

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Romanian Culture Project

Mahoning County

O. H. 485

JOHN CUREA

Interviewed

by

John Muntean

on

September 18, 1975

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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INTERVIEWEE: JOHN CUREA

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SUBJECT: Church Life, Art and Schooling in Romania

DATE: September 18, 1975

M: This is an interview with John Curea for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program regarding Romanian Culture in Mahoning County, by John Muntean, at 134 S. Shore Drive, on September 18, 1975, at 8:00 p.m.

Mr. Curea, what part of Romania did your parents come from?

C: My parents came from a part of Romania which was in the region of Sibiu. The village itself was called Apold de Jos. The nearest city which was somewhat smaller than Youngstown was, about twenty miles away from this village.

M: Was it a farming village?

C: This was definitely a farming village. The size of this farming village was about, I would say, 600 homes.

M: When did they come to the United States then?

C: My father came to the United States about 1914, right about that time.

M: What motivated him to come to this country?

C: Well, in those days people used to live in villages, and the families were large. So the means of making a living was farming. Now if a family had say, four, five, six, seven children--some of the families were large--for the father and the mother to be relieved of the weight of supporting some of the children at the age of twelve, thirrtten, or fourteen, they would send them someplace to become apprentices to learn a trade. They would do this for more than one reason. One reason would be for that when he matures, he will have a craft. Then he can move on out and make a living. Then

they were no longer with the farm and would have to support them. That was reason number two. They were not big farmers. They lived off the land, but they had only so much land. You could not compare with a farmer over here. Some would choose to come to the United States.

M: After they did their mission?

C: No. Some either chose to become an apprentice or came to the States and made a living over here. In my father's case he was about fourteen years old when he went to become an apprentice. Then at about age seventeen or eighteen, he came to the United States. I would say that the reason that he had left Romania was because he came from a large family, and he had to go on his own there. His father, I believe, was in this country working.

M: Previous to this?

C: Oh, yes, previous to this. My grandfather also worked over here. Then he went back. He was here about two or three years and worked and made a few dollars and went back to the family. Many, many people used to do that in the olden days. I would say that was the prime reason why my father came over here, because he came from a large family, and they were sort of poor.

M: You were born in this country, right?

C: I was born in Niles, Ohio.

M: Now I understand that when you were a youngster, your family went back to Romania?

C: Let me backtrack a little bit. My father came over here by himself. Then he went back to Romania once as a young fellow, and he married my mother. Then they both came back to the States, and they settled in Niles, Ohio. Then naturally, I was born. After my mother had been here about eleven years, the family went back to Romania.

M: What motivated your mother to go back to Romania?

C: Well, it was like this, my father, by that time, had worked in this country for about twenty-five years. He worked in the steel mills. It was during the Depression. While he was working over here, he did like any other Romanian. He would be making some money and saving some money. He never did divorce himself from going back to Romania again to live in his village. They would save up some money and send the money back to their parents who would buy a plot of land for them. I remember he bought himself an L-shaped lot and

put the houses on it as to when he goes back at his retirement age to settle back on the farm. Some people would choose to do that. It would be a good system I guess. My father was only in his late forties when he chose to go back. Another reason I guess that he decided to go back to Romania was because the Depression in this country was going on. He went back in 1936; he had some money, and he had some land back there; so he went back, so to speak, to live.

M: How old were you?

C: I was nine and a half at the time.

M: When you went back--I know you had an understanding of English--did you have an understanding of the Romanian language too?

C: Very little, very little. I went with some problems. Let's say that I understood the Romanian language; I was able to speak very broken.

M: How were you able to cope with the change then to the Romanian way of life?

C: It was hard, very hard because we got there in August. About a month later we were supposed to start school. Not knowing the language I was afraid they were going to embarrass me because I did not know it. I would be embarrassed. I would be standing out and so on. School started. I remember for one week I thought about the school. I sat there, and I was a frigid, young kid. I got into the groove as slowly as I could. I forgot that I was learning Romanian very fast. I would be saying things in Romanian twisting them backwards, and then the kids would all laugh. I would explain that I just came over from America and so forth. We made friends; we adjusted ourselves. It was hard, but we did it.

