

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Springfield Schools

Teaching Experiences

O. H. 370

MABEL DAVIS

Interviewed

by

Bernice Mercer

on

November 17, 1975

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: MABEL DAVIS

INTERVIEWER: Bernice Mercer

SUBJECT: Springfield Schools, Twin churches, Mail delivery

DATE: November 17, 1975

M: This is an interview with Mabel Davis at her home on 11372 Youngstown-Pittsburgh Road in New Middletown. It is being conducted by Bernice Mercer for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on November 17, 1975.

D: We lived in the Stoney Point district. I would have a mile to walk because the schools were set up two miles apart. No one had to walk more than a mile.

M: Did you have just one teacher?

D: Yes, one teacher. The New Middletown School was a very large school because it was in the village. The teacher really had his hands full.

A teacher is criticized today if she isn't in the classroom teaching. They go back to the old days when we were dismissed for our fifteen-minute recess. We played hide-and-seek all over the town. There was a distillery in our town which wasn't too close to the school and many times I hid on the other side of it. On one side of the school there was a barn, and more than once I crawled up into the hay loft during recess. When the school bells rang, after awhile, we all got back to school. I think we stayed there for over half an hour. Those were the good old days.

M: About how many were in the school?

D: I don't remember, but I would say at least forty in the New Middletown Elementary School.

M: For all grades?

D: All grades. I don't think there was a grade that didn't have someone. I think my grade was a rather large one because there were ten of us even then. In those days, you dropped out along the way. When you talk about the good old days, it wasn't Johnny who couldn't read; it was Freddie. All through school, every year with me, and when I finished and went on to high school, Freddie was still struggling in the fourth grade reader. Those were the good old days.

You dropped out before you finished school. There were big, tall boys and girls in school. Of course, the boys only came in the winter when they didn't have farm work, but the girls came regularly, unless they found a housekeeping job somewhere and dropped out of school or got married.

You would not believe all the mischief we got into. One of the boys brought a good size bit and drilled holes through the floor. If the teacher caught us writing notes you hurried up and passed it on to somebody else, and whoever was near one of those holes dropped it in. These notes were never found until the building was torn down.

There were two big stoves in the building. If you sat close to one, you burned; if you sat very far away, you froze. The clothes hung behind the stove and were really warm when one wanted to go home. You didn't need to worry about that.

Oh, how we played in the snow. Our mittens would be so wet. We wore leggings to cover our long underwear and wool stockings. We played Andy-Over-the-Schoolhouse with the older children. It was played by them throwing the ball over the schoolhouse. The younger ones played over the coal house. You threw a ball over the divider with teams on each side. You chose sides by going up the stick hand over hand. The one who got hold of the stick on the top was the winner. He could then throw the ball first. The boy who threw the ball would say, "Andy, Andy Over!" and tell you to come and catch it if you could while they would come to catch you. You could run to the other side and dodge them. If you could get over on the other side then you were winners.

M: You kept adding to your number?

D: Yes. You kept adding to your numbers until you had the majority.

We had spell downs. We spelled in our own school and practiced spelling. There was only one other boy who could outspell me, but I always got even with him and

outspeled him sometime or other. We would line up for spelling and would go around everybody until it got to me. Then boy, did I study because I wasn't going to get an extra hand mark.

Dan could also play ball. He was a skinny little rat, and I was a skinny little girl. I couldn't hit a ball far enough to get off of home plate but he could, so we would choose sides, he and I. He would bat and I would run. The trees were the bases. There were three maple trees. When we played the game of two, you didn't have to go past third base. You turned around and ran back. The second homerun, you would run backwards. You never had to go through third to home base. The name of that kind of ball was townball. We liked townball better than ordinary baseball. Our school ground had more acreage than some of the others. The ball would go traveling back across there some distance. The child who picked it up couldn't throw it back to the pitcher or anyone who could tag us or cross us out. If they could tag us we were out, or if they could throw the ball between you and the base, you were out. Dan would hit the ball and I would start from home plate and go to first, second, and third, and then stop. He would hit another ball and I would turn around and run the other. Of course, we played in good weather. I never could play marvelously, but a good many of them could. I learned to play marvelously with my own children. I couldn't jump rope. Those were two things which I couldn't master.

