

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

The Rayen School

View from Student in the Class of 1918

O.H. 88

MRS. PAUL BOOTH

Interviewed

by

Mark Connelly

on

November 21, 1974

MRS. PAUL BOOTH

Mrs. Paul Booth was born on October 26, 1898, in Hubbard, Ohio, the daughter of Catherine Claire Campbell and Thomas Scott Clingan. Because her mother died when she was born, Mrs. Booth was raised by her maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis L. Campbell. Mrs. Booth was raised in Hubbard, attending grade school there, and also attending Hubbard High School during her Freshman year. Due to some difficulties and problems within the Hubbard Board of Education, Mrs. Booth was then transferred to Rayen High School, where she graduated in the class of 1918.

Mrs. Booth continued her education attending the University of Washington in Seattle for two years, then transferring to Kent, where she majored in Education. Before she married, Mrs. Booth taught the fourth grade for one year at the old Elm Street School in Youngstown, Ohio.

Mrs. Booth takes special interest in raising flowers and gardening, and is a former President of the Hubbard Garden Club. She is also a member of the National Wildlife Association and the First Presbyterian Church of Youngstown.

ELIZABETH A. REITZEL
August 30, 1978

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INTERVIEWEE: MRS. PAUL BOOTH

INTERVIEWER: Mark Connelly

SUBJECT: View from student in the class of 1918

DATE: November 21, 1974

C: This is an interview with Mrs. Paul Booth for the Youngstown State University Oral History Project on the Rayen School. It is being done by Mark Connelly at Mrs. Booth's residence at 1200 Academy Drive. It is taking place on Thursday, November 21, 1974, at approximately 10:00 a.m.

C: Mrs. Booth, would you please tell us a little bit about your background? Your own and family's background?

B: My father's family was one of the founders of Hubbard, and the early settlers and their name was Clingan. And my mother died when I was born and I was raised by my maternal grandparents, whose name was Lewis L. Campbell. And both my grandmother and grandfather who raised me had been school teachers all of their lives in this area. They taught in various places around this area, in Sharpsville and in Canfield, the old academy there. My grandmother and grandfather both taught there.

In those days there were so many academies around and the Rayen School was one of them. They were like a prep school today. So many pupils who went to high schools around here, and wanted to go to the big colleges in the east, would come to these academies, which had the status of a prep school today, to complete their education. They would probably have three years in their own town and then come to Rayen. That was not the case with me.

They had trouble in the early days just like they do today, between different people who ran the schools.

In Hubbard, they had a peculiar situation. There was one big building that housed all of the grade school and the high school. The grade school occupied the main floor and the eighth grade, which they had in those days, occupied one room on the second floor. Then the rest of the second floor was occupied by the high school. Well, the village owned part of the building that housed the grade school, but the township owned the high school. They had a fight between the township and the village. The township locked the village pupils out of the high school.

I went one year to high school in Hubbard. Then the board of education sent all of the pupils from the high school that were locked out to Rayen School. That is how I came to go to Rayen. But when I was taking my freshman year, I had a good teacher in math and they taught such subjects as agriculture and botany which they didn't have in Rayen. So I never liked math and I was afraid of the math teacher in Rayen so I took my credit in that. But I took the rest of my freshman year over. So I really went four years at Rayen. Our board of education paid our tuition for two years, then the high school room was opened and they could go back to Hubbard. But most of the pupils from Hubbard who wanted to go to college and so forth continued in Rayen and graduated from there.

- C: Do you think that if you had not been forced out of Hubbard High School that you would have gone to Rayen anyway?
- B: Probably not. I might have but I don't know.
- C: Could you talk a little bit about your father's occupation?
- B: Well my father graduated from Rayen in 1894. I don't know, but on bad days when it was snowing he probably came over in a horse and buggy in those days. But I know that on the good days he bicycled from Hubbard to Rayen.
- C: When your father went to high school, was there a high school in Hubbard?
- B: Yes. There were three years of high school in Hubbard. And he graduated from high school and went into the steel business. My grandfather who raised me, his brother, was James A. Campbell of the Sheet and Tube. But my father went to work for the Republic. Down in the mill to start with he was a night superintendent, and he learned the steel business from the bottom up. He was sent by the Republic to Toledo, as works manager. Then

later he was sent to Chicago. When I was seven years old he remarried. And he ended up going west. My great uncle, William Pigott, with a Judge Wilson from here, founded the steel business on the Pacific coast. That was the Pacific Coast Steel Company, which was later taken over by Bethlehem. My father went to work for his brother-in-law as works manager and later vice-president, and president of the Pacific Coast Steel in Seattle. He ended up as Vice President of Bethlehem Steel in charge of their plants on the Pacific Coast with headquarters in San Francisco.

