

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Remembrances of Lisbon

Personal Experience

O.H. 1165

MARY NICHOLAS

Interviewed

by

Gene Krotky

on

January 25, 1988

MARY NICHOLAS

Mrs. Mary Nicholas, born in 1917 has been a life-long resident of Lisbon, Ohio. In addition she is a descendant of Jonathan Lodge, one of the early settlers of New Lisbon (Lodges were farmers). This gives her both first-hand knowledge of the period 1925-1950 and present, and knowledge of the folklore and stories of earlier generations.

During the Great Depression, Mary worked part-time with relief programs in this county. She recalls that "Life in Lisbon didn't change all that much. We were always on the poor-side."

In 1944 and 1945, Mary worked at a brass plant in Lisbon that was experimenting with various types of caps for shells. She remembers some of her friends being bussed to the Ravenna Arsenal daily. Baking cookies and making up packages of fruit, cookies, etc. to send to friends overseas took up much of her spare time.

As an active member of the Methodist Church, Mary has been able to provide a narrative of the importance religion/church attendance, and other related social issues that affected the life of the villagers.

Mary is still active in village life as a member of the Lisbon Historical Society, the Methodist Church and several other social groups. She is also beginning to write a narrative of her memories of Lisbon and its residents.

K: This is an interview with Mary Nicholas for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Remembrances of Lisbon project, by Gene Krotky, at Lisbon, Ohio, on January 25, 1988, at 7:00 p.m.

One of the first things I would like you to tell me about is what are the earliest memories you have of your parents and your family?

N: Well, I have a pretty good memory. I can remember back some things to when I was three or four years old.

K: What can you remember from that part of your life?

N: They would be little incidents.

K: Just tell me about some of them.

N: My dad drilled. They drilled for coal. They drilled out at the stone quarry, north of town. They would drill the holes to blast, he and my uncle. I can remember my mother taking me out there in a baby carriage. I was about three and a half years old. We took his lunch out to him one day.

K: How did you get there?

N: My mother walked. It was out passed the Salt Railroad and then you go down the Salt Rail Road. Coming back, I can remember, the thing that impressed me the most was the beautiful ivy that grew on the wall up there at the Bogan property, or what is now the Davis property. That house was so beautifully maintained. It was the old Bogan home. That is what I remember about that.

I can remember, perhaps, my first Christmas, when I was very small. My mother put me to bed, I suppose, about seven or seven-thirty Christmas Eve. I do not know if I was waiting for Santa or was excited or not, but I got up about eight or eight-thirty. She said, "Honey, it is not Christmas yet." I do remember the Christmas Tree. It had little wax spiral candles on it. We never lit the candles on it though. They had the little snapper grips on the little candles. It was decorated with that old-fashioned stuff -- it was not tinsel. It was that red fuzzy braid of years ago. We had some beautiful ornaments. What I can remember seeing that impressed me the most, and of course, I had other gifts, were little red bedroom slippers. At the top, they had little cuffs on them and little bunny ears sticking up. Well, that was all I saw of Christmas then, because I was told to go up those stairs again.

K: Tell me about your mom and dad.

N: My mother and dad were married in 1915. My dad, at that time, he checked on the gas wells for the gas companies. You had to walk the line. That is what he did. He walked the line and checked out the gas leaks and things, for the gas company. My mother, her father was Joe Grammy. Her mother was Mary Wilson from New Cumberland, West Virginia. When my mother was quite small, they lived over on Beaver Street. They lived in several places, but [they lived] in the house where Peg Price lives now, a little brick home where the steps go up where the kids come across from Lincoln School. That was her home. Anyhow, Grandpa, they had the store, I suppose, in the early 1900's, say 1910 or 1912, somewhere around there. Well, my mother went to school, but she only went to eighth grade. Then, after that she worked in the store. A lot of people did not have telephones, so she took grocery orders and she walked clear out to Logtown and then, walked clear up on Pleasant Heights. I think once a week she walked around and took grocery orders.

At that time, they delivered the groceries in a flat-wagon, like a grocery wagon and a horse would pull it. In the wintertime, they had a sleigh and they covered the groceries with buffalo. I can remember Roy James, that we know today was one of the delivery boys at that time. There was a little ledge on the back of the sleigh. I used to hop on that when I was quite small, on right up to the corner. And, then I hopped off. That was all the further I was allowed to go.

K: This was with your grandparents?

N: My grandfather delivered the groceries. They had the Provision Company, he and Robert Morris. They were partners. Then, Roy James was one of the fellows who delivered the groceries.

K: That is really something. What were some of the businesses in downtown Lisbon when you were growing up that are gone now? You and I were talking before about the Provision Company and the Bakery. What other things were down there?

N: Did you hear the story? It is called "Nostalgia, the way we were."

K: No, I do not think so.

N: This is a long dissertation but I can give you some of this.

K: Give me what you remember of it.

N: The description at first is kind of cute. It is nostalgia.

K: Just tell me what you remember, what stood out in your mind.

N: Okay, close your eyes and take a deep breath and go back in time to the early 1920's and you will be tantalized by the aroma of fresh ground coffee and full-bodied sharp cheeses, the smell of onions, open barrels of dill pickles that you could purchase three for a dime. Thus was the old-fashioned grocery store, complete with a pot-bellied coal stove.

