

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Poland United Methodist Church Project

Parishioner Experience

O. H. 569

HILDA WEEKS

Interviewed

by

Paul Rohrbaugh

on

June 24, 1981

HILDA WEEKS

Mrs. Hilda Weeks was born on February 7, 1928 to Erwin and Dorcas Crum in Poland, Ohio. She was raised in Poland and attended Poland schools up to her junior year in high school. She was married to Dwight Weeks, Jr. on September 20, 1945 and has three children: Patricia, Timothy, and Thomas. She has been a member of Poland United Methodist Church her entire adult life and has been a bookkeeper there since 1980. She was involved extensively in the church's Sunday school programs for children for many years. Her hobbies include quilting (at times), cooking and baking for the church as well as an extensive collection of salt and pepper shakers and bowling.

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Poland United Methodist Church Project

INTERVIEWEE: HILDA WEEKS

INTERVIEWER: Paul Rohrbaugh

SUBJECT: Church organizations, Canfield Fair project

DATE: June 24, 1981

R: This is an oral history interview with Mrs. Hilda Weeks at her home at 2461 Spitler Road in Poland, at approximately 7:30 on the 24th day of June, 1981. The interviewer is Paul Rohrbaugh and this is for the Oral History Program on the history of the Poland United Methodist Church held in conjunction with Dr. Viehmeyer.

Well, Mrs. Weeks, how about if we just begin. Perhaps you can tell us a little bit about yourself?

W: About myself? What would you like?

R: Where you were born?

W: I was born here in Poland and lived in this area all my life. I went to Poland Schools. I did not graduate. I met Dwight and got married so I didn't finish my senior year. That was back in 1945. My brother and my sister and my mother are still living.* We have a daughter Pat and twin sons, Tim and Tom.

R: Perhaps we can start right off. How did you come to be a member of the Poland United Methodist Church?

W: By marrying Dwight. When I was a youngster I had attended the church. I had three aunts that were Poland Methodists and when I visited them I would always go to Sunday school with their kids. When I was quite small I always thought that I would like to become a member of "that church."

*Mrs. Weeks' mother Dorcas Crum passed away December 26, 1982 as did her sister Catherine Bowmaster on January 29, 1984 and her brother Curtis Crum on June 18, 1986.

I was brought up a Lutheran and was a member of the Zion Lutheran Church in New Middletown, Ohio. I don't know whether it was because I knew more people that attended the church in Poland. It was more or less a rivalry to the kids in New Middletown and Poland.

Another thing I enjoyed about the Methodist church is that while I was going to school we did not have a cafeteria at Poland schools at that time. Every Thursday the Methodist church had soup luncheons. I can't remember if they were 15¢ or 20¢. You got a bowl of soup, a cup of cocoa, crackers, and then you paid extra, a nickel or dime, for a piece of pie. I always looked forward to Thursdays because we got to leave school and walk to the church for our lunch.

R: What school did you go to?

W: Poland Union.

R: You spoke of a rivalry, how was this rivalry?

W: They thought their school was better than Poland and we always thought Poland was better than New Springfield. It was mostly in sports.

R: And the church?

W: It wasn't with the church. The rivalry was through the schools. Due to the fact that my brother and I were the only ones from Poland in the class it was hard for us to defend ourselves.

R: What were your aunts' names.

W: Ada McCrone . . . Uncle Myron (J. M. McCrone) was the president or chairman of the official board. Their meetings were never held at the church, but at homes. I often addressed cards to the board members to notify them of the next meeting for Uncle Myron.

R: So you've been a member of the church for 36 years?

W: Yes. I didn't become active in the church until after our daughter was born in 1961. I joined the Women's Society in 1964 and then they needed some help in the nursery. When the church burned on April 1, 1956 we met at the Poland schools while our church was being rebuilt. I was asked to be secretary of the Children's Division. That was an office in the Women's Society. The job was more or less keeping the women of the church informed of what was going on in the education department. When we had moved into the new church, we had enough room that the four and five years old were divided. I had the four year room for quite a while and became superintendent of the preschool. Then I left that position and was treasurer for the church school for twelve years.