- C: Now when you were going to high school in Hubbard, did your father ever hint at sending you to the Rayen School? Why didn't he send you to the Rayen School originally?
- B: He wasn't living here at that time. He was living in Seattle in my high school days.
- C: After your second year there you had to pay tuition. Was this a problem for your family, the cost of tuition?
- B: I don't know. I can't tell you that.
- C: So you wouldn't even have an idea what the tuition was?
- B: I have no idea.
- C: How would you compare the Rayen School to Hubbard High School?
- B: Oh, there was no comparison whatsoever.
- C: In what ways wasn't there a comparison?
- B: Well, in Hubbard they just had one great big room and three tiny classrooms, that didn't amount to anything. Most of the classes were conducted in the big study hall, which wasn't done at Rayen. We only had three teachers, the superintendent of schools, who taught a few classes and two other teachers besides him.
- C: What had you heard about the Rayen School before you had entered it? Nothing?
- B: I don't remember anything except that my father had gone there, I was told.
- C: What was your reaction when you first entered the school?
- B: Well, I can describe the school, but I don't remember that much. We went on the streetcar in those days. And

we also had some pupils, a couple of them, from Sharon, Pennsylvania who went with us. I know one particular girl who was going to Vassar College and she came over on the streetcar with us. We used to pick up some pupils from Coitsville; this old streetcar went through Coitsville.

C: About how long did it take to get there by streetcar?

B: Oh, I think a half hour in those days.

C: That is including all of the stops?

B: Yes.

C: What was your impression of the student body when you entered Rayen?

B: Well, I was a very shy youngster and I didn't make friends easily. And most of them I didn't know until I did, except the ones who came from Hubbard for quite a while. But it was such a different school.

C: About how many students came from Hubbard to go there?

B: Oh, I don't remember. I'm no good at figures to remember.

C: Just an approximate. Was it say more than 50.

B: Oh, not that many. I would be more apt to say 25.

C: How many returned to Hubbard after their second year?

B: Oh, I don't think more than 12 probably stayed.

C: Would you say that the Hubbard students sort of stuck together at the Rayen School?

B: Yes, I think we did.

C: How were you received by the Rayen students?

B: Well, we were received all right. Would you like to know about Rayen in those early days?

C: Sure.

B: When you went into Rayen you went up the stairs, there were stairs there and everyone was seated in a large auditorium, which was approximately 30 x 40 feet. They had two doors, two entrances in the front of the auditorium. Between the two doors there was a platform. On that platform sat the man who was in charge. It was

usually a man, I don't ever remember a lady being in charge of the study hall. And we were all assigned seats. That is all of the classes were assigned seats in this big study hall. And there were six rows of seats. There was a center aisle that went up in front of the man who had charge, and then there were three aisles on each side. Of course there were the aisles on the outside, the two aisles, that is not counting the two aisles on the outside. So there were six rows of seats and everyone was assigned to a seat.

The one in charge of the study hall had charge, and knew who was sitting in the various seats, so he could take the roll in the morning. I don't know whether they had people to pick up students who don't come to school anymore, like they used to or not. But if you were late or if you were absent, you always had to go into the side door which is in the connecting building between the old Rayen and the Board of Education building. And it was on the first floor, and you would go to Mr. Herr's office. He was the assistant principal and we always called him "Daddy Herr." He took the roll and no one seemed to be afraid of him; they liked him. But, Mr. Edmund Miller was the principal and he was a very dignified and very precise person, and everyone was sort of scared of him when he issued ultimatums.

We usually had an opening ceremony in the morning before school. Sometime we were celebrating some victory of the athletes, or it was some certain day. Sometimes we would have a speaker for a short time, but it was probably about 45 minutes before the regular school started. Then you went out to your classroom, and those that didn't have a class would stay in the study hall. And those who were in the study hall, and they wanted to go to the library. In those days they used the public library which was right across the street. We didn't have a library in the school. If they had an appointment with one of the teachers, they had to sign out the time they were leaving and the time they came back they would sign in. So they knew where everyone was at the time.

It was a pretty big job in those days to have one person in charge of a big student body like that. But we had outstanding teachers in those days, like Mrs. Kerwer, who taught German and she was a German. And Miss Thomas, who taught French; she spent every summer in France, in the home of French people. I was a French major, and she used to have Frenchmen come and lecture to her class, not the first year, but in the upper classes. I guess they did that in the German

classes too. They would have a meeting every month of all the students in a club. They called it the French Club, and the German Club, and they would speak nothing but the language, while they were in there. They weren't allowed to speak anything but the language.

C: In the classroom were you allowed to speak English?

B: Well, when you were a freshman you could.

C: But say in the upper division?