I can remember when there were three A & P's in Lisbon. One of them was operated by Wallace King and his wife. One was operated by a Mr. Frank Crawford. One later on was operated by Mr. McClure who had the three A & P's. But, many times, my brother and I would travel down the hill, better known now as Jefferson Street, and we had a grocery list that seemed a yard long. I had a five dollar bill. We had a red wagon. That conveyance was loaded with large sacks of goodies which we pulled up the steep hill, sometimes having to rest in the middle. Our reward for this was a three pound-bag of Barth peanut butter kisses for a treat, and all for a quarter.

Then, I always remember that mother used soap. This is just according to the price, so you can get an idea. I think we purchased six bars of those for a quarter when they had a special. We would go down to Mr. King's A & P. That was the one near Standard Oil, and where Louis' Parking lot is now. It was next to the VFW building. He used to have all these groceries and things arranged in the A & P with the cylinders. If a kid ever bumped into them, goodbye, you know, because they were arranged. The soap was all stacked a certain way, and he had all these cans in pyramids. The store was just immaculate. When you walked in, you could smell this fresh coffee and everything. The marshmallow chocolate-coated cookies were something else. They had a pecan on the top. They were a child's delight. They were more expensive. You did not get too many of those.

Then, the Johnston A & P had to be perfectly timed so that we could go down and back before 11:00 in the morning due to the fact that Grandpa Branley headed down Chestnut Street about that time to pick up the mail for the post office at the Y & O Railroad Station. That was down at the end of Chestnut Street. There was a depot down there. You see, they contracted to pick up the mail. They did not have mail trucks. Mr. Morris and he, they took turns and they would go get the mail at different schedules in the daytime. He was one of the proprietors of the store and so we had to gauge when we were going to the A & P because grandpa frowned upon mother's bargain-hunting down at the A & P when the Provision Company was at the other end of town.

Speaking of trains and street cars, we had two of these running into town, as I explained. Then, we had the more sophisticated train. It was called the P, L & W. The base was on the bottom of Market Street. They brought the mail in on that train too. I can remember, when I was quite small, the circus came to town. They had a circus over at the fairground. They had a circus every year. If you

remember, there were lots of things way back then. Now, this was in the 1920's. I was born in 1917. I suppose that, again, I was only about four years old. They would unload the train downtown, and they would have their parade at the fairgrounds. They would have a calliope that lead the parade. When we kids heard that calliope, we knew that the circus was up at the top of the hill. We would go up there. The men lead the circus elephants and they had the girls dressed in their tights or dresses or tu tu's or whatever you call them, whatever they were in those days. They would be riding the elephants. Then, they had the animals in cages and they were horse-drawn.

Lisbon was a busy little town years ago. The tree-lined streets of the downtown offered a cool relief from the heat when you shopped in the summertime. There were three ladies' dress shops, several millinery stores, and Kroft & Martins was one of the dry-goods stores, and Hamilton's dry goods and Roger's clothing store. The Thermans later purchased Kroft & Martins. It was something people wanted to recall later. Mr. and Mrs. Guy Therman bought Kroft & Martins store.

The dry-goods store, Roger's, it went out of business, early in the 1930's. Then, Mrs. Hamilton's dry-goods store, they stayed in business quite awhile. Then, it was remodeled, and that was where Dr. Julian Jones, the physician, had his office in there, later on.

K: Where would that be today?

N: Next to Hamilton's Drug Store. There was Hamilton's Drug Store and then the building there, where Dr. Lee was, and upstairs. She had a beautiful dry-goods store. The dry-goods store, the windows of the showcase, the back of it was like paneled walnut. There were squares, it was panel and it was beautiful. I think they preserved that and put that in Dr. Jones' office. That was the first office.

K: Now, where would Kroft & Martins have been?

N: Kroft & Martins was down where the video store is now, next to where Grandma's Attic was. I think it is marked in there on the tile, "Krofts". If you look on the floor going in there, I think it is still there. That's where Elma Booker had her dress shop.

K: Vinnie Warner before her?

N: Vinnie was next door where Chick Webber has Fox's Pizza Den. He closed that in. Let us see. They carried all items that "my lady desired," they said in those days. I kind of told this in a nostalgic way. Some of these words are archaic, but it goes with the story. Then, there was the Nichols Five and Dime. That was a child's delight. With all the pretty toys and the candy counter, why a nickel

would buy a lot of candy. That was owned by Edna and Gilbert Marshall. I cannot remember who the people were before. She told me who the little man was. She said he was a little man. He owned that. Then, next door to that was the Buckeye Publishing Company, which later burned. My mother used to buy little hat forms. They were made out of Cambrick. Then, you bought the straw or cellophane braid and you made little hats for little kids. You had a dress and a little hat that would match. For Easter, you had a little blue coat and a red hat. At Christmas, the glass dishes were fifteen cents. Those are the ones that are satin glass or camphor glass, and they sold for fifteen cents. Now, they are collector's items. You see those at antique shops and so forth.

Then, Vinnie Warner had her hat shop, and later, a gift shop that was added to her merchandising. In 1939, the Crystal Prices, you could buy a phosphoria crystal pitcher and six of the beautiful tumblers and so forth. I think the tumblers were about fifty cents a piece. The whole set ran about \$5. I can remember in the late 1930's that one of my friends had a wedding present like that. I checked that out and I thought, wow. Later on at the clearance, I saw an Early American Water Pitcher and that was several years ago. That was priced at \$40.

