

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
YOUNGSTOWN COLLEGE FOOTBALL

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O.H. 1955

Marilyn Chuey
Interview
By
Erin Pogany
On
April 4, 2001

Youngstown State University

Oral History Program

Subject: Youngstown College Football

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EP: This is an interview with Marilyn Chuey for the Youngstown State University Oral History project on Youngstown College Football at Mrs. Chuey's Poland residence on April 29 year 2000. Now, I thank you very much for being here this afternoon.

MC: Your welcome.

EP: When is your date of birth?

MC: April 2, 1929.

EP: And where were you born?

MC: Cleveland, Ohio.

EP: Cleveland, Ohio, and did you move here after you were born then or were?

MC: A couple after I was born in Cleveland.

EP: Ok, and do you have any siblings?

MC: I have one but she is deceased.

EP: Ok and is she older than you?

MC: Older, six and a half years.

EP: Six and a half years older, so she was born in 1923 about?

MC: About 1922.

EP: And you moved to Youngstown then?

MC: Yes.

EP: Ok, and where did you live in Youngstown?

MC: We lived on Florida Ave. on the south side.

EP: What was it like growing up there?

MC: Everybody was nice. Everybody went to Sheridan school which at that time was a pretty nice school. And we enjoyed it.

EP: And what was a typical day like growing up there, when you were younger?

MC: Generally, going to school, coming home, and playing softball.

EP: Oh how nice! You played?

MC: Yes I did.

EP: Was it a neighborhood team?

MC: Actually, it was just youngsters from the school that would come to a nearby playground, and we did play.

EP: Oh how nice! You were athletically inclined from a young age.

MC: I would say so. (laughing)

EP: And we can state here for the record, who was your father?

MC: Oh Howard Jones.

EP: Howard Jones, who was?

MC: The first president.

EP: of?

MC: Youngstown College at that time.

EP: And what effect did that have on you as a child? If any?

MC: As a younger child, really not much. I remember walking to school one time with a boy who lived next door who was about three years older, and he said "You know I

think your father is more well-known than any of the rest of ours". That was the first time I ever really thought of such a thing.

EP: It didn't really faze you until that time.

MC: No.

EP: So how long was he president at YSU?

MC: He was in charge for thirty-five years. There's a technicality there as he came in 1931, and the title of president wasn't bestowed on him until about '35. But prior to that he was the head of the educational division of what was then part of the YMCA.

EP: And how did he come upon getting that position?

MC: I honestly don't know. I do know that Leonard Skeggs, for whom the Skeggs lecture series was named, was then the one that approached him, about being in this position, and it was he who hired him.

EP: Where did you go to high school?

MC: South High School

EP: South High School. Was there any kind of jealousies from classmates that knew your father was president of the university, or biases against you for that reason?

MC: I really don't think so. Actually we didn't around broadcasting it. And my best friends probably knew but didn't care. I'm not sure how many others did know.

EP: And you attended what university?

MC: I started at Youngstown, which was Youngstown College then, and went a couple years, then I transferred to Mount Union College, and went a couple years and graduated. Then I came back for another year at Youngstown so that I could major in Physical Education. I then went to Ohio University for a two years, and then completed my mater's degree.

EP: And we can state here your thesis was done at Ohio State University?

MC: Ohio University

EP: Ohio University in Miami right?

MC: Ohio U is in Athens.

EP: Oh Athens I'm thinking Miami. Your thesis then at Ohio University was on?

MC: Specifically, the historical study of varsity football at Youngstown College.

EP: And how in the world did you ever come across to do this topic?

MC: Well, for one thing of course we needed to get a unique topic, one that hadn't been pursued. And really all my life I had been involved in the college activities, such as plays, operas, and certainly the sports programs. So I had attended all the home football games and maybe about half the away from home games, and I loved sports. So it was something unique that I could get approved, and wanted to do.

EP: Now you wrote this in 1954 I think? Or there about 1955. I know with women's rights and civil rights, was it looked down upon as a women wanting to do something particularly in a men's field at that time.