M: Were the schools over there at that time comparable to the schools over here at all in the United States?

C: Basically.

M: Did you have a regular schoolteacher, or was it the minister or somebody?

C: We had a regular schoolteacher. They were adequate.

M: Can you tell us what a typical day was like in Romania when you were a child?

C: When I was a child as I said before, my family went back to this farming community. Now a typical day for me then was

to go out to our place at the farm fields. But me coming from the States, I did not like that at all. I could not accept it. They would ask me to help them. In Romania the children are asked to help with the farming. I didn't like it. In fact, I did not get adjusted; I say it took like two years, maybe longer than that. A typical day was getting up early. The family would get up early and do all the chores around the farm. Then we would go to work. Now the farming wasn't done around your house because the land was not around your home. See, the village in Romania, the houses are together, side by side so to speak, and the land is half a mile, a mile, two miles away from the house. You have a parcel here and you have a parcel there. You may be working at this parcel for a half a day maybe, and then you go back or you get your stuff together and you would work at another one. That's what it was like. It took me until I was fourteen. Then I got to accept that kind of work.

M: You got adjusted.

C: Then I got adjusted. I accepted the chores a little better. I learned the language.

M: Still talking about that era when you were in Romania what did the houses look like at that time? Were they comparable at all to the houses in the United States during that time during the 1930's and so?

C: If you go in the villages, you will probably find the same type construction. The construction is not comparable to the United States. A house over there would be built strictly and entirely out of a kind of brick. The walls would be maybe fourteen inches thick.

M: Not too much insulation?

C: No insulation. They would be stucco on the outside and then plastered on the inside. Now the reason for those heavy walls is because you had a basement. That is where you kept your wine if you lived in the wine region. Then in the other section of the basement you would keep your potatoes, and you would keep all the vegetables because we live off the land over there. We did not buy vegetables.

M: I see.

C: If you are a farmer, you will produce; you will consume what you produce, and you hope to have some to sell. So the cellar was strictly to store, a storage area.

M: Storage area.

- C: So was the attic; it was a storage area. In the attic you would store corn and wheat and grain. So the walls of the houses were like I said about fourteen inches thick. To support the attic you would have beams. The beams would be side by side. I would say six by six beams, and they were installed side by side. In other words, you have maybe a few tons up there in other words so that it won't cave in. That is what a house looked like over there. It had slate tile and big roofs. The slate was about a half an inch thick.
- M: About how many rooms did a house of that kind have?
- C: A typical house in Romania in a Romanian village in those days was only three or four rooms; that is all.
- M: Really?
- C: Yes, they weren't large certainly like over here. A lot of people would have a house, and then they would have a summer house, sometimes one in the same yard where you would use in the summer time.
- M: Did they have a living room or anything or was it just sleeping room?
- C: They had a living room. Sometimes the living room would be combined as a bedroom. Then you would have a couple of other small rooms. One would be a kitchen.
- M: You would have outhouses then I presume?
- C: Oh, strictly in those villages even today you see them.
- M: And well water?
- C: Well water . . . In my village everybody had a well at their own place, and that was an improvement from the days when my parents were children when there used to be a well on the street. All the neighbors used the same well. But when I was there, everybody had their own well. It would be with a bucket and a rope and a spindle where you turn the handle. That was how you got your water. Next to the well there was a trough for the cattle. The stoves were wood burning stoves. You use wood for cooking. Most of the stoves were built in a part of the wall.
- M: Would their stove also serve as a furnace?
- C: It was the furnace definitely. The stove would serve as a furnace also in those days. Somebody came on the market with some type of a newer furnace. It was about three feet by three. It was glazed tile, and it was built from the

floor to the ceiling. You would make a fire in there and it would contain its heat quite nicely. Everybody had that.

M: Were the winters very cold?

C: Cold.

M: What about snow?

C: It seems to me it was colder than in the States.