K: At the time you were paying \$5 for the pitcher and tumbler set--\$5 does not sound like much but, what would the average man in Lisbon have been making at that time?

N: My dad had a garage. Of course, he was a good martyr soul. So, there were a lot of people that said, "Lodge, I cannot pay you now, but I need my car." Dad made mud chains for winter, snow chains for the winter time. Actually, I think that back there, during the Depression years, wages were poor. I think an average was \$60 a month. That was a lot of money.

K: What do you remember about how the Depression affected people in Lisbon. Did the Depression really have much of an effect of people in Lisbon?

N: Yes, it did. I even have it in here. Wall Street Crisis- the Depression Years. "When John D. Rockefeller died leaving one billion dollars, there were 98 million people on dole at that time. Only in America could a college professor end up laying bricks and many a once wealthy man, sold apples, or ended up on skid row in many cities.

Here in town when FDR started the WPA he had the WPA and he had the NYA and he had the CCC Camps. Here in Lisbon, other than WPA, these women went to work and they were paid a small amount, but they canned vegetables and fruits and different things. Then, it was kept in the city hall. The men worked, I suppose, around town, and they got little tickets for what they had worked. Then, they could go to the city hall and get these canned vegetables

and canned fruits and things to take home. I do not know if they had anything like potatoes or anything like that because, thank God, I did not have to go there. It was touch and go when I was in high school. I can remember when I was a junior in high school, that my mother made me a jumper. It was out of wool serge. My aunt had sent this big pleated skirt from Pittsburgh. My mother made this jumper. She never needed a pattern. I had two blouses. That was wash and wear and iron and then, put it back on again.

A lot of us wore hand me down clothes. People bought clothes from others, you know, they passed them on, or they wanted to sell them because that's the way they had to get their money. We always had enough to eat. My grandfather had the grocery store. But, again, I was not allowed to have the fancy things. I had to learn that if you did not have the money to buy it, you did not get it. So, I learned the hard way how to save a quarter out of every dollar.

K: Were there soup lines, or anything like that in Lisbon that you could remember?

N: No. I do not remember soup lines. It had a lot of, what you would call, bums that came around. If my mother saw them coming, and we had food, she never turned them down. She would give them a sandwich and a cup of coffee. They would sit out on the porch if they wanted to stay there. A lot of times, you would see them put an "X" there on a tree. They would mark the tree to let you know that it was a good spot.

One time, one man came by. It was Thanksgiving Day. My mother said, "My, we are so lucky that we have all this food, it is too bad that we cannot share it with someone who does not have anything." That was my mother. She had a heart as big as I do not know what. Low and behold came a knock at the door, and here came this highway bum looking for a handout. So, Mother fixed his Thanksgiving dinner. It was not too long afterwards, a couple weeks later, he came back. He knocked at the door. He wanted to know if she had a pair of socks that he could have. My mother called Dad. She was not about to handle this moment. Dad said, "Well, Mister, I remember you. We fed you on Thanksgiving Day, I hardly have two pairs of socks for myself. I do not have any socks to spare." So, that is the way it was.

When we were in high school, we tried to have a little annual. We could not get enough ads because nobody had the money to help out to pay for the advertising. So, the class of 1934, had a little annual. Some of us had our pictures in that annual in a group picture. Our class did not get to have one. We tried. We had cookie sales, and I do not know what else, but we could not raise enough money to have an annual.

K: Did you have any school activities during that period or were most of them cut out because of lack of money?

N: They had the regular football team and the basketball team. One thing I can remember about the football team, they played over at the fairgrounds. My husband, Carl, who was one of the football players, he graduated from high school in 1930. He was one of the star athletes at that time. But, before they could play football, they had to go over and rake the stones and stuff off the center field before they got nailed with all those stones. In high school, we sat in the grandstand and watched the football teams play. At that time, they were put together with adhesive tape and patches, and the most pitiful looking outfits of football suits you ever laid eyes on. The jerseys, I suppose the mothers patched them, or else the kids sewed them up, because they were not anything to get excited about. When they were pictured in the annual, they looked pretty good. But, I can remember some of the kids in my class. They said, "Wow, it is a long way from the way they looked then," how the polyester and the stretch outfits are that they have today.

K: You said when you were in high school, they played football at the fairgrounds.

N: Yes.

K: Do you remember when they moved over to Warren Memorial Stadium?

N: That was during the War. I ca not remember if the WPA built that stadium or not?

K: That is what I am wondering.

N: They had a watch over there. They watched for planes. Up where the broadcasting station is now, they had a tower up there. Different people volunteered at night to work and watch to see which planes were going over.

K: A civil air patrol?

N: A civil air patrol, yes. We had civil air patrol here in town. They had volunteers. I know one night we were sitting in the dark. We thought we had all the lights out and the siren blew that we were to have all the lights out. The man that patrolled our block, he knocked on the door. He said, "You are going to have to turn off your radio. That little red light is glowing in there." It was just a majestic floor radio. Here, there was this little glow of light. So, out went the light.

K: What else do you remember about the war years? How it affected your life, or people here in Lisbon, basically?

