

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Pearl Street Mission

Personal Experiences

O. H. 329

MARY CORRADO

Interviewed

by

Bernice Mercer

on

October 24, 1975

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: MARY CORRADO

INTERVIEWER: Bernice Mercer

SUBJECT: Italian Language, Methodist Church, Teacher
Training

DATE: October 24, 1975

M: This is an interview with Mary Corrado for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on the Pearl Street Mission by Bernice Mercer. This interview is being conducted at Mary Corrado's home on October 24, 1975, at approximately 3:30 p.m.

We'll start with the matter of your home.

C: I was in Italy and was there for just less than a month before I came to the United States. My mother and dad had already had their passports ready to come, but because I was to be born they wouldn't let her come at that time. I came to the United States in a boat which took a long time. I was quite ill because of the salt water. I was in the hospital of the boat most of the time so that when I came here I'm sure my mother thought I was a cranky little baby because I did a lot of crying. It might have been because of the conditions I was in at the time.

It wasn't too long after that when my sisters came along so that we were just steps. There were seven of us and we were practically steps, about a year apart. There were five girls and two boys. I am the oldest, but I am not the oldest child. There were two that were born before me that died of measles or some childhood disease before my mother came to the United States.

My dad was quite adventurous in that he came to the United States and left my mother and then came back and insisted that she come. He went back and forth about three times before he finally got her to come and stay.

When she came my mother was never totally assimilated into

the American way of life because she did not speak the English language and she totally spoke Italian in the home. So even to her death she felt that she would like to go home, to her home in Italy, and to her family. As much as I tried to get her to come to Pearl Street where there were women's groups, parents' groups, and mothers' clubs--I was organizing them and working with them--I couldn't get her to come out of the home that much. She was rather a homebody. My dad was out of the home, he came and worked in the mill.

M: Got the language?

C: He got the language much better than my mother did. He also was much more assimilated and content here. He never talked about going back as my mother did. Of course, my mother was not totally happy here because my dad was very domineering and very temperamental and often had a mean temper. At times he would throw things at her so that she felt rather insecure. She had a thyroid condition which didn't help any of this. I tried to protect her and make her feel more comfortable and I tried to be understanding. I treated my mother almost like a sister because I understood the things she was going through. My brothers and sisters were too little, they were busy doing everyday things, playing up on the hill, and getting sour grass, and playing house. I would be closer to my mother.

M: No wonder the mission met such luck in you.

C: It did.

M: The people at the mission . . .

C: The people at the mission helped me a great deal. These are things I don't discuss or say very often but the mission was my refuge, my place where I could go.

M: It became your second home?

C: Like a second home.

M: You found mothers there that took the place of the bad part?

C: Right, and my boss there, Miss Dire, was very understanding with me and when I needed something or was upset about something I would go to her. Although, I didn't go to her when my dad was carrying on; I wouldn't go to her for that. I know that there were several times when we didn't even have food for the table and I would go to see Miss Dire and she would take care of it and never mention it again. She was the kind that was very understanding that way.

M: Is this lady still living?

C: No, she passed away.

M: This mission at the time was completely financed by the Methodist church?

C: This mission started way back in the early 1900's on Himrod Street as a Sunday school, a Sunday afternoon program of some kind. It was then taken over by the Methodist church and moved down to the corner of Emma Street, which is now called High Street. It was Emma Street and Pearl Street, and they built a little Italian church there called Italian Mission. The Methodist church paid for the preacher who was there at the time, who spoke Italian. I think that was one of the reasons my parents were drawn to it, although my parents didn't go there until my family and I were assimilated in there. I went there for sewing classes and cooking classes. My sisters and brothers went there to kindergarten. There was not a public kindergarten at that time. This helped out so the neighborhood children could go to kindergarten. We were only about three blocks away so that the children could go there without the fear of them crossing too many busy streets. The kindergarten started when I was about ten or twelve years old so I didn't have the benefit of going there.

I started in the sewing. We were taught the things that were very practical; we weren't concerned too much about the religious part. It was a community center run by a church. We learned more about the practical things. For instance, we would take a garment, take all the stitching out of it, clean it off with a damp cloth, press it, turn it on the wrong side, cut it over a pattern, and make something out of it. We also learned how to make pudding, which we in our home never had. We never cared about pudding; my mother never cared about pudding. We made some American foods that we never made at home; we ate the typical Italian food.