I could play caddy. Caddy was made from perhaps six or eight inches of the end of a broomstick. You wittled both ends until it was like a plank. It was wittled in such a manner that if you struck the end of the caddy, it would fly into the air. You would strike the caddy before it landed upon the ground. Wherever it landed then you estimated how many jumps someone on the opposite side would have to take to pick up that caddy. Of course, you guessed as many as possible because your score added up by the number of jumps you estimated. You underestimated--the thing was never to overestimate. If you estimated that it would take ten jumps and it took twelve, you got ten points. But if he did it in nine jumps, he got ten points. That was another game in which I excelled. I could do that. I could jump and I could run.

- M: I'm interested in the way geography and history were taught.
- D: That was a farce. I became a history teacher because I had to learn every date that was in the book. I had

to learn how every battle was fought. And that was boring. I passed the Maxwell-Patterson Exam with a 65 percent, which was a very poor grade. I didn't do any better throughout high school. When I got to college, I elected to take more history than was necessary for my major. I majored in chemistry. I didn't have to take as much history as I did, but I felt I was stupid as far as the history of my own country was concerned. In one of my history courses, I had a different kind of teacher. I was hurt when my older sister, who was also in college said, "You made a mistake when you chose that teacher." Yet, no one told me not to choose her. She was most severe on all of us. She did not believe in giving a grade under a B. We had to earn a B or flunk the course. I worked for it and I learned to like it very, very much. I completed college with a minor in history, which I worked out to a major since then.

M: Did geography go along with history a little bit?

D: No, it was taught as an entirely different subject. I liked the map work. I don't think it was taught in an interesting manner. I became very interested in being a gypsy and going to the places I read about in geography.

M: Did you ever have a teacher who connected the classics with geography.

D: No, there was no connection. Each subject was out on its own. By the way, I learned to read by reading the McGuffey Readers. I had all of them through the sixth grade. I think I read all the McGuffey's I had access to. The last reading teacher I had knew that my uncle had gone further in the McGuffey Readers than we had. He asked that I get my uncle's fifth and sixth grade readers. I kept on reading to him on the side. That was an additional reading class. As a result, I read many classics that occurred in those readers that other children didn't get. In the seventh and eighth grade, we read Hiawatha and many other classics.

M: Were there any free books?

D: No, there were no free books. That's the reason I don't have a collection of McGuffey Readers right now. I was the oldest of eight grandchildren. After I read them, my brother used them and then they were handed down to my cousins. I just don't have the collection I wish I had.

I was in the last class which was graduated from the Northeastern Ohio Normal School, which was renamed Canfield High School.

M: Do you remember your mathematics textbook?

D: I can only tell you that it had a green back. We had very, very good training in math. I was taught compounded interest. When I took my first teacher's examination, I had a problem in compound interest and I was very worried about it. But I remembered. Math was the one subject that was thoroughly taught.

M: Did you learn square roots?

D: I could give you square roots today.

M: Cube roots?

D: I'd have to dig a little bit in cube roots. I would say that in the last twenty years, cube roots have slipped from my memory.

M: Ratio proportion?

D: Yes, all that was taught.

M: Long cancellation?

D: Yes. I have taken a few of the old textbooks to school to prove to the youngsters that they are not doing eighth grade math in eighth grade. They are really doing sixth grade math. The math was far superior. I wasn't taught algebra, so when I went on to high school, I had to make an adjustment there. In my teaching, when students find a question mark in an equation, it is algebra. If there is an "n" there for a number, just put an "x" there. I've had superior students come back to me when they got to high school and tell me that they do algebra. But I would show them that it was so very simple and that was all that was necessary

M: Put a blank or a question mark?

D: Yes, a blank or a question mark. I've asked so many times, "How can you take the children today?" I love it. We have a good deal of repertoire. I think I see the child's viewpoint and I teach. As a substitute teacher, I don't care if a teacher uses her lesson plan or not because it is rather difficult to pick up in a day's time.

One of the things I teach is grammar. In English class, I'll teach grammar and diagramming and they love it. They eat it up. I compare diagramming to building a house without a blueprint. I tell them that you can't build a house without a blueprint and you can't build a sentence without a blueprint, which is a diagram.

When I'm through, you'll know a noun from a verb.

M: There was no high school in this town?

D: Yes, one year. One year of high school, which was in Petersburg. I went there and received marvelous training. Carl Went was my high school teacher. I don't think that he was more than out of high school himself. I don't know where he got his training. I had one year of basic Latin and one year of algebra. I can't remember what I learned in English or what the fourth subject was. I can only remember Latin and algebra.