N: I can remember, I had a Studebaker that my grandfather had given to me for my

birthday. The window cracked. I could not even get glass to put in there. At that time, I was working in town, but afterwards, 1945 or 1946, you still could not buy glass. I was driving to Columbiana to work. My dad had put some kind of celluloid or something on there, and then, the door handle broke. You could not even buy a door handle. You could not even go to a second-hand place. All that stuff was taken up for war. They did not have a junk yard then. The junk yard was high-priced stuff. So, I had that fixed together with a rope. Dad was a mechanic, so he knew how to fix that. So, you did not crawl in the driver's side, you had to get out the other side. Tires, retreaded tires for that car were seventy-five dollars a pair, the cheapest of retreads. That was back in 1944. I was driving that Studebaker at that time, and I bought four tires. I was working over at National Brass. They tried to make bomb caps. But, they could not make them. We were not successful. The Germans knew how to stretch steel, but National Brass was a proving ground or something. Everything would blister out. Anyhow, I can remember buying four tires and each one of those took two week's pay because I made seventy-five dollars in two weeks. They paid good money then.

Then, we had food rationing. We sold coffee at the store. I worked for the Provision Company, part of the war years. The coffee was divided up into half-pound sacks. Then, we wrote the people's names on the sack. When they came to get their coffee, they knew that was all they could get and that was it. It was weighed out like that. Of course there was a lot of coffee. We had an old fashioned coffee grinder down there. You did not get the tins of coffee. It was just the coffee beans.

Butter was rationed. You had to have the stamps for your gasoline. I hardly had enough to get myself back and forth to Columbiana.

K: That was what I was going to ask you. Did people feel the pinch of things like that in a small town?

N: Extremely. It was real bad.

K: Who in Lisbon would have gotten extra stamps? Who was considered to have a job vital to the war efforts so they could get extra gasoline?

N: Well, now my grandfather had this truck that they hauled mail. Later on the hauled the groceries in this. He had this truck for hauling mail. That was vital because you had to get the mail through. Once in awhile, he would give me an extra gas stamp. That is all I know. He would say, "Here is a spare stamp for you." He would give me the stamp. I went to the gas rationing office and asked for more stamps. They said, "No, under the circumstances, I could not get them." I told them I was not wasting gas. I had to get back and forth to work. Driving to Columbiana was ten miles and ten miles back. That was a good little

old sturdy car, but it took gasoline.

K: Were there a large portion of the young boys in Lisbon who enlisted or were drafted?

N: Yes. We had a lot. We had a lot of boys enlist. And, we remember the ones who lost their lives during the war. It was as if the whole town had just suffered a trauma. It just seemed as though there was appall over the town when something like that happened. Our hearts went out to the families and we felt badly because some of them were our paperboys, some of them were kids who were our former paperboys. Even, kids out of school delivered papers then, and they were eighteen years old. At that time, and during the war, it took money to live. That is all there was to it. So, you made a living however you could.

K: Does it seem to you that during the Depression and during World War II, people in Lisbon worked together more than they would have, let us say, in Youngstown or some of the bigger cities?

N: I do not know. I think people tried to help each other an awful lot. I know during the war that the churches were packed. The mothers and the fathers, it [the war] drew them to church because they needed something besides themselves to give them support. I can remember we had great big Sunday School classes. At that time, too, in 1944, our Methodist Church burned in Lisbon. Luckily, the high school opened their doors to us. That was where we had church until 1949 or 1950, until they had the church built. There were large Sunday School classes. We had a big choir.

I can remember during the War, the fellows in my grandfather's class, he had a Sunday School class. He had about 40 boys. He kept up the correspondence with those boys, those young men, as much as he could. He was eighty years old when he died in 1944. From 1941 to 1943, he kept in contact. He sent those kids a Christmas card. I helped him address the cards and write a message. Some of them said to me, "You had a hand in writing Joe's Christmas Cards. I knew that was not his writing." Some of them said, "I thought it was yours." I got a kick out of it, and I said, "You could not fool his writing." He had beautiful penmanship for somebody who did not have a great education.

Some of the boys sent him the boys sent him little Christmas cards which said, "Merry Christmas." Then, it came from an APO, you did not know where they were. Young men in his Sunday School class were my friends. I sent them cookies and I sent little packs of chocolate drinks. We had an apple orchard when we lived in the country. Part of the time, we lived out in the country during the war years. We had an apple orchard. So, a friend of mine and me, we sent a bushel of these beautiful red delicious apples. He said when he took the lid off

of there, those apples disappeared like nobody's business. The next week or so later, I got a letter from him and he said, "Would you please send me another bushel of those apples? Those kids went wild over those!" He said, "I will pay for them and the postage." I had to write back and tell him we did not have any more apples. We were out of those. These Red Delicious were the deluxe apples. They got a kick out of those big apples.

K: How did Lisbon celebrate the victory of World War II? Do you remember any particular celebrations going on when the war ended?

N: It was all planned, I think. Anyhow, we had a parade. In the town, the high school band was alerted. Everybody gathered at the Presbyterian Church. I was in the choir. So, I sang in the choir. Doris Eels, one of the solos she sang was God Bless America. She had a beautiful voice. Doris still has, but she does not extend herself too much. Anyhow, they had a prayer service. Before that, everybody was all excited. I think they had an epigraph of Hitler on a truck all ready. We were parading up the street. The streets were just loaded with people. They did not watch traffic or anything. There was a little note of sadness, and yet, everybody was so happy that the war was over. That was about the extent of the ceremony.