M: Were the roads paved at all, or was it just all dirt?

C: No, no, in the villages there were strictly stone roads not even the cobblestone; it would be just stone. You would continually bring in stone, and then it wasn't too muddy in some of the villages with that.

M: Would you use horses for transportation?

C: Oh, horses for transportation definitely. I somebody had bicycles, they were luckiest in the world.

M: So, no automobiles or anything like that?

C: The only automobiles you saw in those days in the 1930's and 1940's were people who lived in the city.

M: So they were the wealthiest.

C: Yes, but just for pleasure. The politicians and the city officials used vehicles and also doctors.

M: When did you come to this country again?

C: I came back here in 1948. I left Romania in January of 1948.

M: So you spent about how many years in Romania then?

C: I spent almost eleven years.

M: During that time did you see a lot of changes that occurred in Romanian culture, or did the culture stay basically the same?

C: The years that I spent in Romania, it stayed pretty much the same because like I said we left here in 1936. I came back here in the very beginning of 1948. The war ended in 1945. As you know the war started in the year 1939. So it was the war years when I was there, and you can not expect the economy to go up and go forth in war years. It was pretty rough.

M: When you came to this country back in 1948, did you come back to the Youngstown area to settle?

C: I came to Youngstown.

M: What church was in existence at that time? Was it the one on Wick Avenue or Wilson Avenue that you remember?

C: They had just moved to Wick Avenue in 1946.

M: Did you have to relearn English at all, or did you still retain some of it?

C: Well, for some people it may be pretty hard for them to understand this, but I forgot ninety-five percent of English while I was over in Romania.

M: Because?

C: Some people may ask why. When I got there and I started going to school, my father would speak English with me once in a while, and the kids would look at me and laugh like there was something strange. That prevented me from speaking English anymore. I spoke nothing but Romanian, and I just forgot it.

M: So in other words, in Romania at that time they were treating the foreigners, the English people and so forth, as being different if they spoke English or something as the people in the United States treated foreigners who spoke their national tongue?

C: Oh, yes. In Romania if you spoke a foreign language the way I did when my father would say something in English, it would be something they did not accept as children. Over in this country if you hear somebody speaking, you accept it because of all the nationalities we have over here. But there, they turn around and give you a look. It is strange.

M: Retracking back to Romania again a little bit, that church in Romania . . . could you describe what the churches in Romania looked like that you can remember?

C: The churches in Romania as I can remember them, especially the village churches, they were most always located on some kinds of a hill. If there was a hill in that village, you bet that they built the church on that hill. The church would have to stand out. They always built a church where if you were out of the village far away, you always saw the church steeple, no matter where.

M: Did they resemble the church on Wick Avenue in structure at all?



C: Inside you may say they would, the altar very definitely. But on the outside it was a typical white church.

M: Was it wooden or brick?

C: No, it was brick and white stucco. We had two churches in our village. As people got the newer one, it was a large, brick church. We had a large steeple where the bells were. It was opposite from the altar. The bells were housed in the steeple. In this church there were three big bells. At some time in a certain part of the liturgy one of the trustees would always go and take a couple of us with him and ring the bells. It would take about two or three men to ring the bells.

M: What about inside the church other than the altar that is? What did it look like basically?

C: The churches in Romania . . . there were no pews in the Romanian churches, no pews, absolutely none. Everybody stood up.

M: During the whole service?

C: The whole service. The only place where people could sit would be on the side of the church, along the outside walls. They would have some type of pews where you wouldn't sit down. You would stand up and you had an armrest. These chairs or pews, I'm going to call them that, they would be auctioned off once a year. Usually the older people, the older men, would get these chairs. That was his chair, his pew, throughout the whole year. He would sit there. Now it was usually the older people. The purpose of them was for older men, they would have something to lean on. He would go into his pew, and the armrests were so high that if he stood up, it just came at a comfortable position. It had a little seat in the back that would fold up. Unless he was ill or weak or something, he would be mostly standing up. Now the churches in Romania . . . the women had a section of their own in church.