It was these things that I went in on Monday and Wednesday for after school and pretty soon I showed some interest on the piano. They gave me an old grand piano that sat in my mother's bedroom because we had no other room for it. We practiced, my sisters and I, in the bedroom, and that's how I started learning the piano. There were only four bedrooms in our house, a bedroom and a kitchen on the first floor and two bedrooms upstairs. The bath was down in the cellar. We thought we were living high in that home.

About the time I was ten or twelve we moved into another home that my father built across the street which was a larger home. We had a bath upstairs.

M: Was he a builder?

C: He had it built.

M: I'm sure he helped a lot though?

C: Not especially, we had contractors do it.

M: Did he work in the steel mill?

C: He worked in the steel mills for a long time, but he liked gardening, typically the European type of gardening, flower gardening, the type of gardens where you had fancy symmetric hedges and symmetric flower beds. He worked in the mill for quite a while, and I don't know what the reasoning was, but he began to work for the people who had beautiful estates on Fifth Avenue like Mr. Bliss, Mr. Beeghly, and those people.

M: Would he sod?

C: Yes. He worked for them and then they in turn found out about how he did his work. He worked up there in the gardens and did very well financially until the Depression came. When the Depression came, he felt that his work was worth more than they would give him so then he didn't work. He didn't work for a long time and we lost our two homes and moved into a very little home.

This piano thing might sound awful to people, that we put it in the bedroom, but we began to practice there. When I worked at this little mission I would go every night for months because it was something I was learning. When they built the big community house next door, the preacher was very upset that they had expanded the music part of it and not expanded the church part of it. He was interested in the church being a bigger and lovelier place.

M: Was he an Italian minister?

C: Yes. He was very put out when they sent these missionaries who came from the Home Missionary Society, Dire, and people before her, those who taught the kindergarten, sewing, and all these other classes. He was very put out by it. The church people were very angry that the church had built a community center instead of building a larger church. I was between the two because I was friendly to the missionaries who were really my second home, and I was listening to the preacher who was telling me that I had to learn Italian and certain things before I could be a member. The community house was built around the time I was in high school.

M: By the way, where did you go to high school?

C: I went to East High School. It went to Lincoln School as a first grader. I had no kindergarten background. First grade was very hard for me. In fact, I failed first grade because there was a language barrier. My mother and dad spoke Italian in the home. I was the first one going out into school and I had no one else; it was hard for me, and of course, the very first story was about grandma and going to the farm. Well, I didn't know anything about grandma's and grandpa's, I had none, and I had never been on a farm.

M: You understand the present picture . . .

C: Now, I understand the contents and how important the context of reading is in first grade. I had difficulty, but after the time I got in the fourth grade I began to feel that I was on even footing and I began to be a good student. I would like to see my record from before; I think it was poor. When I got into the fourth grade I began to feel like a person and I felt that I could do the work; from then on I've always done good work. I wasn't an A student, but I wasn't a poor student either, I did good work.

I was in Lincoln School until I was in the ninth grade. Lincoln School went from elementary to junior high. I stayed there till ninth grade when East High School was just built. We moved over there and the principal even came over and became principal of East High School. I had the same principal all twelve years of school.

M: Who was that?

C: Mr. Smith.

M: Wilbur?

C: No, not Wilbur, but I can't think of his first name. A man who became very important in my life, he was a member of the Methodist church on Mahoning Avenue. I didn't know this background until after I was out.

I was in high school and worked at Pearl Street every night, five nights a week and sometimes on Saturday and Sunday. When I say every night I mean until five-thirty or six o'clock. I wouldn't go home, I'd go right to the community house. We would help them with the primary singing group and the older ones who were learning to make bloomers. The reason that I was helpful to them was that I could play the elementary songs, opening songs for a meeting, or a little hymn. At that time, I was given five dollars a month for coming every night of the week or Saturday and Sunday, whatever it happened to be. Of course, that meant that I helped also in Sunday school

in church. I was in the choir and taught a Sunday school lesson.