I was thinking about it the other day. For a long time, in the City Hall, they had a roster. There were names of all the young men that had been in the service in World War II. Then, I think it was starting to fade and kind of hard to keep it on the wall. It was something that could be removed. So, they took it down. I do not know if it was preserved or not. Everybody was just in a relieved, ecstatic state, you know. That church, I never saw a church so packed with people, the Presbyterian Church. People were just loaded everywhere.

K: Now, was this the war with the Japanese or the war with Germany?

N: This was when the war ended completely.

K: After Japan?

N: Yes. After Japan.

K: What do you remember about Pearl Harbor? What were you doing when you first heard the news of Pearl Harbor?

N: I do not remember. I forget that day. We had a big snow storm. They plowed the streets, but some of the side streets and roads out in the country, the driveways were almost inaccessible because they had so much snow piled up along there and you could not get in and out of the drives. I was down, I had just

come home from church. Mother and Dad had the radio on and that was when they said that Pearl Harbor had been struck. That was on Sunday, the 7th of December. A boyfriend had come down to visit me clear from Ravenna. He brought his buddy along with him on that cold winter's day. I had been down at my friend's house, and I was called home to be reminded. He did not tell me he was coming. I said to him, "I suppose this is kind of the beginning and the end, they will be taking you into the service." He said, "Yes." Then, I did not hear from him for a while. He was in college. The next thing I knew he was Florida in the Air Force. It was just something where you had the radio on all the time. We listened to President Roosevelt give his speech.

K: That was going to be my next question. What did you think of Franklin Roosevelt and the way he conducted the war and so on? Lisbon was basically a Republican town?

N: Yes.

K: How was Roosevelt received here?

N: Really, after the Depression, after Roosevelt got in, and of course, they spent money to help people out of the Depression, some people were hero worshipers of Roosevelt. He helped them. It was a town that was destitute, really, like I had explained. You had a lot of people that were unemployed. The pottery was still going and the Tileworks, and the different places like that. But even at that, there were just a lot of people that were out of work. Some things I respected him for and others, I did not have much respect for him. The fact, later on, that I had read, he was so severely handicapped, but you never saw that man where he was getting ready to stand up to a microphone. Somebody supported him and put him up there, practically stood him up there.

At the end, I think his mental faculties were sort of failing, and for the grace of God, maybe Churchill and a few others kind of helped things out at the altar. But, I think that they announced on the radio. I was working down at the USO. The USO was located downtown where Vance Adams has his frontier shop, that sport shop and so forth. They had announced his death then. I do not know. I just cannot remember too much about it. We did not have television in those days. You listened to everything on the radio. And, of course, they talked all about the people that passed through at the closed coffin and so forth.

K: What did you think of his fireside chats? As you said, you could not see them on TV the way we do today. Were people fairly much reassured by his fireside chats, by these talks about how the war was progressing?

N: His voice always had a comforting sound to it. Some people, I think, were

carried away with it. He seemed to make it sound as if everything was going to be alright and the United States would be a utopia when the war ended. During the war, no matter what, you would think about the future, and there just seemed to be a mind block. I remember driving to work lots of times. I worked in Columbiana part-time during the war. I would try to think about the future. The war laid so heavy your mind that you just did not seem to be able to clear your mind to think of anything real far ahead. That was the way I felt about it. I was not depressed or anything. I had a lot of friends in the service.

K: Sounds kind of like your life was on hold until the war was over.

N: Yes. Until the war was over.

K: You just mentioned that you worked over in Columbiana and you said before that you made brass?

N: That was before I went to Columbiana. I worked over at National Brass here in Lisbon. That was sort of a proving ground to make bomb caps. That was in 1944 and 1945, and then they closed the plant down because it was not making any money.

K: Did very many people in Lisbon work at Ravenna Arsenal or any of the places around for munitions?

N: Oh, yes. There were a lot of people that worked over there. They had a bus that hauled people over to Ravenna. Yes. I hope I am right on that because Roy James, this man who is still living that I talked about, he was one of the bus drivers. I am sure he drove that bus and took those people to Ravenna. They had to pay a fare or something. There were a lot of people. A lot of women worked.

K: What did people think in Lisbon about the bombing of Japan? Were they outraged? During the Vietnamese War, we were outraged when we had heard several things that our soldiers had done and things that our army was doing in Vietnam. What was the feeling here in Lisbon about the bombing of Japan?

N: Well, I do not know. Working out of town, it was hard to say. To me, like a lot of my younger friends, the only thing we could see was an exclamation mark at that time. That was the way we felt about it. You had the end and that was it. The funny part was, the thing that always got me, was we were on a guilt trip afterwards and we brought those Japanese maidens over to have their faces all cosmetically put back together again. I do not know if that was supposed to be something to make Japanese feel better or not.

K: Or to make us feel better?

N: Or make us feel better. Yes.

K: Now, I am going to jump in time periods. Within your memory of downtown Lisbon business district, have there been any amusing businesses or unusual kinds of businesses?

N: Let me think here. Well, there was one little story that I used to tell. I will not name any names. They were a nice family in town. But, people knew who they were. He put his winter galoshes in the window. A lot of people did not patronize him. Anyhow, the time he had those in the window and the sun in the fall would shine on them, and then, we had the snow. His galoshes sort of turned green. People did not buy them. He would fill his windows with things like that. His wife was kind of a character around town.