MC: Because I was in physical education I don't think it was. My advisor never indicated that, but the only thing I can say in connection with your statement is there was a speaker from I think, Washington D.C. at our commencement and when the title, of my thesis was read he did look up and smile as I proceeded to come up and get my degree.

EP: How interesting. You said you attended the games at YSU, the home games, while you were there.

MC: When I was at Ohio U? That was the first time I couldn't, but you see at that point Youngstown College had just become a university, in 1955 I think, and so I had attended all the Youngstown College home games. So over the period of time included in my thesis I had attended all home games.
attended all games.

EP: And what were the games like then, was there anything like there is today with tailgating or parades or...

MC: No tailgating. When football started in 1938, there was curiosity probably more than anything else and an enthusiasm because we hadn't had any college football locally, and so the initial games were well attended. There were 10,000 at the first game. But the nearest thing I can think of in regard to student activity would be when they had a homecoming game. They did build floats, and presented them at halftime of the game.

EP: No tailgating. Did they have parades? I know during the homecoming games now I think is when they have a parade or something.

MC: I don't believe so.

EP: No parades

MC: None of which I was aware of.

EP: Nothing like there is today what it has grown into.

MC: That's right

EP: Let's see here. Now your thesis here is very well researched, very well written. I read through most of it, what I could get through. I was very excited to find out that you had done this, and I'm not sure that it has been done since anything from 54' until now, which I think probably would be interesting for someone to go back and do. You used newspapers, yearbooks, programs, you interviewed I think sportswriters, your mother and father I might add. And you also interviewed Mr. and Mrs. Dike Beede.

MC: Right

EP: Can you explain who he was, Mr. Beede?

MC: He was Youngstown College football. He was the first coach, and just a tremendous individual. He had gone to Carnegie Tech, and he was a fullback there and played against the four horsemen. He was many things other than just a football coach. He happened to be an insurance salesman. He was an expert in forestry, and he used psychological techniques with his players. He was just a brilliant man. No question about it.

EP: Did you know him personally?

MC: Oh, very well.

EP: Was he friends of the family?

MC: He was, and to the extent that if we couldn't attend an out of town game, he would bring movies to our home to show them. And we actually furnished him with his first dog, a cocker spaniel puppy.

EP: Oh how nice. Now in your thesis here you talked about in particular two major things that he brought to the game of football. One was the flag the penalty flag. Do you remember the story? I think you interviewed his wife for that part.

MC: That's right. She was called the Betsy Ross of football, because she had made the first penalty flag. One time she was canning something and he asked to consult her about this. He had the idea that rather than blowing a horn, (they used to push on a horn when an infraction occurred) He felt when the horn was blown that if it were

against the defensive team, the offensive team, with a runner running, would slow down when the horn was blown. He didn't think that was fair to the offensive team. So he envisioned something that the fans could see, and would show that an infraction had occurred, when it occurred, and where it occurred. So he proposed this to Jack McBee, who was a renowned official, who had officiated in The Big Ten and the Rose Bowl. Mr. McPhee was a friend of Mr. Beede's and he agreed to try using the flag instead of the horn in a football game between Youngstown College Oklahoma City.

So after explaining what he had in mind regarding the proposed penalty flag, Mrs. Beede pieced together a red and white flag. She used part of one of their children's Halloween outfits, and weighted it with fishing weights. This was the initial flag, the first one used in intercollegiate athletics.

EP: Now did she wonder why he wanted these flags. Did he have to explain to her?

MC: I think she knew football well enough to understand.

EP: Now in the summertime, as I understand it, I was looking on the Internet here and I found that he from 1938, I think, until the early 70's had a three-week camp at Camp Fitch.

MC: Yes

EP: And you had recently gone there for a reunion?

MC: That's true.

EP: That's true and what is that like to go back there, and...

MC: It was fun. I was pretty young when I initially went up there visiting. They had a candy store right outside of the camp premises. Peggy Gray was still there. So that was kinda fun.

EP: Peggy Gray is who?