M: Where they would stand?

C: They would stand, but they were toward the back of the church. The husbands would go on the right or left-hand side toward the front. Then all the children had their spot, their location in church. You wouldn't see a mother and dad and the whole family together.

M: You don't see the whole family together?

C: Then the men, the fellows, from age fifteen, any age, as long as he wasn't married, he would go to the church balcony.

That was where the boys would stay.

M: Wasn't there any Sunday school or anything at the church?

C: No Sunday school. To answer that question before we get off that one where we got our religion, Sunday school was in the grade school, the public school. The priest would come and lecture us for one hour once a week on religion. Now when I hear a priest starting his sermon I remember these sermons since I was in school because those were the same sermons that the priest would come and teach us.

M: So it was almost like a parochial school in a sense.

C: I would say very much like that. It was very helpful because when you went to church you understood what was coming up because the priest would explain it while we were in school.

M: Did they have a choir or anything at that time in church?

C: No, we did not have a choir in our church. In the city they had it, but in our church the congregation sang the responses but it was the cantors who would conduct the songs and the responses, so everybody used to sing the responses. One thing that was evident was that you would get the children to sing all the responses. You would have maybe fifty to one hundred children in church, and you could hear those voices come across.

M: As they were inspired?

C: They were inspired.

M: Also regarding the church a little bit, our church has some groups doing caroling around Christmas time. Was the practice also in Romania too?

C: Oh, yes.

M: Christmas caroling?

C: Definitely, Christmas caroling. It was a tradition.

M: So was it the church that really did it?

C: Oh, yes, well . . .

M: Or was it the schools that sponsored some of it?

C: If I was to get back to that, it wasn't really a part of the church.

M: It wasn't?

C: No. It was part of a tradition that was carried on in Romania.

M: So that was really the people themselves who started the culture.

C: If you would like for me to comment on that , I can.

M: Sure.

C: Okay. Now when I was there, there was an old tradition where the single men in the village would form clubs like five or seven weeks before Christmas. There would be about fifteen or twenty in each club. They would gather together. They would choose leaders and so forth. Then they would practice caroling all through the Christmas Lent. Each club would divide a group into two, and you would practice. You had to memorize all the words of about ten carols.

Now the reason for this club was that during Christmas you would have a dance. They would start dancing; they would hire an orchestra, and they would have dancing. That festival occasion would last seven days, day and night with very little sleep of four or five hours. They would have Romanian costumes with bells on their feet and so forth.

M: Bells on their feet?

C: Oh, yes. Did you ever see those bells with the ribbons and all that tied around their legs?

M: Oh, yes.

C: Okay. Come Christmas Eve they have prepared for the caroling all this time. So we used to . . . All the clubs used to select from each club four or six men. They used to go to the mayor's house that Christmas Eve. Then at the mayor's house you would see the city council sitting at the table dressed in Romanian costumes. All these clubs would be waiting out in the yard. Then the club representatives will be called into the house. You would have a Romanian bottle of wine, one of those decorated type--if you have ever seen that--you would put it on a table as a gift to the mayor and the council. Then you would have to sing and perform for them. You would have to sing the carols. The mayor and council would name a carol for you to sing. Of course you selected your best men to go there to represent you. When you were through, they would allot you so many homes out of the village to carol that evening. See this was part of going caroling. Everybody received the carolers; every home regardless of how poor or rich you were. Those who sang the best for the mayor and the council were supposed to receive the largest amount of homes because the boys that went caroling, the

young men, they kept whatever was given to them. If it was money or whatever the family was giving for receiving the carolers, they kept it themselves. The more homes they gave you, the better off you were. The more money you got in that night for going caroling, the more you will be able to pay towards your club's Christmas expenses and the less out of your pocket. It was a tradition that maybe went back hundreds of years, who knows.

