

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Salem Schools Project

Personal Experience

O. H. 1280

DORIS COPE

Interviewed

by

James McNeal

on

December 16, 1975

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: DORIS COPE

INTERVIEWER: James L. McNeal

SUBJECT: Teaching experience, placement, Ella Thea Smith, biology, Quaker emblem, E.S. Kerr

DATE: December 16, 1975

M: This is an interview with Mrs. Doris Cope for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Salem Schools, by James L. McNeal, at 575 N. Howard, Salem, Ohio, on December 16, 1975, at 3:15 p.m.

Mrs. Cope, the first thing I would like to ask you is in regard to your personal background, let's say from the time you were born up to graduation from high school; a capsule background, family and so forth.

C: I was born and reared in the city of Pittsburgh. My birth date is October 28, 1908. I was one in a family of five children, the only girl, next to the oldest. All my years in Pittsburgh, which number to the years prior to my starting to teach, we lived in one area of Pittsburgh known as Garfield. It was a lower, middle-class area. All five of us were born and spent part of our lives at least in that particular area. As I said, I was next to the oldest.

When I started to school we were living on a street known as Rosetta, which was up a hillside, one block from the crest of the hill. On the crest of the hill was the school we all attended. I make particular mention of this because of the fact that the location of the hill served me in a way that I had no notion that it ever would. I left Pittsburgh after I graduated from college. On one side of the hill lived the white people, and on the other side, the negroes in dire poverty. We met at the top of the hill as class-

mates. The influence of those early years on my attitude toward people who were nonwhite has been a great boom to me. I knew these negro children as playmates and color never made any difference. At any rate, we lived on Rosetta Street for a period of time and then we moved down one block.

I entered school at the usual age of six and graduated later on. I even had a graduation party. I graduated from grade school when I was twelve and went from there to Peabody High School. Which was about a mile and a half from my home I finished high school by age fifteen. My parents, who had always felt as though they had been cheated because they hadn't been able to have the kind of education they'd have enjoyed, had aspirations for all of us, but I was the only one who followed through in going on to college, partly because I was the female of the species and at age fifteen one doesn't go out and get a job.

I entered the University of Pittsburgh: It's a community school, and finished college before my nineteenth birthday. When I had completed my college education I was prepared to go into education, in one of two fields, or a combination of two. Almost diametrically opposed. Biology was one, and French was the other. Of course, I had graduated at age eighteen and was a little immature, but I thought I would find employment in the city of Pittsburgh. I went to the major office, the central office of the Board of Education. They were encouraging to the degree that they told me that if I would get a few years experience and a few more years of age that they would be very happy to have me come back. In the meantime I needed to find a smaller school where I wouldn't be snowed by too many students. Through an employment agency I heard of two openings that were available. One was in Donora, Pennsylvania, a small community on one of the rivers, and at this moment I can't tell you which of them. I believe it was probably the Allegheny River. At any rate, this was one opportunity, and another was in Leetonia, Ohio. The man at the employment agency said, "It would be worth your while to investigate." First I went to Donora and was impressed with it, but it wasn't anything I wanted if I could get something else. It was a small, mill town, even in those days characteristically sooty and dirty. I visited there first and then a week later I took a train ride from Pittsburgh to Leetonia to be interviewed for a job at Leetonia. My first opportunity, a very interesting one, was to be interviewed by the superintendent of a very small community. I was fascinated with the community because I had never been in anything quite so small. After having been interviewed and having my parents visit Leetonia area, I decided that that was the place I would do my first

teaching. I entered the teaching profession in the fall of 1927, just a month from my nineteenth birthday, and started to teach students who were the same age I was.

M: I'd like to back up just a little bit. You mentioned an employment agency. A lot of people think that these are relatively new items. Were they quite common for teachers at that time?

C: Yes, very common. As a matter of fact, particularly in the large cities. The agency handled nothing but teachers. Of course, Pittsburgh was a good size community at that time. At that time there were two very active universities and a third that was under way. Actually, a fourth, there were four colleges in Pittsburgh. There was Carnegie Tech, which is just across the valley from the University of Pittsburgh. One was in front of the Carnegie Museum and the other in the back. There was PCW, Pennsylvania College for Women, that has since become Chatham University. There was one other college, Duquesne. Duquesne was in existence too

The school system of Pittsburgh at that time was a central high school system in that it was a central agency where the superintendent of the whole city was located. Then there were various assistants who in turn were responsible for schools in the area. It was a very large system at that time.

