grade also. I don't know if I agreed with that part of it but I would liked to have seen it into the sophomore and freshman classes. I don't know what they will do now. I enjoyed it over all. Of course, I wouldn't have stayed in a program if I hadn't enjoyed it. There were too many other things you could do. Of course, forty-five years is a long time and a good many students have gone through the mill in that length of time.

M: I was one of them.

MB: Yes sir, but many people in Salem have been.

M: Well, Mr. Baker and Mrs. Baker, I would like to thank you very much. I thank you first of all for permission to let me come and talk with you and thanks most of all for your time this afternoon.

END OF INTERVIEW