- M: What about you mentioned the caluseri. Did they have those kinds of dance groups in Romania too?
- C: Oh, definitely. These groups I'm talking about now I will have to show you some pictures so that you can have an idea of what it looked like. You had to be dressed in Romanian.
- M: What could you tell us about these caluseri groups? Is there tradition with them too?
- C: Caluseri groups is Romanian dance.
- M: Yes, I know it is a dance, but I mean the groups themselves. Is it handed down from generation to generation?
- C: That group was what I was talking about. Come Christmas Day after church you gather at the place where you had rented. You rent that place for seven days, and you have those bells on your legs. You had the ribbons and all that stuff. Everybody was dressed alike. Everybody had a hair-cut; you had to be neat and clean. Then you would continue with the place you had rented for seven days. You had a bucket of wine over there, a wooden bucket on the table. You had your own barrel of wine in the cellar. Then the dance would start after that. Then the next day in the morning the same group that would be organized in the village would be two, two, two. Then the musicians would be sitting behind. So you would be marching through the whole village. Then you stop in front of every member's home, and you would dance. That is where that dance came from. They had their certain type of dances they would dance. They were specifically designed for like a big round dance.
- M: Was there any difference from one section of the country to another?
- C: Yes, I would say there was. Those festivities were celebrated in different ways in the different parts of the country.
- M: There is one question I wanted to ask, and I almost forgot. I just thought of it now. In the United States we have different dialects. People in the northern and Boston area speak a Bostonian, and the people in the southern speak with a

southern accent. Is that prominent in Romania too?

C: Very much so. You could tell a person what region he is from by the way he talks.

M: Really?

C: Definitely, no question about it. You could tell; I could even tell.

M: Actually what we think our country as being big, having such a vastness even in a small area as . . .

C: Small country no bigger than Ohio is.

M: That is hard to believe. Also regarding the Romanian culture a little bit of food is always, I understand, a tradition of the Romanian culture. When your parents were living in Romania and you were living in Romania, did your mother prepare the traditional Romanian meals, or did she also have some of the American type of meals today like spaghetti or anything?

C: Yes, she made some spaghetti. Once in a while there were a few meals. Most of them were Romanian though, but she had some others. She brought some meals from this country with her there. Once in a while she would cook in this fashion but mostly in Romanian.

M: Now when you would go to these different events, did they have mostly Romanian type of cooking and so forth?

C: Oh, definitely.

M: What would be some of the type of Romanian dishes that you can think of that were purely Romanian?

C: At a holiday for example, Christmas, everybody would have pigs in a blanket. The cabbage would be cooked in a big crock. That would be the main thing. They would have a lot of pork in there, and that is typical Romanian. That and sausage and smoked hams and that type of food and sauerkraut.

M: Did your parents have any refrigeration at all at the time?

C: No, in the village there was no such thing. The only thing you could find were cold buckets. Some of the food was put down in the basement. They were keeping them down in there. The walls were very thick, you know, for keeping things cold. That is where they put the food.

M: So in other words, you really had to consume what you could

and as fast as you could of this?

C: Well, in here is the thing. There is a way to keeping the food so that you can preserve it that most people learn from.

M: Oh, so they cured it.

C: Yes, they cured it. Here is what they did. For example, if you want . . . everybody butchered hogs before Christmas. If you did not, you were put to pasture. You had to kill your hog. Like I said, you lived off the land. So you fattened your own hogs, and you had to butcher them. Now what they did, you should have something to save from the hog. So what they did was fry this meat; they fried the sausage; they fried the ham; they fried everything. They cut it into small pieces and then they would put it in big jars. Over this fried meat they would put this pack of lard. Then this meat was fried, and it had its salts and then the lard. Then you seal it, and you could eat it five months later.

M: Did they try to consume as much of the hog as they could?

C: No, they tried not to. It was better to have it left for the summer time.

M: No, but I mean they didn't waste anything?

C: No, nothing was wasted.

M: Because in this country over here for the hog usually most places you don't find a hog head or anything. I understand Romanians did eat different parts of the head too.

C: Why certainly. Now you take the head, the meat on the head was that you could throw a portion of that into the cabbage and enjoy it. The bacon slab . . .