M: The reason I'm interested is also, they must have had a wide range of contacts to have a choice right in the city and then as a second one a little village in eastern Ohio.

C: Ultimately, before I did get to Donora, I went to an employment agency. This was not an agency that was operated by the public school system. I paid them a small fee. In retrospect I haven't the remotest idea what that fee was, but it was small. They gave the names of the two school systems, Donora and Leetonia, and I visited Donora first. I was disenchanted and then went down to Leetonia and was utterly fascinated. This was my first teaching position, and that was in 1928. I started to teach before my nineteenth birthday. Today I ran into a student who I had my first year. We always chuckle about the funny experiences of the young teacher who is being pursued by some other student. The answer was always, "No, I'm sorry. I'm a professional person."

M: What did you get involved with in Leetonia as far as class level and courses?

C: Since it was a small school there were fewer than 100 students at the time, which meant that we had graduating classes those two years that I was there, 1928-1930. The graduating classes were of sixteen or seventeen. In as much as the school was small and the faculty members small, it was necessary for us to be diversified. I not only taught biology, but I also taught French, which had been a second major. That went on for just two years. At the end of two years I heard that there was an opening in Salem and decided that I would go up there to Salem to be interviewed, or at least to perhaps make an application.

M: This would be 1930?

C: 1930. John Still Allen was the superintendent at that time. He was aware of the fact that I was still not the same age as most of the teachers. However, he was satisfied with my credentials and hired me at the time of my interview. So, I came to Salem in 1930 to teach biology and whatever else they felt that I would have to fill in my full schedule. The other subject I taught the first year was a course in history. Coming to Salem and going into the biology department is one of the most exciting things that ever happened to me because I worked with Ella Thea Smith, who was Ella Thea Smith at that time.

M: This was before her marriage?

C: Yes. My great good fortune as I say was to have worked with her because she was one of the most brilliant, humble people I ever knew. Ella Thea would help students with any difficulties that they had. She was nonjudgmental in her relationships with the students. She never saw anyone as bad, but rather as needing, perhaps, a little guidance. Our relationship as co-teachers went on from 1930 until 1937. I could have gone on longer, but my husband and I had met. He substituted for me in 1933 and we became acquainted. Before that he had been teaching in Bucyrus, Ohio. He had to come home because the Depression had eliminated some of the jobs in the system. We met in 1933 and dated until 1937. I went to Mr. Kerr, who was then superintendent, and said that we were going to be married. He said, "Don't announce your marriage plans until after June. If you have your contract signed in June I cannot hire you because you are a married woman. You will be permitted to finish out a year." Consequently, we were married in July so that I could continue another year of teaching.

In the meantime, from the time that I came to Salem until that occurred, through Ella Thea's influence I had become involved in hospital work. In 1933 I went

to work at what was then the Salem City Hospital. With Ella as my tutor and helper, a guide I should say, I learned the basic things about lab work. Of course, laboratory work at that time was not so complex as it is today. Basically, what I needed to know were the chemical procedures, and chemical analysis, blood counts, urinalysis. From 1933 until 1937 I carried this job. I retired from teaching because I had to. In 1938 I continued at the hospital until 1939 when I was pregnant. Having lost one pregnancy a little earlier it seemed very important that all precautions should be taken so that I carried through the second time. We were very anxious to have a family at the age of almost thirty-two. I was getting to the point of being concerned. It was the first time I carried a child through the term. At any rate, I retired in 1940 because we had our first child.

In the meantime, John Paul Olloman was teaching in the position I had had at the high school. With the outbreak of war it was necessary for him to enter the service. In 1941 I started to teach again.

In 1942 I managed to have a second baby in August so that I could go back to teaching in the fall.

M: Timing?

