

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Lowellville History Project

Personal Experiences

O. H. 313

RALPH CUNNINGHAM

Interviewed

by

Thomas Kirker

on

August 2, 1985

RALPH CUNNINGHAM

Ralph R. Cunningham was born August 31, 1915, in Lisbon, Ohio. Shortly after his birth the Cunningham's moved to Lowellville, Ohio. Ralph has lived, all but his early days, in Lowellville. After his graduation from Lowellville High School he worked in the family owned Lowellville businesses, Cunningham's Funeral Home and Cunningham's Furniture. In 1936 and 1937 Ralph attended the Cleveland College of Embalming, and after graduation he entered into the funeral business as a full-time occupation. He also took the Pennsylvania Board and has a licence there.

He and his wife, Charlotte, were married September 8, 1939. They have three children: Suanne Rugh, Marcia Lynn, and Kathleen Elizabeth. When not working at Cunningham's Funeral Home in either Poland or Lowellville, Ralph spends time farming. For only two years, 1945 to 1946, while in the Army, Ralph was away from the family businesses in Lowellville; he served in the United States and Okinawa.

Mr. Cunningham served for many years as the Salvation Army chairman for Lowellville and New Middletown, was a charter member of the Lowellville Lions Club, and served as chairman for many things in the community. On November 10, 1985, the town will honor him as the man of the year with a big dinner and dance. He's very interested in historical things, and he is usually the one sought out for information by people wanting to know things about Lowellville.

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INTERVIEWEE: RALPH CUNNINGHAM
INTERVIEWER: Thomas Kirker
SUBJECT: Pyatt Street Market, Businesses
DATE: August 2, 1985

K: This is an interview with Mr. Ralph Cunningham for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on the History of Lowellville, Ohio. This interview is being conducted at Mr. Cunningham's residence, 1212 Bedford Road, Lowellville, Ohio, on August 2, 1985, at approximately 3:15 p.m.

My first question, Mr. Cunningham, is when and where were you born?

C: I was born August 31, 1915, in Lisbon, Ohio.

K: How did you come to Lowellville?

C: My parents had lived in Lowellville prior to going to Lisbon a short period of time. I was born down there; they were there for about three years, but most of my life we spent in Lowellville.

K: What business was your dad in?

C: He was in the furniture and funeral businesses in Lowellville.

K: Was he in both businesses at the same time?

C: Yes. He started to work for his brother in 1907 in the furniture and funeral businesses in Lowellville, and with the exception of the few years he was down in Lisbon, he had always been in the furniture and funeral business in Lowellville.

K: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

C: There are no sisters, but I had three brothers. My oldest brother was Murray and then George. They are both deceased. Then there is my brother, Bob.

K: Did you all live in the same house?

C: Yes. All the rest of them were born in Lowellville, but we lived in different houses at various times. We were always either in Lowellville or near Lowellville.

K: When you were a kid, what were some of the things that you did, like in the summer?

C: I usually would be out in the woods. I always kind of liked to hunt and stay around nature.

K: Like hunting and camping?

C: Anything, just playing. As I grew older, I used to shoot the bow and arrow, things like that, projects of that sort.

K: Do you remember any of your friends?

C: Sure, I remember a good deal of friends. Of course, you mainly have just a half dozen real close friends.

K: Did you all pretty much have the same interests?

C: I'd say similar interests, not all had the exact same interests as I did, but we were pretty compatible.

K: When you became older how did your life change in Lowellville? What did you do on a Saturday night?

C: Well, I don't know whether you are speaking of young adult lives or . . .

K: Say from sixteen to twenty-five or early twenties.

C: As a young man, really we didn't date a lot until we got older and approached a marriageable age. We used to run around together, a bunch of fellows, on a Saturday night. We did more of that sort of thing than what I think they do today.

K: Did you work for your father?

C: Yes. Actually, I graduated from high school pretty much in the midst of the Depression in 1933. Prior to that, for a year or so and even after I graduated we worked. We had started in the furniture business for ourselves around 1931 or 1932, even before there was much remuneration for it; I still worked around

the furniture store and funeral home.

K: When did the furniture store go out of business?