MC: The candy store up by Camp Fitch, where I'm sure all the campers go occasionally. It was just a fun experience to see these football players come back, and how happy they were to get together, and to recall incidents that took place at Camp Fitch.

EP: Now were you able to go to this three-week's worth of camp when you were young to see the football player's practice?

MC: Actually I didn't do that, my dad did.

EP: And we can state here then your dad had a very integral part in getting the first team up and running right?

MC: He did. Supposedly the initial input was from students. The president of student council, John Middleton, approached my father in regarding the possibility of fielding a football team to represent Youngstown College, had asked him if he would find out how much interest there really was and to report back. Middleton found out how many high school football players were attending Youngstown College and whether or not they would be interested in playing college football. He thought there was a good response.

The initiative was proposed to the Board of Trustees. They finally put it back in the hands of my dad and the faculty. Dad's main concern was financial, so he consulted with business manager P.C. Pickard. They finally thought it could be accomplished. The board approved it and they proceeded.

EP: How did they actually go about financing the first team?

MC: That was more my dad's area than my area. There is a list of things in my thesis. One is, I think they increased the fee to attend basketball games, and then they did get some help from civic people in selling tickets.

EP: Going back here a bit, I don't have all my questions in the right order I don't think. Where did they play their home games? It's my understanding that Stambaugh Stadium was not built until the early 80's. When you went to their home games, where did you go?

MC: They started playing at South High School stadium first. That was in 1938. They played there for a few years, and then they proceeded to Rayen stadium and played there for awhile. They then went to Campbell stadium, and following that was Fitch stadium. Following Fitch was Stambaugh Stadium. But one of the interesting things in the early years they didn't have practice fields, and they would go to Mill Creek Park, or anywhere they could. They had no goal posts for a field goal kicker to work on. They had to change their clothes in the sub-basement of the YMCA. So the facilities were almost nil. They did have nice cooperation with high schools, but the high schools needed to play their games of course. I think there were just South and Rayen fields at the time, and several high schools, so Youngstown College had to play a lot of times on Thursday night, and so on.

EP: How interesting! I did not know a lot of this. Now being that their games were not actually at the university or close near by as it is today. Did this, do you think, affect fan attendance in any way?

MC: Possibly, but because we didn't have dormitories, and wasn't therefore a campus school, perhaps not. I would say the main support was townspeople. And it probably always has been. And still is to a great extent.

EP: Now being you explained they had a real problem with the practice fields, and things like this. Did this effect team performance do you think in anyway?

MC: The main one I would say is the field goal kicking. They lost numerous early games because they missed a field goal, and they just had to improvise, any way to work on that. At that time, of course, players played both ways, and you didn't have the specialist you have today. So you didn't have the fellow who just kicked field goals.

EP: Do you know anything about what kind of equipment they had? I know a lot of this isn't in here, but you know it's nice to have opinions of people you know.

MC: I know they didn't have facemasks when they started, they didn't have mouthpieces. In fact, the man who was appointed the team dentist was one of the first to try to promote the mouthpieces. As far as the rest of the equipment, I remember they started off with the colors maroon and gold, and they were so difficult to purchase, there wasn't a lot of maroon available in football uniforms. That's one reason they changed to the red and white, because they were much more obtainable.

EP: How interesting, now that is one question that a classmate of mine told me to ask, because they couldn't figure out why the colors had changed. Did they change the gold because it was also hard to obtain or did they just feel the white would look better?

MC: I really don't know the story on that. I do know that it was just too tough to get uniforms that color, simplified things.

EP: And how did they, were those the colors? I know the basketball team started approximately ten years earlier, were those the colors they wore as well?

MC: They were maroon and gold I remember that. In fact, I saw basketball of course, before I saw football, and that was played at the YMCA. And there was a balcony above the court and that's where we stood to see the basketball games. In fact part of the balcony overhung so that from the corner of the basketball court players couldn't shoot.

EP: Oh no! And how did they go about playing then?

MC: As soon as they could, they went to the high school which had better facilities.