C: Yes, timing. I remained in that position for the years that John was in the service. Inasmuch as there was such a lack of people in the laboratories I did continue in the laboratory or went back to the laboratory at the city hospital about 1944. I continued to work there until 1952. The one thing that had not happened to me in terms of the laboratory prior to my return was that I had no certification. Certification became very important. In 1949 I took the state boards and I passed them so I obtained certification.

In 1952 I decided that it was time to retire forevermore. In the meantime I had had a third baby and felt that I wanted to be home with my family.

Dr. Beaver, who had a practice in Leetonia, a practice that he had started the same year that I started teaching in Leetonia, and with whom I have never lost touch, informed me that he was president of the board of education in Leetonia and that he wanted me to go on the faculty down there. It seemed like a rather interesting thing to do, with Fred's encouragement, so I started to teach again in Leetonia in 1952 and was there for one year.

In 1953 Mr. Kerr contacted me and said, "It's time you came home, there's an opening." So I came back to

Salem again to teach from 1953 until I retired in 1971.

In 1960, Miss Zimmerman, Miss Ada Zimmerman, who was the so-called Dean of Girls, died. It left the school without a Dean of Girls. Mr. Kerr called me into the office and said, "I want you to take Ada's place." This overwhelmed me because I had never had any idea of leaving the field of biology. The reason for him calling me in for that particular job was that I had become involved with the establishment of a YWCA here in Salem. That was from experience from way back in college when I was president of the YWCA at the University of Pittsburgh in my senior year. A sum of money was left for the establishment of the YWCA in Salem. An ad hoc committee was formed. I was on the ad hoc committee because of this previous experience and when the YWCA materialized I was asked to be the Y-teen program director on a part-time basis, no remuneration just volunteer work. All of these experiences had just been wonderful. I find them crowding in so now that I'm a little swamped for the moment, but at any rate I did become the Y-teen program director. When Ada died in 1960 Mr. Kerr came to me and said, "You are the one who has had the experience working with girls. I want you to consider seriously leaving your biology entirely and becoming the counselor. We will call you counselor rather than Dean of Girls. It's a title that is becoming obsolete in schools our size. The one thing you must take into consideration however, is that I will expect you to go back in school and get a Master's." At the same time he had talked to Jean Pridon, whom I did not know, and had said to her, "Guidance is becoming very important in the schools. We are going to have to have guidance people at both junior high and senior high levels and I would like you to consider becoming the counselor of girls at the junior high, but you will have to go back to school." He said, "The woman at the high school and you should get together and see what you can come up with." For four years she and I trailed those back roads between Salem and Kent taking a course here and there and ducking all kinds of weather, and all horrible hours in summer. We took our degrees in guidance in 1964. Of course, we had been working in the field in the meantime. We no longer had classes, it was strictly guidance. I remained in the department until I retired in 1970.

M: You leave me a lot of areas to go back and touch on. Before we get way past it I would like to talk as much as you care to about Ella Thea Smith.

C: Yes.

M: You mentioned that you actually worked with her for a relatively short time in actual teaching years.

C: In actual teaching years . . . I came to Salem in 1930 and my first retirement was in 1938. I worked with her for eight years at that time. It was in that time that she wrote the book Exploring Biology, which was published. I taught from this only one year because although it was copyrighted, the copyright date was 1938, this was actually off the press in 1937.

I remember very vividly how this thing came in to being. I think it's somewhere back in the tape. She was very, very dissatisfied with the textbooks that were on the market at that time. They did not encourage any real intellectual accomplishment on the part of the student. They were below a high school level literally. She was convinced that they were quite capable of using good scientific terms, and comprehending biology on a level that was much more mature than that which had been taught and was being taught in schools at that time. What she did was, what we did, I worked with her, not as her equal really, because I always felt that I was a student absorbing from her. She was so brilliant and such a remarkable woman. She began writing her lesson plans in detail and having these mimeographed in the superintendent's office. So that at the beginning of each unit we had a whole series of pages stapled together for the student. We taught from these for several years. One day, Mr. Kerr . . . You know how our rooms are on the ground level. We were back at the end of the corridor on the south side, the last two rooms on the right. They have a door between them. Mine was the farthest room and hers was next in line. My room was the lab. What we did was that we had a schedule which let us alternate uses of rooms so that they were used constantly, but we were together all of the time. I was in the lab and she was in the classroom that day when Mr. Kerr sent a student down to tell her that he wanted her in his office at once. We knew that she wasn't in any kind of trouble, but we just didn't know what was going on. He told the student to tell her that I was to be in the doorway between the two rooms just to keep an eye on both classes while she was upstairs. When she returned she had a look of almost total astonishment. She came back and she said, "Mr. Kerr wanted me up there because there is a salesman from Hartford-Brace Company." Mr. Kerr had a copy of her mimeographed materials. He had shown this to the man and the man was going through it in some detail. He said, "I think we may have a book here." That was the point at which Mr. Kerr sent for her and she went up. When she returned she said that what the man wanted her to do was to get all of the series of plans of the units put together just as they were, that he would take them back with him to Hartford-Brace Company. They were looking for a biology