R: Where did you get your supplies?

W: The Methodist generally got their's from Cokesbury.

R: Do you remember any teachers' names?

W: Margaret Manos is the one that I started out with, and Jane Kimmel in the nursery, and Edith Mershimer with the four and five year olds. There was also Vickie Conrad and Sophie Roble, Marilyn Schultz. Eleanor Stallard has been in the crib room for years.

R: These are all people that have been there since the very beginning?

W: Yes, when I started.

R: How were they selected?

W: A lot of them volunteered or expressed a desire to work in education. If they didn't have training they would be asked to attend workshops such as weekends at Mt. Union College in Alliance, Ohio or in local churches.

R: What ages were the children?

W: Mostly three, four, and five year olds.

R: How many children were involved in this?

W: Our average attendance in preschool was close to twenty.

R: What did you feel like when the church burned?

W: Sick!

R: How did you raise money for the church?

W: We worked at the Canfield Fair earning money to help pay for it. We had public dinners and the organizations within the church worked earning money for the new building in various ways. The Women's Society had bazaars and made things. The Women's Society consisted for five circles. The circles took turns when they would have work nights to serve the men and workers in the church. We would have lunch for them or dessert. It was just to help give them nourishment after they painted and did various chores.

R: When was the church completed?

W: I'm not sure. We moved into the church before it was completed.

R: What was the Canfield Fair project like?

- W: The job that I had when I went out to work for the day was working on the bread and butter line. We put bread or rolls out with the butter. Another time I worked preparing strawberry shortcake. It was really hard work. The whole thing probably lasted ten days because we had to set up before the fair. I was also a pie roller one time. We baked about 200 pies a day. I was never so tired and I was younger than most women.
- R: How did you get into these positions?
- W: Volunteering or else by the nominating committee. When Reverend Hubler was here he asked me to be the coordinator for making some banners. I was chairman of the Membership and Evangelism Committee.
- R: Mention some reverends that you've worked under. I understand that not too many of them stay around very long.
- W: I think in the Methodist church they rotate. Reverend Hubler was here for six years. Reverend Lockard was here before him. In a way I like it that they move around, but then you get attached to them and it's really hard to have them leave.
- R: So this church is a member of a larger organization?
- W: Yes. We're a member of the Youngstown District and then the Youngstown District is a member of the East Ohio Conference.
- R: Can you give me the names of the ministers since you've been in the church?
- W: Reverend Uphoff, Reverend Riley, Reverend Parr, Reverend Marston, Reverend Hess. Reverend Hubler is my favorite right now.
- R: It seems burning down ended most churches, why didn't it this one?
- W: People in this church come together in any situation just like that. I think the togetherness and care and loving concern of the church is what people are working towards. When the church burned everybody was there and trying to help. It has stayed that way over the years.
- R: Do you think the church will be more or less important to people in the years? Do you see the church having another 50 years?
- W: Oh yes, it will be very important. We had the first 50, the second 50, and now the third 50. I feel we are going to have a fourth 50 years.

R: What has the church offered Poland?

W: A place people can have their children get a Christian education. Its building is open to the scouts and senior citizens. We have weigh-in groups for people who are concerned about their health. The Cancer Society has used the building, the Heart Association. I think the church is there to be used in whatever way it can be used as long as it does not get abused.

R: Is there anything you would like to say that we didn't discuss?

W: We have a quilting group. The quilting group started after Sue Viehmeyer decided to have a quilt made by having women make a patch for each of the 16 goals of the United Methodist Women. (We are now known as the United Methodist Women and not Women's Society of Christian Service.) After the quilt was finished, it was presented to Reverend Al and Lois Hubler for their 25th wedding anniversary. It was so interesting quilting and listening to the older women of the church that we continued quilting for people that liked to put quilts together or had quilt tops given to them but didn't want to quilt them or else they didn't know how.

R: Thank you for the interview.

END OF INTERVIEW