M: So you were actually teaching a Sunday school lesson and you were only fourteen or fifteen years old?

C: When you were younger you would help the kindergarten children, as you grew older you were promoted.

There was a kindergarten teacher, Ruth O'Day, who had a piano. She was trying to sell it. I forget if it was forty dollars or not; I think it was. She knew that I wanted a piano so with the five dollars a month I paid off my first piano. I worked eight months for my piano. A woman from Trinity Church, I don't know how she found out about it, gave me lessons. She lived on Erie Street and I walked from my home on the east side across the bridge over to her place every Saturday for lessons. That's how I got my music background, which isn't very good. I'm not good at it, but I enjoy it.

M: Did it make a difference for you?

C: Yes. I graduated from high school as a national honors student. I was never a very forward student. I was very quiet. I was never one to join all the clubs and that kind of thing, but I was a good student. I wanted to go to school. I would have liked to go, but it was right in the middle of the Depression. I graduated in 1930, and 1929 was the year that everything came to an end. My father didn't have any money to lose as far as money goes, but we lost our home. There was just no hope for me to go.

Every summer, plus all year round, I worked at Pearl Street. We had vacation bible school which we would have for seven weeks, not the measly two weeks that we have now. The first few years I taught kindergarten. The next few years I had the primary children, and maybe by the time I was a senior in high school I began to have the juniors. The juniors were the most difficult to handle and the ones who needed the most attention. But that's the progress we had. I think I would earn \$50 in a summer or \$35 or something like that for working those weeks.

At that time, Miss Gire knew that I wanted to go to school. She became like a second mother to me. I would set and wash her hair every week. If she would have company for dinner, she would always invite Joe--my boyfriend at the time--and me over to eat the leftovers, which was just like having a special dinner to us. She was very close to me. She didn't tell me about it, but she decided she would try to get a scholarship for me. By August I had a scholarship to go to Lucy Webb Hayes

National Training School, which is under the Methodist church. It was a training place for missionaries. I got the scholarship, but I had no money or anything to go with.

M: In Youngstown?

C: I never thought about going to Youngstown State University. There was a University here, but I had no money to go so I never thought about it. Mrs. Beeghly, who is a very important person in Youngstown and whose husband was very well-to-do, gave me my trunk, my evening gown, and my first good pair of shoes. All of the rest of the hand-me-downs were brought in and I had enough clothing to go. They paid for my fare to Washington. I stayed down there from September to June. I came back home and worked in the summer. They gave me the scholarship for three years to go to school.

M: Isn't that something wonderful?

C: I took the kindergarten course; I always said that I wanted to teach kindergarten. My kindergarten courses were the kind that I could teach in a public school. I could be accredited in a public school, although, when I did it, I didn't realize what I was doing.

M: Kindergartens were a little bit new then?

C: Right, they were new.

My kindergarten supervisor had a kindergarten right in our school. There were no more than fifteen or twenty in the kindergarten department. I had to do my practice teaching in the junior, senior, and even some in the freshman year. We had the children right there in the school so that when I had to go I might practice teaching for two hours today, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, or practice teaching every three days. I got a better background there than if I would have gone to a university where you do your practicing at one time.

M: You were really completely oriented in kindergarten before you ever started?

C: Right.

Lucy Webb Hayes is a building on the corner of Capital Street and Eleventh. It was the school and the nursing school for the church. It was called Rust Hall, which was Sibly Hospital. There were nurses in our school who were getting nurses' training while we were getting missionary training. I don't think we had more than a hundred and fifty or two hundred students in our missionary

training.

M: You really had personal attention from your teachers?

C: Very much. It was either personal attention or the opposite. It was sometimes too close. If I wanted to study, we had to have our lights out at ten o'clock, not like today. But we were right on North Capital and had big street lights right in front of our bed. I could sit on my windowsill and study. The light was strong enough that I could study from the windowsill. Our dean happened to be coming in one time and saw me and I was greatly reprimanded.

I couldn't go home even for Christmas because there wasn't enough money. Part of our scholarship was working one hour a day towards our scholarship in the kitchen, washing dishes or setting up tables, or dusting the classrooms, or whatever it might be. I was then given another extra hour where they paid me twenty-five cents an hour. That gave me \$7.25 or \$7.50 a month that was my spending money. My father and mother might have sent me a dollar or two, but they didn't have it so I didn't expect it.