C: The furniture store went officially out of business in April of 1983.

K: Was it a good business in Lowellville?

C: Yes, it was a good business. The last few years it got pretty trying though. We had, of course, opened the funeral business in Poland in 1963 and that was a better part of our business. We thought we would close the furniture store and put all of our efforts into running the two funeral homes, one in Poland and one in Lowellville.

K: You mentioned that you graduated from school during the Depression, what can you recall about the Depression in Lowellville?

C: I think the main thing you learned from the Depression is the fact that you had a good sense of values. Even though you had to work long, hard hours for a little bit of money, it didn't seem as though it was any hardship on you. It was the way you had to do things. I really have no regrets as far as my childhood is concerned.

K: Did you listen to the radio every night for Roosevelt's fireside chats?

C: No, I can't say that I listened to the radio a whole lot, anymore than I watch television today. I maybe watch television more than I ever listened to the radio.

K: Did the Depression really hurt Lowellville?

C: Well, yes, it did in a way. However, during the Depression there were a number of businesses, although some of them didn't work too well. We had steel mills in Lowellville and quarries around Lowellville, just over the line in Pennsylvania. We probably had more businesses then than we do today. I don't know about the total employment compared to now as it might have been then.

K: How has Lowellville changed? Are there buildings that you remember from the 1920's and 1930's that have been replaced or burnt down?

C: There are an awful lot of buildings that are not here now that were here when I was younger.

K: Can you recall any of those?

- C: There was Burkes Drugstore. Just east of the drugstore there were some stores that had been bakeries and different things like that, I don't remember too much about the earlier stores. Zuerchers Bakery was one of them. The hardware and dry goods store was Pyle and Howard's. We had an awful lot of grocery stores in Lowellville back in those days, Bernon's, Chuey's, Frech's, and I think some other smaller grocery stores scattered around town too.
- K: You had mentioned the drugstore, did it have the soda fountain in the counter?
- C: Yes, not that I ever had a whole lot of sodas down there, but I remember they did have a soda fountain at the drugstore, the chairs with the iron, twisted legs, and seats.
- K: For the younger people was it a big focal point in town, the drugstore and the soda fountain?
- C: It was one of the places where if you were downtown and waiting on them to close up, there was a period of time, particularly when I was out of high school, that if we weren't working at the store the drugstore would be patronized by various young people.
- K: Were there baseball, softball, and football games at the time?
- C: Back in those days there were a lot of church teams. Mainly, the boys would participate in them. I don't remember many girls who participated in those kind of sports. In high school, there were girls' basketball teams as well as boys'. The boys seemed to predominate in the sports field, but we had many church leagues. During the Depression, there was a lot of baseball played, probably because there were so many people available to play it.
- K: While you were growing up did you ever ride on the trains, trolleys, or streetcars?
- C: No, the streetcar ran when I was young. Around the time the Depression started, or in the early 1930's or late 1920's, they quit running the streetcars between New Castle and Youngstown, which was the main line that ran through the town.
- K: Then you didn't ride it?
- C: No, I can't specifically remember riding on it even once, but I suppose I may have.

- K: During that period that you were growing up, you mentioned the church softball games, did everyone pretty much stay within their own nationality and religion? Would you have ball games with the Italian Americans?
- C: I remember there were various church leagues. I would say most of the church leagues, that I remember, were of the Protestant denomination. A lot of baseball was played in the summer by mixed nationalities and people with mixed religion without any particular emphasis on who was what. It was pretty much based on how good of a player you were. I was never much of a baseball player, so I can't say that I fit into that category too well.
- K: Did you fish? You mentioned that you liked the woods, I just wondered . . .
- C: I really never did any of what you would call real earnest fishing until I got older and after I was married. We went to Canada with our family and we used to fish up there, which was considerably more game fishing than what I might have done as a kid.
- K: You never fished in the quarries or in the Mahoning River?
- C: Not in the Mahoning River, and I don't recall ever fishing in the quarries, although we swam in the quarries when I was high school age or older. There was a run over the state line, Coffee Run it was called. That is the place I learned to swim. We used to fish for chubs and crabs, but not to any great extent.
- K: Did you have a swimming hole where all the boys went?
- C: Yes, at Coffee Run, and at one time a place called Sheep Pond, and later on down by the bridge where we used to have a rope that you would swing out and drop into the pond.
- K: During the Depression, do you remember a lot of hobos or bums living in Lowellville, people riding on the trains?
- C: I can remember that there were more of those people that would never come through Lowellville, but I never knew that much about them. I never spent a whole lot of time when I was a kid downtown, but I do remember as I got a little older that there would be fellows that would come in . . . I think that the town was obliged to give him a meal and let him sleep in the jail.
- K: How did people pay for a funeral if they couldn't afford it during the Depression?