M: Were science experiments performed in the elementary schools?

D: No, none at all. I don't remember anything ever being brought in. How could you with all eight grades?

I think I had unusual parents. My father said to my mother in the summer of my first year at Petersburg, "Let's go to Canfield and get Mabel enrolled in high school." Canfield was the only high school in 1909 that was in this county outside of the Rayen School in Youngstown. I stayed and boarded a room there for three years. When I went on to college I didn't have any adjustment to make. As far as I'm concerned, my high school was college. We only went to class when we had classes. We didn't have to go to study hall. You were on your own. We studied in our room or sometimes got together in groups. I found that group study wasn't too good because too many times those boys or girls who wanted to study with you were trying to get your information and you were just tutoring.

After I was out of high school, I began teaching. All one had to do then was to pass a teacher's examination, which was not too much more difficult than the Maxwell-Patterson Exam which I had to take to be admitted to high school. One did not go directly; one had to pass it first.

M: Do you remember how many parts this examination had? Were there parts for all different subjects?

D: Parts for everything. Both of them were taken in the old Rayen Auditorium. There weren't a lot of students, you were spaced. They told you, "Go to the third row and the tenth seat." You had to have a magnifying glass to see what the person closest to you was writing. It was absolutely impossible to copy. There was one section on math, history, orthography, and reading; one for every subject that you could imagine.

M: This got you into high school?

D: This got us into high school. We were admitted to high school at Petersburg. But to go to Canfield, we had to pay tuition. You couldn't go from one county to another. Those who lived close, went to Columbiana. Some went to Poland, but Poland only had three years at that time; I don't know if they ever had four. Canfield was the only first-class high school.

M: It was really designed for teachers?

D: It was designed for teachers, yes.

M: The word "normal" means that it was designed for teachers?

D: Yes. That normal school was reorganized later under Jerome Hull, when the schools of the county were consolidated. There was a time when I was in school, for instance, when each township had its own supervision. Each school was a school unto itself. There was no supervision in the township. I don't know who bossed the teachers except the trustee for that school. I don't know how they even hired. I don't think they even earned bread and butter for a wage.

In high school, after the county was consolidated, Jerome Hull became the superintendent for the county system. Under Jerome Hull, he reorganized the normal school at Canfield where teachers could go and get a special year of training to teach.

M: You said that there was a test after high school.

D: I took a test to be certified to teach.

M: You said that wasn't very different from the one . . .

D: No. I don't even remember if there were any method questions asked to me. There was no difference in them to me. But remember, you are asking me to go back sixty years. I don't remember ever taking method questions to get my certificate. In college I was granted a provisional. I had no examinations or anything to take.

I taught in Cleveland for three years and was certified. At the end of three years, I was awarded a state life certificate. On that certificate the recommendation was given that I was certified to teach in any grade, one through twelve, in any public school in the state of Ohio. So I thought I was sitting pretty.

I married and came back to Springfield Township.

M: You had one year past high school. How many years did you have at Canfield?

D: Three years. I was graduated in first-class high school. Then I began teaching after taking the teacher's examination. I had my high school diploma. Some of my classmates did not go on for four years of high school. I don't know how they became certified, unless it was through teacher's examinations. You had to renew your certificate in some manner. If your grades were very high, you got a better certificate and longer years before you needed to repeat.

M: You taught three years?

D: I taught five years.

M: In Cleveland?

D: Three years in Cleveland. Then I married and moved back here. My husband said that the business firm for whom he was working was going to go under. The Depression would wipe them out. If I could get back in the school game, that would be the thing to do. Jerome Hull was willing to have me. They needed a seventh and eighth grade history and math teacher in the Middletown School. He was not willing to accept my life certificate. I was not certified according to him in the seventh and eighth grade. He said that he could see that it says any grade in any public school but that he didn't have to hire me unless I did what he told me to. He said, "You will have to go to Columbus and take a teacher's examination." He told me the date and all. So I filled out the application and they sent me a blank, which said that if I had done any traveling that I should write it in detail and explain how it helped me in my teaching. That was down my alley because my husband and I took a long, long honeymoon. We went west to the West Coast. It took us several months to go west. We gypsied the whole way. It was live geography to me. I wrote about those experiences at length.

Mr. Hull called to remind me not to forget to go to Columbus. I said that I would be there. I was all prepared to go when the mailman brought me another life certificate, an elementary life certificate with the notation that I had done an excellent job on writing about my travels. I hold two life certificates.