textbook. He said to her, "Now I have no idea that you would be chosen, but this material is tremendous. Ordinarily when we take a book back for editors to review it's anywhere from six weeks to three or four months before any word reaches the person who owns it. It doesn't mean that you are or are not being accepted, this is just the way it is. Do you mind if I take a copy along?" She said, "No, I don't mind at all." He said, "Don't expect anything, don't build up any hopes. I don't want you to be let down. We are hunting for texts, but if you don't hear from us sometime within the next three months, it will probably be between two and three month." She was prepared for the wait, but somewhat apprehensive. It was a matter of two weeks time when she was called to the superintendent's office and she came down looking as though she had just been carried off into some space that she'd never seen before. She said, "They want me to start rewriting, they're going to publish it."

Of course, the book came out in 1937, although the copyright date in 1938. That was the beginning of the series. I am minus one of the books. There were four editions before she died. Within a matter of a year she was getting feedback from schools all over the country. The book was used in one or more schools in every state. Periodically a letter would come from a former student saying, "Hi Ella Thea, my child has your book as a biology text," from such and such a school in Arkansas or wherever. I have never in my life know anyone quite like her, her brilliance and her humility. She was a very likable person.

M: Do you know of her background, where she came from?

C: Yes. This was another of the great breaks of my life. The first year that I was in Salem, the young woman who had been hired as a physical education teacher for the girls at the high school and I had an apartment together. Of course, I was working with Ella Thea at that time. I was in the biology department and came to know Ella Thea very well on a personal level. Between the first year and the second year the physical education teacher resigned and went back to Iowa. This was the beginning of the Depression and money was rather tight and Ella Thea lived at home down here just off Jennings Avenue on Port Street. She was supporting her mother, who was a Gurney Quaker, one of the most beautiful women I have ever known in terms of personality. A wholesome woman. Ella Thea and her mother, a sister who had been married and divorced, and the sister's child lived down there. The income on which they lived was entirely Ella's money. Our incomes were rather meager at that time. I didn't want to live in an apartment alone and Ella Thea said to me, "Why don't

you come and live with me, at least consider it." So, I moved in with them, and spent two of the most exciting years in terms of learning about people with very different religious backgrounds than that to which I was accustomed.

I remember one evening at the dinner table we were chattering and I mentioned that I had been to the movies the night before. In the picture, which concerned a schoolteacher, there was a desk. On the desk was a series of books. One of the books was a copy of Ella Thea's book. I told them that in that room was a desk of a teacher who was teaching Ella Thea's book. Ella had grown up with the attitude that made her a remarkable person. One of the big disappointments in her mother's life was that she left the Quaker church. When she graduated from high school she went first to Wooster for a year. At Wooster someone or other recognized her for this and suggested that she transfer to complete her major in biology at the University of Chicago. Her degree was from Chicago then. She didn't go on to get a Master's, she came back to Salem. A Master's Degree for her would have been redundant because her lifetime was spent in research and writing.

During the war years, actually before Fred and I were married, she was married to a classmate of Fred's, a classmate named Marion Cox, who lived out on Georgetown Road. Marion was some years younger than Ella when they were married. We were married in 1937, they were married in 1935. Of course, there was much stir about that in the community because she was the teacher and he had been the student and he was younger and this sort of thing. That part of it was very quickly forgotten.