M: That is slanina in Romanian.

C: That is slanina. You treat that. You salt it, heavy salt. There are some big pigs where the meat and the salt would penetrate. After about five days of that you would hang it up and smoke it. Then after you smoke it and it was cured later by salt, from that day in December and until August, you could use that bacon.

M: You are still curing the pig.

C: Oh, you have to be because the cooking was strictly lard and bacon. So that was part of the cooking.

M: When you came to the United States back in 1948 and into

the Youngstown area, you mentioned about the church on Wick Avenue. Did it resemble the church at all in Romania in the sense of composition? I don't mean services or altar or anything like that. Did it have any resemblance to it at all? Did it carry maybe a gothic style or anything?

- C: Yes, it did very much. The pictures you see in the church are pretty much the same over there. The way the altars are arranged is pretty much the same. There are certain icons placed in certain portions of the church.
- M: So really the only difference would be that there are pews in the United States?
- C: Yes, that definitely over here. You take the church on Wick Avenue, inside and outside it looks pretty much like that church, but you have got to remember that it was made out of a mansion. It was converted from a mansion. So we have a steeple over there, and the outside looks very much like a church, but it was not designed primarily from the beginning with the tall, tall steeples and the long white everything. All the churches in Romania always had white stucco on the outside so you could see if from far away. The bells would ring. You could hear them from miles away because you didn't have the noise there that you have here.
- M: Were there many changes that you have seen over the years at the church on Wick Avenue?
- C: Yes, when I came over here in 1948, it was mostly all Romanian spoken in the church then. All the services were in Romanian. The groups were quite active. We had a lot of youngsters. We had a lot of people in church then because a lot of the originals were still there, and they were younger. You see these people are now eighty years old.
- M: They were really the founders.
- C: They were in their fifties, and they were active in church. Now a lot of them are dead. All of the Romanians wanted the Romanian church. At that time they all mostly came from Romania and they did not know the English language. The children also went to church. They were teenagers then and in their twenties. The church had a nice membership. Then the first generation had grown and matured and became parents. A lot of them had intermarried. Some continue to go to our church, and some went in other directions. So fortunately we still have a nice church.
- M: It has really Americanized itself then.
- C: Yes, much more. Like I said there was no English then, but

now half of it is in English. There is much more English in the church now.

- M: Do you think that the young people might in the future or even now try to preserve some--I'm not saying all--of the old tradition, or do you think that they themselves would rather have it more or less Americanized completely?
- C: The way I look at it now they will Americanize our church. They will try to save some because some of the children from the third generation still have a degree of Romanian pride. It is not that great, but they will retain some. But it is going to change. It is going to continue to become more and more Americanized.
- M: I think so too.
- C: You can't blame them for that.
- M: Now I understand that at the church over here on Wick Avenue that in the old days they used to have theater groups and the societies used to have it like that--to have Romanians get together and patronize a little bit. Is that prominent today, all of this?
- C: Unfortunately that has slowed down very much. To answer that question back in the early 1950's hardly an Easter went by that we did not have a play from our church. Oh, almost every Easter we used to put on an Easter play.
- M: Who did this? Was it the Sunday school children or the people?
- C: Young and old. We always had plays.
- M: Where at, at the church?
- C: No, we used to study at the church, but we still had that place at the Romanian hall which was a combined thing of all the Romanians from Youngstown. Then every Easter there used to be a Romanian dance. Well, this type of dance was for the family. You take your children who are three years old. They are always there and doing just a Romanian dance. It wasn't typical of couples only. That was done.
- M: Also at our church you have served as president of our church. Could you tell us a little bit about the function of the president at the church? What are his duties?
- C: Well, the function of the church president is, you know, we have a church council. The size of the council is based on the membership. So we have about 245 members, that is 245 families in our church, and that gave us about thirty some council members or trustees that is. The function of the



president is to call council meetings once a month or as often as needed. The duties of the council president is to preside over the council and our job is to administer all the church matters, that is the buildings and maintenance, pay the bills and maintain all the business. That is the primary function of the church council, and you also represent your church in our community.