I coordinated my history and my geography; I coordinate everything that I teach. I don't care what it is.

M: You taught in New Middletown then for quite some time?

D: Yes, I taught in New Middletown for ten years. Then, being a married woman, I was let go. Do you want me to tell you that story?

M: Yes.

D: I don't always feel kindly to boards of education and their manners of doing things. I was not rehired. I found out about it by seeing the name of someone else who was to teach seventh and eighth grade history and math next year in the New Middletown School. I knew I was not rehired. I was depending upon my bread and butter for it. So I did other things because I had to subsidize the farm. Four years later, they asked me on Labor Day to begin teaching the next day in the high school. I taught for four more years in the local Petersburg High School. Then I resigned to help my husband and our farm business because I was needed here. As his health got worse and worse and he was less able to do things and our sons were grown and on their own, I quit the farming, the Ruth Hill Farmers. We had four hundred customers that we serviced weekly. I quit that and went back to substituting.

M: I am interested in the very early history of the people who came over the mountains.

D: My ancestors came from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Some day I am going back to see what I can find out. Undoubtedly, I should uncover enough to make me a Daughter of the American Revolution. I know that some of them were born here in the 1780's and 1790's; therefore, their parents must have been here in time for the revolution. I'm taking for granted, since I am a proud German, that probably my ancestors were some of the Hessians who were hired to fight with the British. You know once they got here, they saw that the colonists had a point and they returned coat and plotted with the colonists. I think if I were to go back in history, that is what I might find.

M: Your people's name is Sipe?

D: Right. When my great-grandfather, Philip Sipe, and his wife, Katherine Messerly, were married in Lancaster County, they planned to go west to the new state, Ohio. Katherine was an only child and her father and mother shed tears because they knew for them to make such a long trip in those days was like saying good-bye for good. So they compromised and Philip and his bride brought Pappa and Mamma Messerly with them.

I'm taking for granted, for a very good reason, that Pappa Messerly sold everything he had because the

great-great-grandfather Messerly bought 640 acres in Springfield Township. It required quite a sum of money. A dollar and a quarter an acre is what he paid for it.

They started out with their wagon and traveled. They tried to camp at night time where they found good fresh water. They brought a cow with them. They milked the cow and had it in a container which they fastened to the back half of the wagon. As they traveled through a hot day, they had butter that night. That butter was churned and they had fresh butter, buttermilk, and when they milked the cow, they had fresh milk. They took weeks to come.

One day after they knew they crossed the boundary into the new territory, they found a very wonderful spring at which to stop. They next morning, Katherine and her mother agreed that they had traveled long and far enough and would never find a better spring. They decided that they would approach the men. Surprisingly, the men had had enough travel also. So this was the place. They stayed here, built here, and reared their children here.

That 640 acres was divided as each child grew to maturity and married. A certain amount of acreage was given by Philip Sipe. By that time, Grandma and Grandpa Messerly had gone on and Philip Sipe and Katherine had fallen heir to the 640 acres. They gave each one of their children land here. The son, Johnny Sipe, continued on the old place, which he inherited. My grandfather, Jacob Sipe, had the first land of the farm directly south of the John Sipe farm. John Sipe's son, David, fell heir to the homestead. The only son left of David Sipe's was Charles Sipe. He owns the property now. The latest bit that was disposed of was sold to the Springfield Township Board of Education. The intermediate school now stands on the property. The fifty acres that the board of education bought no one had ever previously owned, except the Indians, the U.S. Government, and the Sipe family. My house stands on a bit of that property.

Do you see why I love history? It is because I go way back there. My grandfather, Jacob, gave the first bit of land for a school in Springfield Township. That is according to the records in the courthouse. The records show where the building stood.

M: That courthouse record is in Youngstown?

D: I found it in the courthouse records in Youngstown. It is a similar copy to the original one which came from Columbiana County. When I went down to Columbiana County to get a more detailed record, the original card had

been burned. There is no other record. The record showed, in the courthouse in Youngstown, where and from whom these first schools and property were bought. One mile in from the state line and one mile south of Poland Township is where the first school was erected. I know on whose property that the school was built. A log cabin was built on Mrs. Maylor's property. Sooner or later, there was a highway that was more important and more used. Mrs. Maylor bought that acre of property and the first school was established at the corner of Raff Road and Pella Road. That was called the Jerusalem School.