- C: Funerals back in those days weren't a whole lot of money, but there wasn't a lot of money around. I would say by the time I got into it, around 1932 or 1933, a good deal of the people did have insurance. People that didn't would pay their funeral bills on time, if necessary.
- K: Did anyone try to pay you with goods?
- C: No, we never had much bartering in our business.
- K: Most of the people that went through your funeral home, were they buried around Lowellville?
- C: Yes, a big share of them were buried in either the Lowellville Cemetery, which although a lot of people think it's a Protestant Cemetery, it's a nonsectarian cemetery owned and operated by the Poland Township trustees. The Holy Rosary Cemetery is just adjacent to that; of course, there was a time that only Catholics were buried in that. Now Catholics and Protestants can be buried in either place.
- K: We are going to move now from the Depression to the Second World War. Can you visualize what Lowellville looked like in 1941 when America went off to war?
- C: Pretty much, I wasn't too young then. I was twenty-six or in that general age. We had active railroads and fairly active railroad stations; those that weren't active passenger stations were active freight stations. We had Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh and Lake Erie, B&O, all of those three different freight stations.
- K: Were troops and equipment moved through Lowellville?
- C: Sure they were.
- K: Did many of your friends go to the service?
- C: Yes, down there on that World War II memorial particularly, just Lowellville had a lot of boys who were conscripted and an awful lot that enlisted.
- K: At any time did you have funerals in Lowellville for someone that had been killed in the South Pacific or in Germany?
- C: Yes. Down on Liberty Street there are little monuments with the name and rank of the boys who were killed in the service, although all of them were not brought back; I suppose that twenty-five or thirty of them had a Lowellville mailing address that were killed in World War II, particularly a large amount in the Battle of the Bulge.

- K: Was it harder to bury these men that were younger and were guys that you grew up with than somebody a little bit older?
- C: The bodies that were shipped back were shipped in sealed caskets, so even though you might have known the boy, you were dealing, at that time, with a casket knowing that a body was in there. Although emotion ran high with the family, I don't know that it ran quite as high with people that were not family.
- K: Did Lowellville have any celebrations because the war was over and the men were coming home?
- C: Yes, they did. They had a welcome home celebration; I think that was in 1916.
- K: Was there a parade?
- C: Yes, it was a pretty big thing.
- K: Did the whole town turn out?
- C: Yes, it was quite a parade.
- K: At that time, the end of the Second World War, what would you estimate the size of Lowellville to be?
- C: I think it was somewhere around 2,200, maybe a little more or less, but in that neighborhood.
- K: When did it start to really shrink? Now it seems like there are very few people living there anymore.
- C: I think I saw the other day something that there is only around 1,500 people in Lowellville. That's in Lowellville itself, I assume. We have a very small school system and we have very few businesses.
- K: When you were in school, can you recall how many teachers you had?
- C: Do you mean how many in high school?
- K: Yes, you mentioned that school was always small.
- C: You usually were taking four subjects at one particular time in order to get sixteen credits. I ended up with more like nineteen or so credits because I took things other than English, history, and that sort of thing. I had some music and typing, so I suppose that at any one time I might have been in contact with five or six in any semester, maybe seven.

K: This is at Lowellville High School?

C: Yes, it would have to be the high school. It was in grade school with the exception of junior high where we didn't have that many teachers. Even in junior high it was usually just one or two teachers that we had, unless we were taking music or some other course.

K: How many students were there when you graduated?

C: At the time we graduated, we had the largest graduating class that ever graduated from Lowellville. I think it was around 43 or 44, in that neighborhood.