M: Do you have to be a Romanian or really an Orthodox to attend our church?

C: To attend our church? No, anybody can attend our church. Our church is quite liberal. For the church services anybody could come.

M: What about membership?

C: Membership in our church, if you want to become a member in our church, you would have to have an interview with the priest, and he would check out your character. Then the priest will submit your name to the council for final approval to become a member. That is how you become a member. Council has the final say-so.

M: Who has voting rights in the church? Do the women have voting rights like the men too?

C: When it comes to voting, we have certain traditions in our church that we follow. The head of the house has voting rights. Now the rest of the family receives all of the benefits, but they cannot vote. Now if the wife wants to have voting rights at our church, it will cost her \$8. So if the family pays "\$56, then they vote. That is \$48 for the head of the house. Of course, retired people pay less. I don't remember the figures to tell you what they are.

M: That is okay.

C: In some cases where the husband has died and the wife, or the mother, has become head of the household, then after she has completed the payment she has voting rights.

M: Also in that church over here that I can remember, we talked about plays and so forth. Sunday school when I was a little boy, it was a place that a lot of children went and learned something about the religious aspect and also a little bit I believe I think under Father Stanila some of the culture of Romania. Do you know if that is still a thing now, or is it mostly phased out and become Americanized and religion has supplemented it?

C: Sunday school in our church the way it is now is Americanized.

It is all in English, and they try to teach them the basics of religion.

- M: Do you think they should mention anything about Romanian culture or anything in there, or do you think that is out of place for them?
- C: Oh, I don't see any harm in that, but I think the main function of it is religion. There is no harm if they want to mention anything about Romania. I would say the country itself is secondary to the Orthodox religion for the young to learn at our church. They are in that church; they are in the Orthodox Sunday school class, and that is what they are supposed to be taught.
- M: In other words, it is one of the changes that Father John wonders about. Regarding the changes in Romanian culture and so forth, and how the church was used before as somewhat a tool to further Romanian culture, do you think that perhaps today it should be utilized as a tool, or do you think that it should be left up to Romanian societies to take it upon themselves to teach Romanian culture to those who are interested?
- C: I think it should be up to the societies. I don't think that in this day and age in the mid-1970's now and with the third generation over here and the fourth that we should go to Sunday school to study about Romania. I think tradition should be up to societies.
- M: Well, see I don't mean in a sense of Sunday school teachers teaching it as part of religion, but I am referring to it as they are teaching dances and so forth like that. I was wondering if you think that and even caroling at Christmas time some years ago they used to teach to sing Romanian carols and so forth. It has gone amiss as time has progressed. I was wondering if you think it should stay that way, or do you think that maybe some of the teachers should bring it upon themselves to bring it back to the younger ones? I don't mean the teen-agers, but I mean some of the younger ones like maybe eight or nine years old. The teens themselves already have more or less become Americanized, and there won't be anything of interest to them in that sense.
- C: Well, I don't see anything wrong with trying to teach some Romanian dances. If you have an organization whether it is with the church or anything, you have to have some social life in it. They already know how to dance these other dances going to their schools. To prepare for say a play or a banquet to entertain the people somehow, they might choose to have something in Romanian.
- M: You don't see this as for the Romanian society to do this

then?

C: The Romanian society? You mean the society itself?

M: Yes.

C: Oh, yes, I think it is perfectly alright for them to have something like that. They are a society which is churchgoing people, but they don't have the same functions the church has.

Some people out of curiosity would like to learn a foreign language. This is a good opportunity to build on. There is nothing wrong to learn a foreign language if a teenager wants to learn a language to be a linguist or an interpreter some day. Every little bit helps. It is nice to know English and I think it is nice to know a foreign language if you want to. Being the society or the church, I think it is good.

M: They think that it should be up to them more or less other than the church to follow through with it.

C: Oh, definitely.

M: The church then would only be used as a secondary source.

C: The church is just strictly helping them out because we have the buildings. The society being a Romanian society is made up of Orthodox and Catholics.