Across the township, there were little log schools that were painted white. They were every two miles so that no child had to walk more than a mile in either direction. Two miles farther west of Jerusalem School was the next school. There the Harper's Ferry School was established. Two miles further out was another little white schoolhouse. It was called the Haas School. German people lived here and settled it. From Jerusalem School, two miles south was Stoney Point. No one knows why it was given that name. Two miles west of Stoney Point and two miles south of Harper's Ferry was the center of the township. The school was called Center School. Going on two miles farther was the Esterly School. You had three schools in perfect distance apart. Two miles south of Stoney Point, a school was established in Petersburg. Two miles west was College Hill and two miles west of that was a school in New Springfield.

M: Rick School was College Hill?

D: Rick School is still there. Four of the original schoolhouses are now dwellings. Ed Chiller lives at Stoney Point. McMurns lives at Esterly. I don't know who lives at College Hill.

New Middletown School was built because the village itself was quite a distance from these other schools. Later, the little old log school was replaced by the red brick school. The red brick school buildings came into existence in the last part of the 19th century. In the 1890's practically every red brick school in Springfield Township was built. Only one little frame building was never replaced and that was the Hass School, where Evans Lake is now.

Much of my family history has been by word of mouth, which my father told me and his father had told him. What I know corroborates the story my grandfather's brother, John, told his family. The both got it from Philip.

M: Did they tell the names of the families with them?
Did the other families stay here or go on?

D: I think they stayed here, but I don't believe that I ever heard who traveled with my family. I'm quite sure Charlie Sipe never did either. I know that they did not travel the entire length alone. They had to chop their way as they came. Sometimes, they made very little progress.

Are you interested in the churches?

M: Yes, indeed.

D: I've written the history of the Zion Lutheran Church.

M: Were there many circuit writers in the beginning?

D: No, they begged the circuit writers to come.

M: Regardless of denomination?

D: In fact, the very first church that was established down here is what we know as the twin churches. People wonder about the twin churches. There is only one church left; the other twin died, let's say. There was one church established at Stoney Point, and old Springfield Cemetery is the result of it. That church was established, I believe, in 1804. By that time, settlers were already here, like my great-grandparents who had arrived in 1803. There were marriages, deaths, and baptisms. The people missed their spiritual leader. They wrote back to the Eastern Senate saying, "Please send us a minister. We need a spiritual leader."

M: You have no idea how many people were around there at that time?

D: I have no idea, but they were both reformed and Lutheran. They formed a joint church. According to the Lutheran records, it was called the Reformed Lutheran. Someone explained that this was because of the Reformation. I don't believe that. The Reform Church was one church and Zion began from Switzerland. Lutheran was another because Martin Luther started the whole thing. The joint part was reformed people worshipping in the same church as the Lutherans. They took their turns worshipping there. My grandfather, Jacob, gave the property for the church that was built and for the graveyard. That was the first church in this particular area.

M: Since there were both congregations here and only one paster, they . . .

D: They each had their own pastor.

M: From the very beginning?

D: I can't go into the Reformed history because I am a Lutheran and that's what I like. It would be interesting and probably . . . I don't know whether the Reformed Churches have done things with that or not. I only know that there were two down through a period of time., There must have been two because they did not worship together; they worshipped at their own time. They only shared the building. It was joined that way.

In 1842, a minister who was anglicistly minded came along. The Lutherans were sort of staid. The old-timers didn't want all of this praying by the congregation. They rebelled; they told this pastor that this couldn't happen. The praying people suggested to the paster that they hold the prayer meetings separately; they would get together. And they did. But the old-timers locked them out of the building and wouldn't let them worship that way. That's how Zionism got started. They held the meeting and asked what to do. It was decided the only fair thing was to write to the heads in the church-- not the pastor because he was with the younger group. They asked them if they could share the building and the books, would they meet with them, or could they have a meeting, in general. They set the date, place, and time and no one showed up. That told this young group that they had to go on their own.

As a result the Zion Movement was organized and established. In 1949 they built their first church on the corner of Rapp and New Middletown Road. By 1900, the older church building was worn out and a new church needed to be built. At that time the Reformed congregation decided that they would build their own and the Lutheran would build their own. I think the one was called St. Luke's Church. The old Springfield Reformed churches each built their own churches with maybe two hundred feet between them. They used the same cemetery. They each had their own minister and that kind of thing. That is how the expression "twin Churches" came about. Way out in the country were two churches almost identical in structure, except for the bell towers which faced each other.