The thing that was amusing that I was trying to recall, too, after the repeal of prohibition, there was one nice restaurant in town. He always maintained a nice, clean restaurant. A lot of people that were religious went in there. They would go in there on Sunday to eat their dinner. Let me tell you, after he got the beer in to the restaurant, all those people disappeared. I know my grandfather was one of them because when he worked at the store on Saturday night, he did not go home.

K: There were a lot of people in Lisbon who were in favor of Prohibition were there not?

N: Yes. See, I did not know anything about it. The stories they used to tell was about the saw dust or something they had. I suppose there were not sidewalks or something way back. I guess it was a bad scene lots of times when they had the saloons, as they called them years ago. I guess a lot of women were very unhappy about it because not so much thinking about the future, but it was the recall of what had happened, and then, what might happen to their children with the bars and the saloons, they called them even then, were well-maintained. There were a couple that were kind of noisy, but with what you have today, you do not pay any attention to it.

K: We talked before and said how most people of Lisbon belong to a church and live fairly close to the church. Do you think this prohibition thing had something to do with that too? Do churches do much in the way of anti-alcohol?

N: Yes. Back in the 1950's, in our church, the minister passed around a big sheet of paper. They were asking you to abstain from alcohol. Of course, I always had to get my simple two cents worth in. I said to him, "Now, just how far does this

go?" He was a little Englishman. I liked to argue with him a little. I said, "Just how far does this go?" I said, "Suppose, for medicinal purposes, you had to have some whiskey. You know, sometimes that helps the heart." "Well, for medicinal purposes," he said, "there would not be any harm in that." He said, "It was the idea of drinking the alcohol and people becoming alcoholics." As I recall, I do not think I signed that because I thought it was a bunch of bosh, because there were a lot of people that would go down to the bar and lift the floor boards and get the booze. Lots of times, they were supposed to be the pillars of the church. Do not quote me in my particular church, but there were situations like that. That was the way they talked anyhow. The older folks would say things about that.

K: Speaking of the church, do you see much differences between churches, let us say, in the 1930's and 1940's, and our churches of today and how the people react to religion? Do you think people as a whole in Lisbon were more religious 40 years ago than they are today?

N: They toed a straighter line. Yes. The people that went to church, there were a lot of them that were very straight-laced and were biased. Religion, to me, is something that you should be able to live with. Some people were so straight-laced and everything, even I felt that sometimes, they did not even give the young people a chance. For instance, we had a minister, and we went to a youth fellowship meeting. I said, "Oh, I had a wonderful time. Tonight we had more fun dancing." He came right in there, he said, "We do not call that dancing, that is Folk Dancing." It was not anything that was dancing or anything rowdy, but it was fellowship and relaxing and letting go. Because in the church, you know, the young people, they watched you. It was as if you lived in a goldfish bowl. Some of them, anyway.

But, in other instances, there was a closeness there. When you did not have television, families gathered together more in the church. In our church, we had what we called Church Night. There were different sections of the town that were responsible for the program for that. It was held once a month. We would have a covered dish dinner. And each section, like the northeast and northwest and so forth, one of those sections, would be responsible. They would put on plays or skits or whatever it was, then have songs and things. The families really enjoyed that. It gave the kids an opportunity that had musical talent to sing, play the piano, and even some of the older people in their early twenties, had nice voices. They would ask them to sing. They would sing secular songs and things like that in church, instead of the hymns and stuff. It was just something different that you cannot picture today because everything is prepped for you on television. It was just like they called it hometowns. Some churches were almost like they have today in the granges, the ones that are still existing. They have lectures and different things. Of course, when they had the revivals,

they scared me to death. That was enough. They always preached hell, fire, and damnation; and we always thought that was where we were heading.

K: So, in other words, the churches were more of a social setting. Today we have television or we go out. People used to go to church to socialize as well as for religion.

N: Yes. Then, we had a youth group in our church. Once upon a time, it was a very active group. One lady was one of the sponsors or leaders. She was a minister's wife. She had come from the big city. We had a big group of young people that attended church then. We gathered canned fruit. They had a contest at that time. When they had these gatherings of all the churches around, all these churches would have a little room down at our church, and they would fix up a booth, as they called it, and arranged all this fruit. Something like you would see at the county fair. We went out to our members and asked for canned fruit and so forth. Then, that was sent to the various children's homes and homes for aged that belonged to our church. I think we had over three hundred quarts. We won the prize. We got the banner. That was what it was.

K: Now if kids do not get a lot more than that they are not happy, are they?

N: No.

K: Speaking of kids, you have your grandson down here. You have some contact with today's teenagers. What do you see is different about the education and the education system today and about education in the 1930's in junior high school?

N: The kids are so much more advanced in school. I noticed, especially, in biology. When I was in school, and what Mary Jo learns in high school, I think that today what she is learning, way back in the 1930's the doctor's were studying in college. I really do. Everything is so much more advanced. I told her one day. I said, "Maybe I can help you with Biology." "Well, can you do this?" I said, "Oh, my Lord, I never heard of that." Then, little kids in first and second grade, when we were in school, and studying the phonics that were up on the board and sounding those and the "s's" and so forth, and then playing with little picks and making pictures and learning how to do our numbers, and our little reading classes where we would be up in a little circle and learn, these children today, especially I noticed in second grade, I never even heard of the work endangered. During the first part of school, my little nephew came home and he had this word endangered. I said to him, "Well, do you know what that is?" "Well sort of." I said, "A good way to remember it is about some of the animals and things are endangered species." That is what I always used to think about the chickenpox

and different things. He just kind of withdrew, "Ok." They are so much more advanced.