K: That was the biggest class?

C: That was the biggest class and I don't think they had many after that that were a whole lot larger; Actually, some of them I know were a little larger.

K: Did you compete with other schools in sports?

C: Yes, Lowellville was quite a sports minded community; it was part of my time. At the time that I was in school, they started a football team in Lowellville about five years prior to my getting old enough to play. We used to play practically all the county schools that today are too big to be played. We used to play Boardman and Canfield, and Poland didn't even have a football team back in those days. The year that I was a senior we played about nine games: Struthers, Campbell, and even Akron Garfield. I don't know what kind of champs they were, but we gave them a good scare and they had a hard time beating us, nineteen to six I think it was.

Basketball, they had teams that went down to Columbus several years, but they never got the state championship. They had a lot of good track with the boys. One of the boys ahead of me, Kenneth Dickson, got second in the mile down in Columbus in track. He must have been pretty good.

K: Were did you live when you were in high school?

C: We lived on Stuart Road; we used to call it either North Heights or Cemetery Hill. In Lowellville, we would call it North Heights right over the hill it was called Stuart Road, and most everybody used to call it Cemetery Hill.

K: Did you walk to school every day?

C: Yes, it wasn't that far. It might have been a little over a quarter of a mile.

- K: At that same period of time, do you remember any large disasters, say a fire, robbery, or a train wreck, things that were major events in Lowellville?
- C: Nothing comes up immediately. I can remember as a kid, one of the policemen was shot by a shoemaker, I think. Nobody did or will ever know why he shot and killed this policeman. He had a little shoemaker's shop. That was quite an earthshattering thing for young people. I was younger then, maybe fifth or sixth grade.
- K: Once in a while when I was a kid the powder mill would blow up out there. Sometimes there would be injuries, that was out around Carbon, Pennsylvania; sometimes there wouldn't be any injuries. I can't remember any train wrecks where there was a whole lot of damage or people hurt.
- K: If you could draw a picture of Lowellville up until 1950, in one word what would you call Lowellville? When you were born in 1915 to 1950, how would you really sum up life in Lowellville?
- C: Pretty much a typical small town.
- K: Did everybody pretty much know what everyone else was doing?
- C: I would say pretty much in Lowellville, yes.
- K: I had also heard that your mother had been one of the earliest families to this area?
- C: My mother was not an early Lowellville resident, but her family was an early resident of the general area, just over the state line. My great great-grandfather came over from Ireland in 1771 and settled in what is now Lawrence County, but in those days was actually Mercer County. He settled out just south of New Bedford in 1796. He had hundreds of acres out there, farm ground and so forth. His name was Alexander Wright.
- K: My great-grandfather, James Erskine, came over from Scotland prior to the Civil War and he has set a pretty good mark for himself in this general area. Part of it is over the state line and part of it in the Lowellville-Youngstown area.
- K: The Erskine Quarry?
- C: It was called the Erskine Quarry, but it was never owned by any of the Erskines. I guess the reason they called it that is my great grandfather made bricks and he ran out of clay down around Edinburgh. He bought some ground

because there was clay there. It was mostly limestone that was mined up there. They used to have a drum house on the property and that's probably why it identified as Erskine Quarry, which was nothing more than a large drum-brake that let cars go down over the hill. At one time three, another time five full cars would pull the three to five empty cars back up the incline and there was a tipple where all the limestone was dumped down there, close to the Mahoning River.

K: What did your grandfather do?

C: My great-grandfather primarily made bricks. He had a company called the Lowell Firebrick Company. He had an office on the square in Youngstown. He had a warehouse off of South Avenue in Youngstown where they warehoused these bricks. I never knew too much about it, but it appeared to me that maybe the bricks were used to line the furnaces, the steel furnaces.

K: How long was he in business?

C: Quite a long time. He came up to this general area, I'm not sure of the exact year, but 1860 to 1870. He lived to be an old man; he was in his nineties when he died. Primarily, he made bricks, but he also seemed to acquire a lot of real estate as he went along.

K: Real estate in this area?