While I was there I had a ruptured appendix and no one in my family was able to be with me. But I'm sure that I grew because I was able to cope with the thing. I didn't lose any of my credits because I stayed during the Christmas holidays anyway and made up all of my courses.

My father hadn't been working all through these years. My mother was second place with him; he never gave her too much attention. He wasn't working so he was very unhappy with himself and he began to drink. He had always drank a lot in his lifetime, but he drank more and made my mother feel very insecure in herself. When I came home in the summer, I always protected her and wanted to be as helpful as I could.

I worked at the community house and at the time that I graduated in 1933 there were no jobs to be had, not even in the missionary society that had given me the scholarship. My roommate who had paid her own way and had not received any scholarships, came back and started working in Penney's or Sears & Roebuck because there were no jobs to be had. They finally gave me the job at Pearl Street. I earned \$25 a month salary and \$20 room and board because they were supposed to pay room and board. I was getting \$45 a month and with that I helped to keep the family, and if my dad brought in a little money it helped.

I worked at Pearl Street for three years and taught kindergarten. I had a parents' group and I did the social kind of work, mothers' clubs for the children who came to kindergarten, after school classes . . .

M: How would this be? Would you have a double day?

C: I taught in the morning, went home, came back perhaps at two o'clock, had a class from three-thirty, when the children came home from school, until five-thirty or six o'clock, went home and had dinner, and if I had another class that night, I came back. It was a full-time job. It was close enough that I could run back and forth without too much trouble. I didn't have to get a bus or anything, I would just walk. If Miss Gire, who was my supervisor, wanted to go somewhere she would leave me responsible for the place. If I needed to go somewhere or do something she filled in for me. The two of us worked together; I was the children's worker, she was the superintendent, and we also had a man who was a boys' worker. He took care of all the boys' classes and groups.

M: This was still the same building? It hadn't been enlarged at this time?

C: No, not at that time.

M: This was 1933?

C: Do you mean the big community house? The community house was built before 1933; it was built more like 1925. When I came out of the high school it was built. That's when we had the classes there.

M: So the missionaries won out a second time in enlarging the mission and the church?

C: We let the church go when the community house became very full and we had no room for the classes. It would be nothing to have seventy or eighty children in my junior department in the summer. The neighborhood at that time was considered the toughest area of Youngstown.

M: What was the common position of the neighborhood?

C: The children were mostly Italians, Polish, Slovak, and a very few black children. It wasn't until I came back and was working at the community house that I began to have a few black children who lived down on Valley Street. They would come up and play. When we played baseball, the white children wouldn't choose the black children, so I always made it my business to be protective of the black children and give them a little more advantage. Today at the community house, it is the opposite, there are a lot more black children than there are white.

The church and the settlement house was being supported by the Women's Home Missionary Society, but it was through the Northeast Ohio Conference of the Methodist church that

their missionaries were sent to Pearl Street to work. The preacher was also paid by the Northeast Ohio Conference.

About this time, there was a total change in the church. The Italian parents that came there were becoming less and less because the young people were growing up. As they grew up, the young people left and there was just a nucleus of very old Italian people left at the church. The church was going downhill where the community house was just building up and flourishing. When I say flourishing, I don't mean that everything was beautiful, because our front door to this day is marked by children who have carved their names out, windows were broken every week, and things of that kind. It was flourishing in the fact that we had so many children that we didn't have room for them. We worked in the cellar and upstairs in the upper hallway. It was just so full that we didn't have enough room for the children. We often would go over to the church and use it. The preacher didn't like when we went over to the church because we were messing up their little church. The Italian people that were members were very proud of the little church because they had paid for their stained glass windows and the beautiful front altar that they had painted and fixed so lovely. They were very fussy about having any of the kids, as they called them, come over there and mess them up.

M: Was this Methodist?

C: This was all Methodist. It was the Methodist-Italian Church.

M: Most Italians were probably Catholic?

C: We were all Catholic. I brought my family into the church because I became interested in the community.

M: You were a Catholic family then?