B: You were supposed to speak, but they didn't enforce it as much as they did when you belonged to the club, as I recall.

C: What would they do if you spoke English?

B: Well, no one tried to do it.

C: How were the classes generally conducted at the Rayen School? What was the usual method of teaching, as you recall, can you describe it? What would the teachers do?

B: Well, he usually asked questions of the students. It depended on what the subject was. But in history class you were asked and in say Latin you had to, the teacher would ask questions and of the different ones, and asked them on whatever the lesson was.

C: Generally how much time did you spend in homework per night?

B: Per night? Well, we did most of our studying in school. See we had study periods and we didn't have too much at home like they do today.

C: Do you speak French now fairly well?

B: Oh, I have sort of forgotten it. I can speak it a little bit, but I did take French in college. And with Frenchmen I found that my French was perfect under Mrs. Mariam Thomas. And in fact I seemed to be a head of a lot of the other students because I had taken it from her.

C: Speaking of college, where did you go to college?

B: I went two years to the University of Washington in Seattle. And then I ended up in Kent. In those days you could teach if you had one year in, in those days Kent was just a teacher's college. Almost all of the students were women, there were very few men in Kent in those days.

- C: What was your major in college?
- B: Well, they didn't require you in those days to have a regular major like they do today. I just took a general course. I would say that Education is what I majored in.
- C: How well would you say you were prepared before college by the Rayen School? Did you find it fairly easy?
- B: Oh, yes.
- C: How would you compare the quality of teachers that you had in college to say the teachers that you had in the Rayen School?
- B: Well, I think that they were pretty well on a par.
- C: Okay, getting back to high school, living in Hubbard, did you find yourself sort of left out of the extra-curricular activities of the Rayen School because you lived so far away?
- B: Well, they didn't have as many activities in those days as they did later on. In fact, they had very few all school dances and things like that. There were just little cliques that had their parties in their homes and things like that. They didn't have like they did later on, like my children did.
- C: Your children went to Rayen?
- B: No, I lived in Hubbard. They went to Hubbard.
- C: What did you do for say on a date or just to relax? What sort of activities did you get involved in?
- B: You mean in connection with Rayen?
- C: Well, just in any way during your high school years. What did you do for fun?
- B: In those days they sent youngsters to dancing school, and I went to Botts Dancing School. That was one activity, that was at night. We usually had someone bring us home from that. I ran around with people in Hubbard; more of my social activities were in Hubbard. We used to go with young people from Grove City College. They used to come over, and take a bunch of us out. And we would go maybe to Youngstown to a show, and ride around the country. But there would be a big gang of us. We didn't go out alone. There were about four girlfriends of mine who had dates

with these different ones from Grove City College, they had relatives who lived in Hubbard, and they came up.

C: Were there any sort of any special rules that a student of Rayen had to abide by; was there some certain code that they had to uphold?

B: Well, they were real strict in those days and the youngsters were afraid to disobey their teachers. It wasn't like these days, but they did do some things that youngsters like to do. As I recall, in between the two doors of the main study hall there was a niche and in that was a bust of somebody, I don't remember who it was. And there was a row of them along the corridor. Some of the students would put wreaths around their necks and put a hat on one of them, just for fun.

C: How was this looked upon by the administration?

B: Well, I never found out what they really did to them for doing that. Some teachers were very strict; everybody was afraid of Mrs. Peterson and Lida Baldwin. There were certain teachers they were afraid of, they were scared of.

C: Generally, what was the student-teacher relationship? Was it a very friendly one on the whole or was it reserved?

B: Well, again it depended upon the teacher. Now Miss Thomas was very friendly, and my history teachers were friendly. Mr. Tear was always very friendly.

C: How did you look upon Mr. Miller? I know you said that he was a very dignified sort of gentleman, but when you were in high school, what was your opinion of him?

B: Well, I never came in contact with him. You see the principal didn't teach any classes, and I was never sent to his office for anything. I was always a good little girl and was never sent into his office for any reason. When my husband, who taught at Rayen the first four years that we were married, Mr. Miller was still the principal.

C: Did your opinion change of him during that period?

B: Well, I always thought that he was very dignified, and I don't think that he ever changed in that respect. There were several of the teachers who were still teaching there when my husband was teaching. They had been there when I went to school.