EP: How interesting! Now another peculiarity that my classmates and I were wondering about which, I read your wonderful chapter on the naming of the Penguins here.

MC: Oh, you liked that? Human interest.

EP: Yes now that was actually the first chapter read. Could you tell us first how the name Penguin was chosen?

MC: Well again according to my dad, the basketball team was in West Virginia, just getting off a bus. It was very chilly, and the players were flapping their arms up and down, trying to keep warm. Someone said that they looked like a bunch of penguins.

EP: Is this the football team?

MC: That was the basketball team.

EP: The basketball team, how interesting. Now on November 18, 1939, in the third quarter they presented their first penguin. What can you tell us about the first penguin?

MC: Well, it really was interesting...because you can imagine seeing a penguin on the field would be a bit unusual. There had been a lot of bally hoo in conjunction with the penguin prior to that, but just to see him at the game was kind of fun. He didn't stay too long, as it was unusual situation for him as well. But I do remember as an elementary school student that they brought the penguin to Sheridan school, in the gymnasium. They had the whole school come all the youngsters to see Pete. He did all these interesting things. My dad did bring him out to our house. Dad had rubber gloves for some reason to handle him, he couldn't be trusted one hundred percent, he not to bite. I think in the chapter you were reading it told about the homecoming queen going to cuddle up to him or something, and he sort of nipped at her. Anyway he did go into every room in our house, and look around, he was very curious. Among other things there was a couch and he jumped up on that and there was a little table with a flower pot next to that, and somehow he managed to knock that off. So he was very busy and very active, but one of the cute things was there was a rocker, and one of the rockers was on carpeting, and the other was just on smooth varnished floor. He jumped over the part of the rocker that was on the carpeting, successfully, and he went to the next location and slipped on the slippery floor. He sort of fell down getting across, so he marched around a second time, and did a similar thing, and here a third time he persevered, until he jumped over the slippery floor part of the rocker, and then onto other things.

EP: How cute. And how old were you around this time, when your dad brought this penguin home?

MC: Ten.

EP: Ten, so it must have been very interesting for you and your older sister to have this, he just had him for like an afternoon or?

MC: Probably a couple hours.

EP: How nice now I also read in here that it needed to be bathed or, he came with strict directions to be bathed a few times a day and to be dipped in cod liver oil.

MC: Oh my, the whole tale of Pete was fun, and everybody liked it, because it was so new. There were just so many cute things like that, and of course his demise was very sad for the school and the students' reactions to all of it.

EP: And what happened to the penguin?

MC: Well, he drowned of all things. They would make a hole in the ice at Crandall Park and he would go under each day and I suppose go fishing or whatever he did, and come back out. But this one time he didn't come back out, and they were able to find him in just less than an inch of ice I believe, somewhere when they were breaking up the ice to look for him. They thought maybe later that he might have been lonely, because he was the only penguin and used to being around thousands of penguins. So the next time they pursued something like that at the university, they got two penguins, Pete and Patricia.

EP: Why did they choose the names Pete and Patricia, do you know?

MC: Oh, probably alliteration with penguin.

EP: Now I might add we have Pete and Penny.

MC: Right.

EP: Do you have any idea why they changed the name now? Penny from Patricia?

MC: No, I don't.

EP: Now you mentioned Crandall Park, was that the penguin's home?

MC: It was.

EP I think you said someone's house they also took it to.

MC: Yes, to try to acclimate him somehow, and do the best they could by him. Before they took him to Crandall Park they did take him to someone's home. He spent a little time there.

EP: Where did the penguin come from? Did they purchase him?

MC: They purchased him from the penguins Admiral Byrd brought him back from his

expedition to the South Pole.

EP: How nice. Let me see hear. Oh I know what I wanted to ask. Did the actual Pete the Penguin coming to town soften the feelings? It's my understanding that some people in the community didn't feel the name Penguins was a good name for football players.

MC: They had so much fun with him. I think it did help. Of course most of them were Tigers or something much more fierce, but the fact that it's still here, I think they were finally able to accept it.