C: We were a Catholic family who had not been very happy with our Catholic-Italian church because it was very dictatorial and it was so far away from our home. They expected so much money from our families and our families didn't have it. Not many of the Italians would go that far. We didn't have a car in those days.

I became interested in classes there, pretty soon they said that there was a prayer meeting that night, and they told me to come. I took my father and mother and by the time I was twelve years old my whole family was taken into the church.

M: The helpful point there was that you had this Italian minister?

C: Right.

M: Otherwise you couldn't have done this?

C: No. My mother and dad really appreciated what the minister was doing. I appreciated it because I was learning the Italian language. We had to sing in Italian because our hymns and rituals were in Italian. I got the benefit of learning that where I never would have remembered it. When I came to the community house, I had the benefit of all the things Miss Gire could help me with.

M: It was helpful to the Italian speaking children that you were able to speak Italian.

C: Right. I could always speak to the parents because I could speak Italian well in those days. I had no difficulty there. The children, of course, picked up English very easily.

I said once that ours was the toughest area. It was the worst area in the city of Youngstown; the east side was considered the worst area. It was known as the mafia nest. There were murders right across the street from where I lived. A store burnt to the ground at the corner. A man in the next block up was found dead; it was whispered that the mafia had done it. It really was a tough area. We had tough children and it is very interesting for me to see what the children who grew up in our area are doing today. The toughest boys that we had, who marked our doors and broke our windows, are not the best cops in Youngstown. The children who came to our kindergarten and then our classrooms are some of the best teachers and principals. It would be a wonderful thing if we could go back and look up the names of those children and try to locate what they have done in their growth.

M: Do you suppose that there are any lists of those who were enrolled?

C: I don't know. There might be and it would really be an interesting thing to check back.

I know the next door neighbor boy is now in the Navy in the band. The girl is a teacher in the Boardman Schools. There are just so many. These tough kids that were always standing on our little porch in the front are the ones who are now some of the best policemen in the city, and lawyers, and insurance men.

M: That's wonderful, we'll have to look those up.

C: That would really be something to do. We began to grow and grow so much that in 1936 we were really full. Things

began to happen at Pearl Street that were not to the liking of Miss Gire and me.

We had a board made up of all the women from different missionary societies of the Methodist church in Youngstown. We had a board of twenty-five or thirty women who would come monthly to the community house to have their business meeting. We would come in and give our reports as to how many children we had, what we had done, and what was necessary, and if we needed new curtains, the women would see to it.

There were some things going on that were not very pleasant. During this time, Miss Gire wanted us to earn some money for the community house for different things. We would have spaghetti dinners and she would give me full charge of that. We would have as many as a hundred and fifty to two hundred people, all Methodist people or friends of Methodist people who would come from Mahoning Methodist Church, Indianola church and the Canfield church. It was during this time that I got to make many friendships that I've never forgotten. During this time then Miss Gire, who was much older than I, in her forties or fifties, would be called out to speak and make these thank offering speeches, or she would be asked to come out to speak at the spring meetings where they have their conference meetings. When the time came, she would say that she didn't feel like going and tell me to go. I then began to go to Wooster and Ashland, Ohio, and all these different places. I made these talks in these churches for the community house. In that way I got to meet some of the most wonderful people I've ever known. As much as Miss Gire felt that I was doing her a favor, the favor turned out to be something worthwhile to me because it expanded me.

I'm not a speaker; I'm not that kind. I am too introverted. I am not one who memorizes a speech, I can't do that. But I think that the reason that I enjoyed doing it was because I was so in earnest with my work that it showed, and they could see my enthusiasm. These women would call me Our Mary. I became a part of them and they were the ones who sent us our supplies. They would write a letter to the community house and ask us what we needed or what we could use. I would write the letter and I became friends of the people who would write. I would tell them that we could use comforts, quilts, or some other things.

One family in Columbiana would can two hundred to four hundred quarts of all kinds of vegetables in the summer and bring them to the community house and leave them for us to distribute to the families. Those were Depression days.

One man would come to the meetings with his wife and sit outside and if he saw a child who needed shoes he, Mr. Hiland, would take them downtown, buy the shoes, and let them go home with never a word said about his deed.