During the war years when we had a draft board in Salem; it was hounding everybody to get into the service and be drafted or else. Marion was a conscientious objector. He was a conscientious objector, but not on a religious basis. It was a fundamental thing with him that war was wrong and that our interest into any war put us in a very negative situation. When the draft board realized what his situation was they decided that he should be drafted immediately. Marion stated to the draft board that he was a conscientious objector, but not on the basis of a religion. It was a matter of conscious. They put him in jail. There was quite a stir in the community. One member of the school board was John Burns, who was very, very foul. He was radical in terms of all of his decisions. He said the war was just and no one had the right to say that it was wrong and I do not want to go. Marion was put in jail as a conscientious objector. He wasn't acceptable under the terms that they had established. It put Ella

in a terrible position. There were those that wanted her fired because her husband had done this. Mr. Kerr was disheartened. He said she was the finest teacher he had ever known and that she had done more for the school system than any one person could ever have done or would do. It was a very traumatic time for Ella Thea. Ultimately, Marion was released from jail. He was given a negative status as a conscientious objector. He was told and Ella was told that she could maintain her position only so long as he stayed out of the building. He must never step foot in that building again. You could imagine how crushed she was because she believed that he was absolutely right, that the war was wrong, that any war is wrong. However, she continued to write and teach until I believe 1952, when they made a move to Arizona. Her younger sister who had tuberculosis had been down there years before. They liked the area and decided that they would get as far away from Salem as possible. They moved out in the desert and personally built their own home. Marion was very talented. They remained there and Marion came back once that I know of, but Ella never returned. We maintained contact until she died a couple of years ago. I never saw her again.

M: She would have been how old?

C: She was ten years older than I, she would have been 77 now. She had continued to write and revise her book.

M: I understand from interviewing Laura Mae Whinnery, twice actually, she had so much information that one tape didn't do it, that Ella Thea's mother was the source of the profile which is used now on Quaker rings and whatnot, the Quaker lady.

C: The class of 1925, my husband's class.

M: Could you comment to that situation?

C: That was before my time here. However, I do know this from Fred and from Ella Thea, and Marion, Ella's husband, was in the class of 1925 also. Ella graduated from the University of Chicago in 1920 and came back to Salem to teach. Fred's class entered school in 1921 and at that time and my understanding is that class advisors were selected and carried with the classes for the four years. Ella Thea became class advisor for them sometime during that year, sometime before 1922 and then remained their class advisor through. The classes admired her so greatly and were so interested in her background that the original ring had the profile of her mother, a little gold Quaker head that was anchored to the stone.

- M: I have a class ring that goes from 1961 and the profile is still there.
- C: That is the correct profile too by the way, the one that Fred has. It was the gold anchored to the onyx, but it's the same head.
- M: The left profile?
- C: That's right.
- M: I had a tie tack I remember in 1959 or 1960, it was at the new building and they had two things for sale. I think it was a student council operation, money raising business. One was tie tacks. I knew nothing of the tradition behind it, I just liked it. I had that for the longest time and I don't know what happened to it. They also had stationery, threefold stationery with the high school building on it. I bought fifteen or twenty, whatever was in the box. I had two left and I don't know what I did with them. I guess you can be sentimental about things and not really know the true story about them.
- C: There is something that has bothered me. The Quaker head, Mrs. Smith's profile, remained the emblem until John Cabas came to Salem. At that time she became Quaker Sam. I always thought this was a horrible thing to do to Mrs. Smith.
- M: There again, it may be just a matter of ignorance on the part of the people. Of course, once they found out it didn't make any difference.
- C: He taught with Ella Thea, he knew. I like John, don't misunderstand me.
- M: I'm not pursuing anything there, but it might not be ignorance then, but a matter of a time for change and so on. That is sad in a way. I'm basically the type of individual that likes to see those kinds of things go on. I've seen some nice things change just in ten years, not in the area of tradition so much, but since 1966 until this afternoon. But I really do get upset when I see these kinds of things go on. I think they are important. It's a shame maybe that there wasn't some type of program along the way that had students really know what the background was. It didn't happen so I guess we'll accept it as it is.