What we had in school, I think the teachers were very thorough in it. You were drilled. Today, they have levels now, where children proceed all through the school. If you are on level one, two, or three, where we had reading classes, A, B, and C. Then, the little kids would go read their lessons and so forth.

K: What subjects did you study in elementary school?

N: We would start out; we would have reading and spelling and geography and arithmetic. Then, we were in fourth grade. That was where you started in with your history. Then, in fifth grade, of course you had your geography and your history and your arithmetic, that was about where you started in on fractions and so forth. Look, little kids are doing fractions now much earlier. It was just a routine thing, you know. Everyday studies.

K: What about the discipline? How were you disciplined in school as youngsters in Lisbon?

N: Well, some teachers used a ruler, and some teachers used their hand. I must have been a model child. A teacher shook me in first grade, it was not my fault, but a paper was torn. So she said, "No wonder you cannot read that!" So, she shook me. I went home and reported that to my mother. After that, she did not shake me again.

But, you had to stand in the corner or you had to go out in the hall. They would make you go out in the hall. If you were too bad, you were sent to the principal's office in the lower grades, or to the principal's office in high school, and you had to spend so much time in the, sitting there if you were bad.

K: What did you have to pay for in the way of school supplies? Was everything furnished?

N: No. You bought everything. If I remember correctly, at Chalky Davis Book Store -- that is down where Winestock's Nationwide Insurance is now -- in the front of the store, he had all the educational materials. Oh, I used to love to go buy those golden rod pads. I liked the yellow writing paper with the little green lines on it. At the beginning of the school year, you would have a list of the books that you needed. If you did not buy your books from the student ahead of you in your class, you went down to the book store, and Mr. Davis either had new books or they had a bunch of books in there with the student's name on them, and they would sell the books. That was the way we got them. I always made a beeline down there to get a nice book so I would have good-looking text books.

One thing that I always liked was you could protect the outside of the

book with book covers. The merchants would have paper. It would be like a craft paperbag. They would have these different merchants' names on them. You would fold them in like a jacket, and you would put that on the outside of your book cover to keep it nice.

K: What were your teachers like?

N: They were nice, but they were teachers. You had to be a teacher then. You know. I think, as a person said, that they were sort of living in a goldfish bowl, too. They were supposed to be an example to the student and the community.

K: Do you think we have lost that?

N: Most of the teachers--well, they were not married. You did not have that many married teachers. I cannot recall any married teachers until I went to high school. We had to have some substitute teachers. Those people had been married quite awhile. They were called in through substitute teach. They were excellent teachers, too. I had a lot of respect for them. The teachers in the lower grades, as we called them, they hung around for quite awhile because they were not married. A lot of the teachers, teachers were from and lived in the country, they would board at different people's homes, or have a room. They would stay there, eat out, and use it just for a place to sleep.

Discipline in the school, at the McKinley School, was much different than at the Lincoln School. Mr. White, up at the Lincoln School, was a disciplinarian and we had to mind. Mrs. Steel, she was the principal at that time and everybody toed the mark with Mrs. Steel. You marched out of the classroom to the tune of the Victrola. The teacher had a yardstick and she would beat time, while you marched out of your room and you walked down these steps. In the old school, there were steps to the east and to the west exits, and then to the front. Different classes on the second floor marched down these steps. The teacher put the Victrola on, the record, and when we marched out, she beat time while we marched out. Then, we walked down the walk. You did not run and you did not get on the grass, and you walked down the walk on each side. Years ago, you could stand up in the window in the office and look down and see where the flagstone was worn on either side. In the middle it was real nice and smooth. It was a little worn from students walking up and down there.

The McKinley School was a nice, clean school. Of course, it was a newer school. Our classes down there, which were fifth and sixth grade, and school up at the Lincoln School were [grades] one through four, and then, back up for seventh and eighth. We had good teachers for junior high school. They were very dedicated, and I liked all those teachers. The other teachers were nice, but in your adolescence, you sort of enjoyed those teachers more. You did not communicate too much with them. There, again, they drew a fine line, but still,

they were nice. We had lots of fun.

K: Did your parents ever go to school and complain about anything?

N: Well, only in first grade when a teacher shook me for no reason at all, and she scared me to death. So, my mother met her halfway up the street and told her not to lay a hand on her child again. She said there was not any reason for me to be disciplined like that. Most of us were good students. We were well-behaved, the kids in school. There were a couple boys in school, that by the time you got in sixth grade that were detained. They wanted to be showoffs, so they were scolded or disciplined, or sent to the office. Then, one time, I remember the teacher had this one big boy. She was a lot smaller than he. She tried to shake him. It was like trying to move a rock. He just sat there and aggravated her all the more. Then, one time, she had to apologize to a student because she hauled off and batted him in the face and bloodied his nose. Now, that would be really child abuse. He would get called on the carpet, now.

K: That is right. Did parents come to protest that kind of thing?

N: Not for those. No.

K: Was everybody passed a lot at that time?