Nurse Harriet Eckles, who was a friend of the community house just because she happened to know Miss Gire, had a peach orchard. Joe would go out there with his Ford Model T and fill the whole backseat with peaches or apples, bring them back, and we would pass them out to the families. It wasn't just a project with two or three workers there, it became a project of many people. We got to know them so well that I would take a ride and go out to see Mr. and Mrs. Hiland. It was a broadening field for me, really a broadening field.

After I had worked there three years, I told Miss Gire that I couldn't keep my family with the small amount of money that I was earning there, so I was going to ask them for a raise. I did ask them and so did she. Of course, there was no money and they couldn't give us a raise. I asked her if she cared if I went looking for another job. She said no and that we would arrange it that I could go this year and she would go next year. Mr. Reed, who was the boys' worker, had already left and they had gotten someone else.

I started looking for a teaching job. At that time, I was going with Joe who is my husband now. We went all over the countryside seeing everybody we could to get a job. There were no jobs available. The Board of Education in Youngstown told me that they would give me a job as soon as I got one year experience somewhere else. I went to some people that I knew through the church, the community house, and finally was accepted to work as a teacher at Polk, Ohio, which is near Ashland, Ohio. I taught first and second grade. The only reason that I was considered was because I had spoken in the church and the superintendent was a member and had heard me. He took note that I was available. I got the job which earned \$90 month. I lived there and paid \$30 of that for room.

After I had taught there a year, in the country with first and second grade, I came back to Youngstown and the board of education hired me. I taught four years at Wood Street School, which is now our Choffin Center.

M: Four years?

C: Four years. I had the children who lived in Smoky Hollow, Summit Avenue, who were really poor folks, and folks who lived down under the Oak Street Bridge. Our superintendent, Mr. Begeese, lived in that area.

M: That's when you had him?

C: Yes, I had him in first grade. The type of child that I was working with was the same and it didn't make too much difference.

M: Not much transition?

C: No, not much. I had children from Bott Street right down in the heart of town, the red light district. I had two little boys who were called the overall twins; they wore overalls every day. The stories that they would tell us about what went on in their homes were not astonishing because I was used to that kind of thing.

I got married and did some subbing. I continued to go back and help at Pearl Street. I worked a great deal with the Queen Ester girls. They were girls that were in high school. The Queen Ester girls was a missionary group that was trying to earn money for missionaries. I had worked with them all my high school days. After I had worked back there they became a very important club. We would earn money to give to the missionaries, and we also earned enough that we could take a week's vacation up at Lake Erie. Many of these young girl's never had a trip like that and we would manage to go up and rent a cottage from Mabel Christy, who is a teacher at East High School. We would rent her cottage for a week. There would be as many as ten to twelve girls that would get to go up there. We would plan our meals. This was their vacation, the only real treat that they had. I continued to work with them even after I taught in the public school. I continued to see Miss Gire and was quite close to her.

My mother and dad, during this time, had lost their property. The house was foreclosed. We had a little cottage that had three little rooms, one behind the other, smaller than your little cottage. Finally, we moved into that cottage. I had a bedroom and a bathroom built on to the home. My sister said that she wouldn't move into that house because it wasn't nice enough. Joanne moved out of our home at about that time. She was eighteen or nineteen, and it wasn't too long after she left home that she got married.

In the thirties, when the community house was really booming, it was pretty much of a center within itself. We didn't have much to do with the other centers in town or agencies, the welfare agencies or any of that kind. We were not connected with them at all. It was in 1933 that we did let welfare come in. The people in the neighborhood who needed to get on welfare or needed attention would line up in the auditorium of the community house and down the street waiting to talk to these people that were from welfare. That was about the only agency that came

into our center. Some OWPA or WPA people came in too, and helped us with sewing. I forget what the name was for, the women who came in and helped us with sewing and things of that kind. The irony of that was that Miss Gire and I were getting paid a lot less than these people who were coming in to help us. We were the ones that were directing them and were responsible for them.

That was the beginning of letting the outside agencies in. From 1930 until the 1970's, within that time, it has grown.