M: Are your folks buried at that cemetery?

D: I found a tombstone with Katherine Sipe's name on it up there. But at that time, the tombstones were not so good.

My grandfather was married twice. He was born in 1808, which would make him a very old grandfather. His wife

died and he had two grown children. He had more than that, but two lived around here. He married again. He married the oldest daughter--there were three of them--in the family of Edlers. She reared him with another family of three boys, and my father was the youngest.

I came along the tail end of the second marriage. My grandfather Sipe and his first wife are buried in the cemetery, and my own grandmother is buried in the cemetery by the twin churches in Old Springfield. I don't know where the Messerly's are burried, except for Katherine Sipe, who was buried there. She was my great-grandmother.

M: Before we finish the interview, would you tell us something about the early transportation systems and post offices?

D: The post office, a stage route, went from Pittsburgh to Cleveland on Highway 170. It was a pony express sort of thing. The mail started out from Pittsburgh and would go to Cleveland, which was a day's journey. It would be picked up there and taken off. The part at which my family was involved began at Enon Valley in Pennsylvania. The stagecoach came to the post office. I call it a stagecoach because it is within my memory that John Webb carried the mail. He was an old man with a beard. He drove two horses in what was called a surrey, but he sat on the outside and the passengers sat on the inside.

The mail was brought as far as Enon Valley. He would drive and deliver the mail as he went. There was a Petersburg Post Office, and at Stoney Point there was the Subrosa Post Office. The mail was delivered from that old black building, which had once been a school building. The coach would stop at New Middletown, which was more than just a mail delivery connection. A hotel was on my father's farm where they now have a mobile home. Across from the mobile home is an apartment called the Midway; it is a modern building. It is named that because it was halfwav between Pittsburgh and Cleveland, give or take a mile or two. They stopped there, unhitched their horses, put them in the barn, and whoever owned the farm fed and cared for the horses during the day. The mail went on to New Middletown, Poland, and then downtown Youngstown. They left the first team of horses at my father's farm, got the new team, and rode on to Youngstown. They were fed there. The man waited a couple of hours, came back as far as my father's house, unhitched those horses that my father cared for during the night, left in the morning, and went on to Enon Valley.

M: Was there a postmaster at these places?

D: Yes, there was a postmaster at each place. I'm writing the history of the post office in New Middletown for postmaster Peter Casper. This is a part of that history which I am telling you.

The post office was where the Billing's Lineoleum & Floor Covering place is now. John's horses knew the way to the post office. The horses pulled up there and stopped and whoever was taking care of the mail inside hurried up to get it ready. John didn't go in. The postmaster went out and saw that he was dead. He had died of a heart attack and the horse just knew the way and stopped there.

After that the stage route changed somewhat. For awhile, we got our mail from Lowellville. That was in 1912 and 1913.

We had a flood in Youngstown in the spring of 1913. The mail carrier was not allowed to, or was afraid to, take his horses across the Old Mill Bridge because the water was so high and his horses might be washed away. So he tied his horses on the west bank and carried his bags of mail across the bridge to the post office.

When automobiles came into existence, the stage route came back again. The mail was picked up in Youngstown and taken through East Palestine, no farther than that. We had men who drove trucks and carried passengers taking the stage route. One of those was Stanley Cobb who had the greenery. Another one was John Hubbard.

M: Is was a bus?

D: Yes, but he carried mail also. He carried the Starr route.

M: Along with the bus?

D: Yes. That was why he had a bus. You see, even the stagecoach carried passengers. Stanley Cobb, who carried the mail, also carried passengers. When John Hunter had a bus, he began by having the stage mail route. In addition, he carried passengers.

In the early 1900's, we began having rural delivery. The roads were still all mud because there was no pavement out here anywhere. Pete Sires was the first rural carrier. In the winter time especially, he used a two-wheeled cart to get through the deep mud. He was a neighbor of ours; I knew him quite well. His children babysat for my parents. We stopped at their house from school when we knew our parent's wouldn't be home

at four o'clock.

If I ever got any mail, it was written on a postcard. As Pete approached our house, he would read aloud my mail. He never opened a letter, but he read all of the postcards. Following that, we had a series of postmasters. Eventually, they began to deliver with automobiles.

The population of New Middletown has grown until it's better than two thousand now. In my early memories, there were 204. If one died, a baby was born; it just hovered around two hundred, and now there are over two thousand.

M: Thank you, Mabel.

END OF INTERVIEW