N: No, you stayed back. You were detained. You were not passed a lot. That is what I could not understand about some of these people who were friends of mine. You would hear of parents that had a child that was a slow-learner. When they were in school, she was passed along, but at the end, she was handled at school, but no diploma. Now, some parents would rather die than say their child did not get a diploma. I know they did not get one because you had a rule. You would have to pass so many subjects in school.

K: Were there any special classes for slow-learners?

N: No. Just in the classes in the lower grades. Say, in the reading classes. There were groups A, B, and C. It taught little kids in the C class to read. You felt like you wanted to get up there and help them. Even then, I loved to read. I had story books and things like that to read. Even when I was little, I think I read part of the chapters in the bible. I loved to read the Christmas story. I always wondered and I asked my mother when I was little, I remember. I said, "What are swaddling clothes?" about baby Jesus. I could not figure it out. My mother explained to me what the swaddling clothes were. It was a new word to me, I could not figure out what that was.

- K: The other thing I wanted to ask you about that I thought of when we were talking the other night about going out with your friends and so on. At what age did you begin dating?
- N: Well, I did not come out of the woodwork until I was about nineteen or twenty. I was very quiet when I was in school. Really, I was. I had a couple fellows say, "I had my foot on your front doorstep to ask you out for a date, but I never got up enough nerve." I do not know why. Of course, some of the families did not allow their daughters to date. I had friends in the young people's group. But no.
- K: A lot of group activities?
- N: A lot of group activities.
- K: Were there very many couples that dated in high school? You said you were in high school in the 1930's?
- N: Yes.
- K: Were there very many couples that dated in high school?
- N: Oh, yes. We had a few love-sickers. They would be going through the hall. If the principal did not see them, they would be holding hands going up the stairs to the different classes. We used to call it mooning. They would sit there in the study hall and watch each other from one side to the other gazing around. I could remember four or five couples that were really serious. Some of them married.
- K: Did the parents permit them to date?
- N: Some of these parents did. I think the kids sneaked out of the house. They would lie and say they were going someplace or somebody's house, and then meet their boyfriend after school.
- K: Go to the library?
- N: Go to the library. The library was not anything that was too exciting. In the early years, it would be very quiet. The lighting was not very good. You just went in and chose your book, they stamped it and you walked out.
- K: The other night when I was here, we were discussing family geologies and so on and so forth. What about the Lodge family?

- N: They were here before Lisbon was settled, because they were out in the country.
- K: Did your grandparents or parents tell you any family stories that were supposedly handed down from those families' early history? For example, my grandmother always told me that I had a great-grandfather five times back who was full-blood Indian. She would always tell me about the story about the Indians. Anything like that about Lisbon's history that you heard about the Lodge family?
- N: No. Not that I can recall. My grandfather Lodge passed away when I was in the second grade. Then, my grandmother moved to the outskirts of town. The Lodge family, they always gathered out at my Grandma Lodge's in the country. She was an excellent cook. Her children would come home. My dad was the youngest of the family and the rest of them, they were married. Then, I would be the youngest one of them all at that time when we would out at grandma's and grandpa's home. I can remember the chicken dinners and the pies that she baked. She had a big kitchen and we would have our meal in the kitchen at this great big square table. We would gather around there and have dinner. The family gathered. Then, when they had the threshing and they had butchering time, I can remember that. It is vague. But, I can remember the old threshing machine.
- K: Were you ever told about how the underground railroad went through Lisbon, stories like that?
- N: Yes. We heard that when we were studying history. Then, the different people would talk about that. There was not too much of a discussion on that, but I knew that there was an underground railroad here for the slaves to escape. We never saw it or knew anything about it.
- K: I thought maybe, because it is just right around the corner on Jefferson Street. Supposedly all my life, I have been told that there are tunnels down there on Jefferson Street, down where Coleman's live.
- N: I did not know that.
- K: Really. I have always been told that. B.J. Coleman is in my history class, now and he has told me there is a wall behind the furnace that used to be sandstone. The sandstone was crumbling so they replaced it with block. But behind that sandstone was a caved-in tunnel. It went across the street to Pastores.
- N: Well, that was an old home. Yes. That home, as I remember it years ago, belonged to the Johnson girls. They were maiden ladies. One worked at the

post office and there were a couple more that stayed home and kept house while the sister worked at the post office. They took care of the mail. Other than that, I never knew much about the underground railroad. Of course, I had never been down in the basement of the Provision Company, my grandfather's store, but one thing I could not understand, and I was going to ask somebody when they had torn the building down and before they filled in the basement, it was just like a half-basement.

But, back to the back was a wall. When I saw that, it was just a little archway, and then it opened up back in there. I am going to investigate some of these old-timers that used to be at the store, and see if they could tell me what that was. Because that building was built before 1840. It should have been on the national register. But, anyhow, I cannot figure out what that little storeroom or whatever that thing was back in there. The only thing they kept down in that basement, they just put the extra boxes down there. After they took the groceries and put them up on the shelves, we would throw the cartons down there. Then, we would pick the cartons back up when we had a delivery and we ran out of cartons. They had kerosine that they sold there, too. I think the drums of kerosine were down there. But, I never went down there because I think there were some large rats in that basement. They did not have roaches, but they had rats.

K: Well, thank you very much for the interview.

N: You are welcome.

End of Interview