C: Yes, in the Lowellville area. He had a lot of property like the quarry property and four or five properties in Lowellville. His son, George, my grandfather, was a gardner, or a farmer. He and two other men, Mr. Darrow and Mr. Shipton started the Grower's Market in Youngstown, which was the forerunner of the Pyatt Street Market. Bert Shipton runs it today.

K: Where was their farm at?

C: It was the same farm that my great-grandfather took clay out of down there, just over in Pennsylvania. Alexander Wright had hundreds of acres over there, my grandmother Erskine's side of the family, whose maiden name was Wright.

K: They dug the clay from the Erskine Quarry area, did they make the bricks in Lowellville or did they ship them to Youngstown?

C: I think they made them down around Edinburg. There was a farm down there called the Dewberry Farm where he mined his clay. When he ran out of clay he moved to where this quarry was, but I think the bricks, as far as I know, were made around Edinburg. There were different

companies that made bricks down in that area.

K: Then he shipped his bricks to a store in Youngstown?

C: He shipped them to Youngstown. He owned a piece of property there that was later bought by Republic Steel, I suppose close to a hundred years ago when they bought the property from him or his estate, I don't remember which. It's down where they used to have what they called the Bessemer converter, down in that area. He had an office on the square in Youngstown. My mother used to tell me about when she was a girl and going to Youngstown with her mother.

K: Was that a big thing for her, going to Youngstown?

C: Sure, she rode the streetcars an awful lot, my mother did. She used to talk about racing the streetcars when she was a girl with her horse. She used to race up the roads there and get the people to watch her out on the road while she was showing off.

K: What do you know about the Erskine Quarry, was it still in operation?

C: No, I don't think it was at all. There's an area near where Erskine Quarry was a few years ago they were getting some stone out of and making some lime for the fields. I can remember this drum house; it was kind of a focal point because anything that was mined there for a long period of time would go over the hill to the tipple. Later on there were a couple of fellows from town here who would physically blast the stone and pick it up. Frank Mangine was one of them and I think his brother-in-law was another. I think there was one of the Quinn's involved at one time in part of that operation down there. I don't remember what they called those, but they were all down in that Erskine Quarry area. At that time, there were still a lot of quarries out on the Carbon and Hillsville area.

K: Did a lot of people from Lowellville work there?

C: Not so many in the Erskine Quarry area at the later time. They did at one time; there used to be a lot. There used to be a lot of people that worked at Carbon, and a quarry called Lake Erie, which was later bought by Republic, I think. Johnson Quarry was bought by US Steel.

K: So they hauled a lot of stone through Lowellville then? Most of that stone went to Youngstown?

C: Most all of the stone that went in the mills went down

- the P&LE high-grade more or less from Carbon on the south side of the river on the hillside there and would go to Sharon Steel and perhaps onto Sheet & Tube or Republic. Some of it was hauled by trucks too.
- K: I'm pretty much out of questions. I guess you're kind of pleased at that. Is there anything that you really want to add or anything that I've overlooked?
- C: My father was a good hardworking businessman. He had come to work in 1907 for his brother, Jeff Cunningham, who had started in 1896. Lowellville dates back a long time farther than that. With the exception of the few years down in Lisbon where he was in the furniture and funeral businesses by himself; he was always in Lowellville. My two brothers and myself took over the ownership right in the midst of the Depression, that's when we went from using the morgue and taking all the bodies home to the place where we actually had the funeral home. It's not quite where we are now, that was in the early thirties. Then around 1939 we moved into the funeral home that we are in now in Lowellville. Starting up in the Depression and working during the Depression, you worked to get things done, and of course, in those days there wasn't much money to pass around to anyone. It was just the kind of matter to make a living and make things grow.
- K: How did he get his training as a funeral director?
- C: I think my dad took some schooling, then the state board. My dad was a high school graduate and at the time we came along you had to be a high school graduate and then take a twelve month course of intensified study in the mortuary field, pass a couple of state boards, one for funeral director's license, the other for an embalming license.
- K: Were you ever a coroner? Could you be a coroner?
- C: A funeral director in Pennsylvania can be a coroner. I don't know what the state law is in Ohio. All that I've ever known had to be medical men in Ohio. Our law must be a little different than the Pennsylvania law.
- K: You mentioned your mother and your father a little bit, do you remember any Christmases or anything like that?
- C: Sure. We were never showered with a lot of different things, but we usually got something pretty practical for Christmas. I can remember one time we got a saddle for Christmas. When we were young and lived up on what we called Cemetery Hill, we had a pony from the time

we were pretty young up until we were almost adults, I guess. That was a very memorable remembrance as far as a Christmas was concerned. It was usually clothing or something like that that we got.