M: Do you think that the society itself is going to teach the Romanian language?

C: No, because again a lot of young men are not showing that much of an interest. I don't think they will; I hope I am wrong. I would like to see them get themselves established again on solid ground and keep on going as it is a fine organization. Unfortunately most of the members are older.

M: The younger ones are Americanizing.

C: Americanizing; they don't have the interest; they don't go to meetings because of many other interests. Their parents came from Romania, and they are from a Romanian church, but as soon as they walk out of that church, they don't think of themselves as Romanians. They don't speak Romanian at all.

M: What sports do they play there?

C: Football, and they called it soccer.

M: You played that in school?

C: Yes.

M: Did the high schools play one another as they do here, scholastically?

C: Yes. Not that type of program, but everybody . . . If you had two high schools like at Youngstown, well, like Sibiu but it wasn't as big as Youngstown. . . You would have two high schools. They would play one city against another city, yes.

M: Was there quite a bit of interest in those sports?

C: Yes.

M: Did you have recreation facilities at all? Over here they have movie theaters; they have swimming pools and things.

C: Yes, they have that. They have swimming pools. There is a place to go dancing if you like to go dancing there like over here.

M: What was really the culture center of a city, or wasn't there any in Romania at that time? This was during the war I understand.

C: What was the culture?

M: Was there any real culture center of the city at all during that time, or didn't they have any culture centers or anything like that?

C: Yes, they used to meet at the township or village hall; even though you may have been out of school they would have plays and sing and dance groups.

M: Were there societies there? We have a Romanian society. Was there a special type of society over there at these halls?

C: The halls would belong to the village.

M: Oh, so it would serve for the whole village then?

C: Definitely. There were not societies over there.

M: What about in the large cities? Did they have more than one hall there?

C: Yes. The only distinction in the nationalities in Romania in those days was we had Saxons, Hungarians, and so forth

in Romania for years.

M: Could they speak Romanian?

C: Yes, but mostly their own language. Some of the people were born and raised in Romania. They would speak Romanian, but it was a broken Romanian. They would go to their church. They had their own culture; they had their own schools. That was during the war and before. Now I don't know if they still have any Saxon schools. Well, there are a lot of things about that country that I could . . .

M: Yes, well, I don't want to get into those things. Getting back to this country and summarizing a little bit more or less, what changes would you like to see occur regarding the Romanian community and Romanian church at all?

C: You ask what changes I would like to see. I don't really particularly have a change that I would like to see. I would like to see the Orthodox church as a whole continue to be an Orthodox church whether it is called Romanian or whatever it is called. I would like to see our diocese as a whole continue to grow.

M: Would you like to see more of the Orthodox diocese to get together like a group and the Romanians and like that and become one unified Orthodoxy?

C: I see that in time coming. I definitely see that coming. It may not be tomorrow, but I definitely see an Orthodox church.

M: And really becoming like an American Orthodox church.

C: Like an American Orthodox church. In fact we now belong to the Orthodox Church of America. It has been adopted as far as the episcopates are concerned about two or three years ago. The Romanians and a group of other Orthodox churches also belong to the same diocese. I see that, yes. It may not be right away though.

M: Is there anything else that you would like to add at all? Could you tell us a little bit about your job in a sense because I know you do a lot of traveling working for Mr. DeBartolo.

C: Well, I have been with the DeBartolo position since 1956. That will be almost twenty years. My job has to do with the designing and installation of air conditioning and ventilating systems for all the shopping centers and all the industrial buildings that Mr. DeBartolo built around the country. I started with him as a draftsman. I worked on the drawing board for quite a few years. After that I was in charge

of the mechanical section. As of the last six years I am a mechanical coordinator. My job is to coordinate the engineering and the field, the construction in the field over-seeing any problems, inspecting all the construction and making sure that it is installed per plans and specifications. As a result we go to malls in the different cities throughout the country, and I make trips to various places.

M: Thank you very much, sir, for your time.

END OF INTERVIEW