I wanted to pursue a little further the actual books that were written, not necessarily any one, but just general comment. Could you tell me anything at all about the way in which she continued to work on them and how the things were put together and what was

involved in all the things that go into a book of that type?

C: For one thing, there had to be much photography. Naturally in a science textbook there would not only be photography, but there would be illustrations of other sort. Marion did a great deal of photography. He was an excellent photographer. There were people in town who criticized him because they said he never earned a living. He not only earned a living, but he was 50 percent of the book. Not only did he do the photography, but he also did drawings of examples. If there were to be drawings of a section of a leg of a frog with the muscle attached to the bone, he did all of them. Rather than photograph he did the drawing. This is true of all the editions of the book, whether they were good photographs or fine drawings. He had as big a stake in it as she, only in a different area. It was an interesting combination. They were so different in personality, but they worked together very closely. He had such respect for her superior intelligence, and yet she never lorded it over him in any way. It wasn't that kind of a relationship.

Later, when the book was in the third revision I believe it was, some of the work was done with two people involved, Marion and then somebody from the company itself. He was vitally involved in a way that people in the community never appreciated. They couldn't understand. Does that answer your question?

M: Yes. As I recall, since I had you for biology in the new high school in 1959, one day you mentioned something about Dr. Crowgey. That there was a muskrat or some such . . .

C: Possum.

M: I forget the details, but you mentioned that Dr. Crowgey's hands and Fred's too . . . I'm not sure how it was.

C: That's right.

M: That's coming back from a few years ago in the back seat of the room. I remember you mentioning Dr. Crowgey because I went to Dr. Crowgey as a child. That just sort of stuck with me. What was your story there?

C: He was fascinated with the possum and the fact that babies moved from the birth canal into the pouch and then moved in and out. One night, Carroll Colburn, who was a very close friend of Ella Thea and Marion, and Dr. Crowgey and Fred, and I don't know whether there was a fourth person involved, but those three were out

at a place that Dr. Crowgey called his farm. They had a female possum and the young were just beginning to come out of the birth canal. A photograph was taken and the photograph appeared in the book in the next edition. Those of us who knew Dr. Crowgey recognized the hands. And of course my Fred was there too.

M: You continued then in biology teaching and eventually left that entirely to take over a counseling position with what used to be the Dean of Girls association. This may be a little personal, but I think it's of interest based on the fact that you've had such a list of experiences in education and so forth. Did you miss the classroom or did you find that it was . . .

C: Yes.

M: Were you comfortable in being a guidance counselor?

C: I did miss the classroom for awhile. As a matter of fact, teaching was always my first love, even when I worked at the hospital. The hospital was the second love because the first love was not available when women teachers had to be single. That's the way it was. When Mr. Kerr asked me to go into guidance I wasn't certain if it was really what I wanted to do, but he felt that it was terribly important. I did go into it, but with some misgivings. Within short order I was very satisfied.

M: Satisfaction of a different type.

C: A different type entirely. My concern of course was that I might not be able to do the kind of job that he thought. I felt he saw something in me that I didn't see. Through training, further education, and so forth I discovered that I could deal with all kinds of youngsters who were not being so simple.

M: It gave a rich foundation and experience. The classroom never hurts at all, but it sure does come up through that first.

C: The whole thing was Ella Thea. I was still young enough to have tremendous respect for someone who was ten years older than I was and had many years of experience teaching. I saw how she related to youngsters and only once did I ever hear any one of her own classmates or her students be critical of her, and this was within the last month. A woman who went to school with her said that I had made some mention of Ella Thea. She said, "You know, I never liked her." I said, "You know, you're the first person from whom I've ever heard that. Why didn't you like her, I'm interested to know?" She said, "I don't know why I didn't like her,

I just didn't like her." I wrote that off.

M: That doesn't count.

C: I have a feeling, knowing the two people, and I know this woman quite well now, it was a matter of perhaps the person not understanding the intellect of the other. Ella was never critical of other people. She had absorbed the Quaker attitude. She was perhaps the nearest perfection of an individual that I've ever seen.

M: In your comments to my questions the name Mr. Kerr has popped up. This tape wouldn't be complete without some comments with regard to him. Everybody that I've interviewed knew him one way or the other and has made comments. I might add that they seem to fall primarily in the favorable camp. I think that in the sense that Ella Thea was one of a kind that perhaps Mr. Kerr, in his own right, was one of a kind. Could you comment to any association and remembrances of Mr. Kerr?