K: Did you spend a lot of time working?

C: Always, yes.

K: I assume, that with the type of business your father was in, he was away at odd hours?

C: Oh yes. The funeral business requires it, and in the furniture business in order to be successful it requires an awful lot of your time and energy. I always liked the furniture business, but at this stage of the game I'm glad I'm not in it any longer. We still keep pretty busy at the funeral home.

K: How did you meet your wife? That's a question I haven't hit on yet.

C: She came to church one Sunday with a friend of hers that was dating my brother and we started to hit it off. I guess that's all; we got married.

K: She was from Lowellville?

C: No, she was from Columbiana at the time.

K: She came to Lowellville to go to church?

C: The church that I belonged to, yes. It was a Christian Church in Lowellville. That's when we met.

K: Did he marry that girlfriend?

C: No, Bob married another girl, a Lowellville girl, but not that particular girl.

K: Do a lot of people that were born and raised in Lowellville stay in the area?

C: Not too much anymore. The young people seem to move either out of Lowellville to maybe Poland, Struthers, Austintown, or somewhere, and lately out of this part of the country with the work that they are trained to do. There isn't too much industry in Lowellville anymore, not too much business.

K: Are there still trains that run through?

- C: Yes, with the exception of very few passenger trains they just kind of run through for special excursions. It's mostly all coal or automobile or something like that. During the war there were an awful lot of oil tankers.
- K: During the years when Lowellville had a mill and there was mining around Hillsville and the railroad, was it a dirty town?
- C: We had the steam engines, that was prior to the diesel engines. There was a lot of soot, yes, created in the downtown area. People didn't think a whole lot of it. The river was dirty, it was red; people don't think a whole lot about that now. The diesels don't make that much dirt and I don't think they are as noisy, although they have some shrill whistles. The river is a lot cleaner than it used to be and they have the sewage disposal of plants all the way down through the valley. I guess a lot of people would rather see the river red, I don't know. There's someone, Sam Chiracosta, that I thought really had a good perception of the steel business. He says, "Making steel without smoke is like frying fish without a smell." (Laughter)
- K: Since you mentioned that you knew that Italian man, was there a lot of animosity between the new Italian immigrants and the Scotch Irish? Was there a lot of prejudice?
- C: I think most of that, or anything that would have been that way, would have been mostly prior to my being a kid. I can remember some fisticuffs between somebody from the west end, south end, and occasionally from the east end. Back in those days it was not unusual to fight even if you weren't looking for a fight, because there was always somebody to put a chip on your shoulder making sure it got knocked off so a fight got started. I don't think any of them were made for lasting bad feelings. I think most of the boys that I used to have fights with, I would say, if any of them were still living would be good friends of mine, but not too many of them are living now.
- K: Was the town pretty much segregated? Did the Italian descent stay on one part of the town?
- C: I suppose maybe to a certain extent it might have been true, say to the south side of the river or the west side and some to the east side of town. It was awhile before some of the Italian or Slovak people moved into what might be called the Walnut Street area on the north side of the river. Most all of the people of foreign extraction have taken a good interest in their homes.

Not only do they keep their homes up nicely, but they have built nice homes. They have a lot of pride in ownership.

K: At this point I have no more questions. If you would like to add anything that you think I should have covered . . .

C: I don't know whether I have anything to add, unless Charlotte thinks there is something I should add to it.

Mrs. C: He would walk, he had no automobile, up and down the streets and talk to everybody, any church: Protestant, Catholic, anybody. He brought these people together, and he was in the Lion's Club. He was a breath of something down there.

K: Do you remember his name?

C: Oh yes, he's at the university.

C: Father Witt.

C: Do you know him?

K: No, I don't.