EP: Moving on here, do you attend the games now? I see you have a wonderful YSU flag hanging outside your home. Have you attended the games since you graduated?

MC: We attend virtually every home game. I can hardly remember ever missing any home games. And then when we can, we go out of town, and certainly to all the post-season games.

EP: What kind of feeling do you get when you sit and watch the games now?

MC: I'm really proud, because something like that either improves or deteriorates. Certainly there's no question that it has come a long, long way. The thing that makes me perhaps happiest is Dike Beede was a very principled person. I think that helped immeasurably getting the program started, and building on that. I think Coach Tressel is equally fine. It makes me very happy so does the tremendous success, that his program has brought.

EP: Of course, we might add here that they have made seven post-season appearances in the 90's, and won four National Championships in the past ten years or so. In the preface here, to your thesis, you wrote that Youngstown College Football is a deserving, as well as successful history. Now did you ever think it would become what it has become?

MC: I really couldn't imagine the success they are having under Coach Tressel. One of the reasons they instituted football in the beginning was to have the name of Youngstown College and now Youngstown State recognized by more than just the townspeople. Under Coach Tressel there is no question about it. I mean by being on ESPN several times, and I know when Coach Osborne, who was at Nebraska for so long, and is recognized as perhaps the best, or certainly one of the best, football coaches in the country was asked if he had heard of Coach Tressel... He said everybody in football has heard of Coach Tressel. In that same connection because of the success Coach Tressel has had they recognize Youngstown State now. Another person, I think, who has been tremendously important to the program is Ron Jawarski.

EP: Who is?

MC: He was a quarterback for seventeen years in the National Football League, and is in my opinion the most outstanding graduate we have ever had in the football program. He's played in the Super Bowl, he's been All-Pro, he's on ESPN now, he's had just all kind of honors. He's always spoken well of the university, he's always come back when he possibly could to help them out with clinics, to receive honors, or give speeches. That just helps, again, promote the name of our Youngstown State nationally.

EP: Now we might also add that Paul McFadden and Jeff Wilkins went professional after attending Youngstown State University which might have also helped. I think that their wonderful playing in the past ten years or so under Tressel has helped to promote YSU. Essentially what you have here, in your thesis, is that they wanted to put Youngstown on the map. I think you stated in several areas that people 150 miles down the road said, "Who the heck is Youngstown"?

MC: That's about it.

EP: What it has grown to today is just amazing. Just amazing.

MC: Willard Webster, our first athletic director, came here because of Coach Beede. He again was from about fifteen miles away from here, and he didn't know that Youngstown College existed. So I do think there is no question that football program has helped immeasurably.

EP: You father, going back, I just thought of this, did he play football?

MC: Yes he did. He played for Hiram College, and he was an end. He weighed 120 pounds, and he played both ways.

EP: Oh wow! A lot smaller than they are now.

MC: In that same connection, I don't know if you happened to notice, but the first football team didn't have one two-hundred pounder.

EP: I did notice that. Just very interesting. Now did he play in high school, or how did he get into playing college football?

MC: I don't believe he played in high school. It was difficult for him to even get to high school, because he's from tiny Palmyra, out by Lake Milton, and he had to take a train to Alliance to go to high school.

EP: Oh my what a far..

MC: I don't even know if Alliance had a football team. Of course they have a

reputation for one now. But when he went there, I don't think they did, and if they did he would have to get home for farm work. He wouldn't have had time for something like that.

EP: Now this is a great place to add more about your father. Could you tell us about him? What kind of person he was? What he meant to the community of Youngstown?