C: He was a remarkable man, brilliant also. He came from a small community and I cannot remember the name of it, but he was a man who loved the outdoors and the woods. Somewhere southwest of Salem, the name Dalton comes to my mind but I don't think that's the area, he owned what he called his camp. It was at Freeport, Ohio, where Mr. Kerr had over 100 acres of woodland and creeks. It was a wooded area with a lovely creek running through it and he and some of his relatives had built what they called a cabin. It was not a cabin. It was rustic, but it was a very nice, spacious place where he would go just to walk through the woods and enjoy himself in this rustic area. Ella and I went down with him for one weekend. I remember the joy of both of them because they were vying with another to see who could name the most wild flowers.

M: Always competition.

C: It was fun to be along. I wasn't as sophisticated as they were in the knowledge of the wildflowers, but I can remember Mr. Kerr's charming mannerisms and saying, "Right now Ella Thea, I have something very special I want to show you." She said, "Well, what is it?" He said, "I'm not going to tell you, you just follow." We arrived at a spot and stopped. She said, "Are we there?" He said, "Just look through this." Here is was a lovely hillside and right smack in the middle of it were wild orchids. I remember him just standing there grinning. Ella Thea was literally getting down on her knees to see these things. That's the way Mr. Kerr was, he liked so much to take folks down with him to his camp. He'd say, "Now just sit down, I'll do the

cooking."

M: It had been indicated to me primarily through a number of teachers that he was extremely fair and so forth. He could be very demanding and strict and knew exactly what had to be done, how to do it, and who should do it, and who could do it the best, and so forth. Did you find in your association with other staff members that there was a basic share of respect for him or not?

C: There were those who did not understand, but I guess in some instances they were called in and when he called you in and wanted to tell you something he let you know that this was the way it was to be. If you did not like this you were free to leave. I don't know that he was ever irate, but he could be firm.

M: Do you think the personality, as you witnessed it and saw it in action, would be the type that could either handle today's situation or do you think that he might be out of place, a person of that temperament having not been out of education all that long?

C: He was a politician too. He knew when to handle and how. I don't know.

M: I asked that because so many teachers have mentioned that since, Mr. Kerr, with rather rapid succession there for awhile, a lot of the personality has been lost in that position. I don't think that the men in there don't have that personality, I think the position creates the man.

C: I think that there has been this change in the early years of Mr. Kerr's policy of teaching, and this would be my teaching also, we were not so involved with government funding, with federal funding and all of these federal programs. In recent years the role has had to change because of the massive amount of paperwork there is and all this running around in order to get the funds from this source and this source. In Mr. Kerr's time local funding, and I assume some state funding, I don't remember, were basically it. The local situation was operated by the local situation. Now, how many of the programs are there that we can deal that have something to do with other than local. We have our vocational programs and many of the guidelines, and even in the salary ranges come not from the local establishment.

M: Title programs.

C: Title programs, all this sort of thing.

M: We've lost the autonomy that gave a chance to Mr. Kerr



and others, perhaps even teachers at the classroom level, a chance to develop more along personality lines and put off business and political lines. That's sad. I see so much of it in the short time that I've been at it. This is my tenth year. If I didn't enjoy teaching as much as I do I've often thought I'd start to look elsewhere because I see it encroaching and getting worse and worse.

I like to conclude tapes with certainly thanks to the individual who has taken time, but I think it needs, at least by me, to be publicly stated that not only am I in debt to you for being willing to chat with me, but make it known that you certainly could not possibly have any regrets about your experiences in teaching in general, or Salem in particular. The rich experiences in sitting and listening to them are many times one of the things that I'm getting out of this "course" that keep me at it. I have really been impressed not just with the information from a practical standpoint, but the feelings and much of the devotion that came out of the years that teachers that I've interviewed had had. That's good for me, aside from the fact of any other values that are attached to it. I certainly do want to thank you and express my debt to you and hope that you have enjoyed your experience.

C: It was most interesting.

END OF INTERVIEW