The first boys' worker that really became interested in intramural or outermural activities was not a man who expected religion to be a part of his work, but a man who said that if the children swore they would be taken off the gym floor. If they did not behave themselves, they couldn't belong to the athletic group at the community house. This idea of growth for the children was to become better citizens and that kind of thing. At that time, he started taking his good basketball players down to Hazeltown Settlement in the Hazelton area or to Christ Mission or to other centers. He started to take time on Saturdays or during the week to play games with them. He was taking these children, who were in a community that didn't get around very much, to see what other children were doing in other parts of the city. That was the beginning and it has continued. They still have these groups who go one to another.

For the girls we did have some activity outside of our community house. We would be asked to put on a program for the women at the spring meetings. We would go as far as Conneaut, Ohio. The children who had very few rides in cars--we didn't have cars in those days--would get to go up there. One youngster may have to get up and say Psalm 24 or Psalm 100, that was her part, and maybe three or four others would have a duet or trio in singing, another may have the prayer. We would have the program, and these children got to go out.

It wasn't until about the 1960's and 1970's that all the agencies were allowed to come in here such as Head Start, and the welfare programs. I'm sure that all agencies that are helpful to the community house are permitted to come out there and do their thing for the neighborhood, which means that the community house has opened its doors. In fact, our own home school visitors had some of our meetings there so we could see what the center was doing. In the 1930's they wouldn't have known about Pearl Street because it was more of a church center. Now it is not church centered, it is a community center.

M: That building that you were in, is it still there?

C: Yes. During this time, there was a fire in the cellar. It burnt out the whole kitchen and the back furnace room, plus the upstairs and into the gym. For awhile the children couldn't use the gym. A man who was very wealthy here in Youngstown, Mr. Beeghly, gave the money, many thousands of dollars, and had it rebuilt and expanded. I remember being there for the big celebration. They said at that time that it was an anonymous donation, no one knew. Since he has passed away, I'm sure that he was the one who gave that money. From that time on, the community house has expanded and let other folks in. There are more facilities for the black children because the white people have moved out of their homes and the black people have moved in, and they are working in the community house.

In the summer, they have programs where they take the children out to Lincoln Park, which is a good facility for swimming and such. They have the day program where instead of taking the children to Christ Mission Camp, they would go out there or take them somewhere else.

It has expanded; now they have this nucleus of people that are on the board, but at one time it was just women from the Methodist church. Today it is people, men and women of Youngstown, not just Methodist people, but anyone who is outstanding and wants to become part of the board. That board is made up in that way and is more liberal and open. With the community house still being paid, the initial background people, the ones who are heads, are still being paid by the Northeast Ohio Conference of the Methodist church.

M: This has been a very interesting, complete story about the Pearl Street Center, but we are still interested in the public school because you were in that.

C: I worked at Wood Street School, which was part of Smoky Hollow, in the first grade. It was really doing missionary work in that school as well as doing the kind of work at Pearl Street. From there, I was married and had my family. I went back to Monroe School, which was also in a poor neighborhood. They needed a lot of missionary type of work.

After teaching there nine years, which was kindergarten and first grade, I went into the home school visitation program, which was part of the Youngstown Board of Education program. I worked there for nine years and worked with children who had specific problems. In the inner city schools, which was really considered the poor area also, we worked directly with parents who needed help, emotionally, physically, or whatever it was. Because I have done the same type of work, this missionary work that I started with, if I had any guilt for having left Pearl Street and having gone into public schools, I haven't anymore. I don't

have the guilt because I have ended up doing the same type of missionary work that I did at first.

M: The most important thing as you look over all this history is what has happened to the children in this neighborhood, starting with the Italian families?

C: The children who were fortunate at that time to have gotten scholarships, or were able to go to college, are prominent today in Youngstown. A good many of them are very prominent, for example, the head of the Children's Services, teaching, or such. The children who come to the community house whose parents' did not feel that education was important, but that it was important to see that their Mary or Johnny got married and settled properly with a place of their own, a little house or a place of their own, those girls and boys married and today are the steel workers, contractors, carpenters, plumbers, and bricklayers. And if we were to evaluate the scale of money, those who have not had the education, that we consider, as educators, as important, are the ones who have come out on top. It is interesting because today we are seeing where the schools have missed the boat because they didn't teach the vocational kind of thing, which today we see is an important thing in education.

END OF INTERVIEW