MC: He was very energetic. He loved the university and his work, and in his mind there wasn't a better university. You were asking about some little tales. One I thought was interesting, because I graduated from Mount Union College. At that commencement they had a speaker, I think his name was Acken. I think he was a senator from one of the New England states, and he was in the news at that time. So it was kind of a coup for Mount Union to have him speak, and he was very interesting with the events of that time. My dad did come over for the MUC commencement, and we had our commencement locally at Youngstown after that. They had, in my opinion, the least interesting of commencement speakers. He was a military man and just stated a lot of figures, and this type of thing. I thought it was quite boring. Anyway I remember after my dad saying, "You had a good speaker but I really did think ours was better." So because he was so sold on YSU he tried to sell everyone he could. I think his enthusiasm was kind of catchy. I do think he also helped promote the university. In the thesis, I'm sure you read too, but I was proud of the fact that he really was an honest person, other than thinking Youngstown was the best school in the country.

EP: It is though. (laughing)

MC: Good for you! He was very hard working and he seemed to have quite a knack for money raising. As you may or may not know he still worked in conjunction with the educational foundation after he retired as President. He raised a lot of money, so when they turned over the physical facilities to the state, they allowed him to keep his monetary fund, and that's what started the educational foundation, which is now called Youngstown foundation. When he left he had raised twenty-nine million or something like that. Of course, it has grown to one hundred and twenty-five million now. The point where he left the twenty-five million was great, because when he came there was no endowment whatsoever.

EP: Wonderful, wonderful man then we might add. Was he gone a lot?

MC: He was very very active, he really was, so I would have to say yes he was gone a lot, because he worked so hard. He would be at the university all day, and then he would go to as many as four functions in the evening at university functions he would just stay a half an hour or hour at each one. He did like it, and wanted to show his interest, the fact that he was backing them one hundred percent. Although he was gone a lot, we went to a lot of things too. As I suggested the performances that were given at YC if there were three operatic performances, we

saw three. So we weren't really left out. We admired some of the operatic singers and I remember after the third performance one time I was in his office waiting for my parents, because they often talked to the performers afterward. He brought the star performer in so I could meet him. So there were a lot of privileges that way.

EP: Was your mother supportive of his role in the community?

MC: She probably got him into education in the beginning. He wanted to be a shoe salesman, and might have done well in that capacity. Her family was interesting in that they really were educated. Her parents were both college graduates, as were her grandparents. That was when Hiram College was just getting underway. So the whole history of her family was in education. Conversely, my dad's family were coal miners from Wales, and farmers. He realized early growing up that he did want an education, so it was kind of natural for him to follow along in that way. I do think it was her influence that got him into education as opposed to business.

EP: How proud you must be to know that your father has come from such a different background, and has been so successful, and had such an impact on the community. I don't think Youngstown would be anywhere near where it is today without a person like your father. Youngstown surely wouldn't be Youngstown if we didn't have the university here now.

MC: Well certainly nice of you to say. One thing I particularly was proud of, I don't know if you know or not, WYTV did some sort of survey locally. They picked the twenty most influential people in the Mahoning Valley for the past century, and he was one them.

EP: How nice! I'm almost wrapped up here, is there anything else you would like to say here about your father or family?

MC: I guess the thing I was proudest of was the fact that he really was the same to everybody, it didn't matter if you were President of the Board or in the maintenance department or anything. And I can honestly say he really was the same to everyone.

EP: A good man then. Would you like to tell us a little bit about yourself here? You attend, I think, which church Poland Presbyterian Church?

MC: Yes, you've done a little research.

EP: Well when we spoke on the phone you filled this out here, and you know our YSU alumni, and you're in the Penguin Club. What kind of things do you do with the Penguin Club?

MC: We just attend all their events, we do support them.

EP: What kind of things do they do, what kind of events?

MC: They honored the football team when they needed to raise money for the rings that they earned as champions. My husband buys tables and that type of thing.

EP: How nice! Is there anything else you want to add to this interview about Youngstown football that you think I may have not touched on or Coach Beede.

MC: Well I can only say I think we were enormously lucky to have Coach Beede, because he really was an honorable person, as well as an able person.

EP: Very nice. Now I might add here that that your thesis is on reserve at Maag Library, which is wonderful. I urge anybody who listens to this to go and take a look at it. I think you did a marvelous job with that. And I thank you very much for taking time out of your day here to talk with us.

MC: Oh thank you very much.

EP: Thank you.