Mrs. C: That was something to see, how he operated down there and what he was able to do.

C: When my mother was a girl there was a fellow by the name of Harold Bell Wright who came to church one Sunday at the Lowellville Christian Church. My grandfather, George Erskine, invited him home for dinner and he stayed for two years. My mother, who was eight or nine at the time, gave up her bedroom to Wright, who became the first American author to make a million dollars writing. He was a very prolific writer and he wrote several things. The books that he was best known for were The Shepard of the Hills, and the Winning of Barbara Worth. I guess there were probably a dozen or more books that he wrote. My grandfather didn't think he was going to amount to very much. He did work in the quarries some, stayed there for a couple of years. He probably was kind of a naturalist in his thinking, so he finally moved down into a little shanty down in the quarry. He made a bed out of barrel staves, looped it with ropes like a hammock and that's what he slept on.

If you read his books, you will find there is always a nice, clean romance, none of the dirty, filthy stuff they have to put in books to make them sell today. He was a minister, author, and a painter. We have a painting down at the Lowellville Funeral Home that he

painted and autographed for my grandmother, Anna. Her name was Wright and his name was Wright but there was no relation.

K: What year was he there?

C: The picture was autographed in 1896, I think it was. He was there for two or three years or four perhaps. He then left on a canoe with one of the Darrow boys, or at least with a boat that they built; my mother called it a canoe. He went out around Hannibal, Missouri, and ended up in the Ozarks. There is a Sheperd of the Hills Museum out there where they put on the play at a summer theatre every year. I don't know whether people knew if he was a painter or not. He painted a pretty nice oil painting of daisies for my grandmother.

Mrs C: I don't think many people know he lived in Lowellville. We are trying to collect all his books at book sales. We are getting the word out that they should keep them for us. We are trying to put them in the school library; I think the kids should know about this.

C: I've talked to people older than me who said that the reading of the Sheperd of the Hills was a required book to read when they were in high school.

Mrs. C: There were a lot of kids that came from Lowellville that weren't famous, but were pretty well-off in their professions. The principal, Mr. Metzger, one time made up a list for me when we were doing the history of Lowellville, and I was surprised at the list of people that he had kept track of. Quite a few of them, weren't there?

C: A lot of bright kids came out of Lowellville from all walks of life as far as nationality is concerned.

Mrs. C: It's like a private school.

K: Lowellville?

Mrs. C: The classes are still thirty kids.

K: From what it looks like, I was there a couple of weeks ago, it looks like no one has moved in in the past ten years?

C: Where would they build? There are no lots to build on.

K: That's true.

C: Many years ago, after many attempts, we got part of Coitsville Township in the Lowellville School District.

That's a pretty tough thing to do and I think it may have helped Lowellville keep its school, I'm not sure, which in a way helps keep its identification.

Mrs. C: You stop and think, if they lose their school . . .

K: What would there be? Where do you think Lowellville will be in ten years, a hypothetical question? Do you think it will continue to fall off?

C: I don't think it really is going to grow very much. We sold a building down there to a young fellow who is building arch-shaped glass transoms that go over Anderson windows. He's really going to town down there. We've got a good foundry, Falcon Foundry, a good plumbing shop, and a machine shop.

K: When did the mills go out?

C: Sharon Steel was lost shortly after 1960 completely. We haven't had a steel mill since then. Sheet & Tube used to make pipe and store it down in the Lowellville village limits. There's no pipe anymore stored down there; I don't know how much they're making. Even when other parts of the steel mills weren't working they were making pipe for the oil wells, and that's way off.

K: If we would go to the football field, across the river at the top of the hill about three quarters of the way up, there are parts of an old building there . . .

C: Sharon Steel ran from that area all the way to Washington Street in Lowellville. The old Mary Furnace made pig iron, not steel, for all the wars from the Civil War up to the Korean War.

K: Was there a train that went up the side of that hill?

C: That's the P&LE siding. The P&LE is actually on the north side of the river but the P&LE tracks ran up through Carbon and up to Hillsville.

Mrs. C: It hasn't been very long since that has stopped because I can remember stopping for a train.

C: I don't remember seeing any trains over there for a long time.

K: I have run out of questions.