- C: You mentioned when there were parties or whatever, that they were usually promoted by little cliques. What were these cliques usually based upon? By, say, the area in which certain groups lived?
- B: I think so. I didn't know too much about the ones in Youngstown because I continued to go out with my friends in Hubbard. Because I was there at night, I never stayed in Youngstown. The only thing we used to have some of the boys in our class were ushers in the local theaters. One was Frank Savage, he was Frank Zawistowsky in those days. I mean he changed his name. He worked for the Palace Theater, and he used to give us girls tickets to go to the shows. He would get so many free tickets, and he used to give them to us.
- C: Did you ever go to the show during school time?
- B: No, we went after school and we were taking a later bus going home, that's all.
- C: What kind of shows were at the Palace? That you recall that you have seen?
- B: Oh, well they were regular movies. They weren't the blood and thunder like they are these days, that's all.
- C: What was your favorite?
- B: Oh, I don't remember. That is too long ago.
- C: Let's talk a little more about the discipline in Rayen. Did any of your friends receive the wrath of the administration or teachers that you know of, or were you yourself ever disciplined by the staff?
- B: I can't recall. I will say that South High had started in those days and there was quite a rivalry. The big thing was the Thanksgiving football game. It was always between Rayen and South.
- C: What was your opinion of South High School?
- B: Well, I didn't know anything about it as a school. I just knew that we used to go to the big game on Thanksgiving; we never missed that. We usually had a date to go to it.
- C: Would you say that there was a feeling of superiority among the Rayen School students as opposed to say South High?
- B: Oh, yes, Rayen students thought that they were better; probably South High thought that they were better.

C: On the day you graduated as you look back on your years at Rayen, what sort of feeling did you have? Or can you just describe your graduation day?

B: Well, I know that we graduated in a theater. We had the graduation exercises in a theater because there wasn't a big enough room in Rayen, we didn't have an auditorium in those days. We used the old theater up in the arcade. What was its name now? It was the biggest theater and it was always used for the Rayen graduations. They had stage shows there.

C: Was it an all-day ceremony?

B: No, it was in the morning usually. The big thing was the Baccalaureate. It was in one of the churches. They had different churches different years. I don't recall just which church we had then, but we marched. The gals always got dressed up; they always got a new suit to wear for Baccalaureate.

C: What was the general dress of the Rayen student? What did you usually wear to school? You said that they got special dresses for graduation, but what was the usual dress?

B: Well, we wore either skirts and blouses or dresses. They didn't have such things as blue jeans, no pant suits in those days. So it could be any kind of a dress. Oh, we used to wear "middies," they called them, that had big sailor collars and a tie. We used to have "middie blouses." We also had dresses of the same style.

C: What about the boys, what did they generally wear?

B: Well, they usually wore suits.

C: Do you recall any student ever being sent home or punished or disciplined for not having the appropriate dress?

B: No, there was no difficulty in that. Their parents made sure that they were dressed properly. So there was no trouble in that line.

C: Now you said that you graduated in 1918, right?

B: Right.

C: Can you recall the approximate number of students that graduated with you in that year?

- B: There are still Rayen records around and they would probably tell you if you want to know. As I say, I am not good at figures and I don't remember that.
- C: Would you say that most of the students who entered Rayen the same year as you, now this is just the Hubbard students, but most of the students who entered Rayen School as freshmen with you, would you say that most of them graduated or not?
- B: I think that most of them did. I never heard of ones dropping out when they started high school in those days. A lot of them did not continue after high school. But most of them, when they started high school, would graduate.
- C: When you think of the Rayen School, what one thing comes to your mind immediately?
- B: Well, I liked my time at Rayen very much. I was always very happy. That is all I can say.
- C: There is not one thing though that you liked the most?
- B: No.
- C: To the other extreme, what one thing would you have liked to change, if you had the power to? What one thing would you have changed about Rayen School?
- B: Well, it was so different from Hubbard and so far advanced and above it that there wasn't anything about it that I cared about changing.
- C: When you had your own children, did you ever contemplate sending them to the Rayen School?
- B: No, because we had good schools in Hubbard. In fact, we live right across from the grade school.
- C: Was your husband teaching somewhere else?
- B: No, he was an attorney, and he had taken one year of law at the University of Minnesota. Then he finished up at Youngstown night school. He went nights while he was teaching at Rayen. Then he graduated in law and he went right into the law practice. He was also on the Board of Education of the Hubbard Schools part of the time and President of the Board when my children were in high school in Hubbard.
- C: Did you have any regrets about not being able to send your children to the Rayen School?

- B: No, because we had good schools in Hubbard.
- C: So there wasn't any remorse about it?
- B: It didn't have the status, that is, everybody did send their children to their own schools then; they were all first grade high schools in those days. But in the early days, as I said before, I found that when we had our fiftieth anniversary, and I was on the committee to look up graduates, that these people that came in just for one year. They came for their senior year; there were some from Liberty, some from Coitsville, some from Struthers, some from Poland, and they weren't particularly interested in the 50th anniversary graduating from Rayen because they had gone the three years to their own schools. So many of them that graduated just came for their senior year, from all of these surrounding high schools.
- C: Was that just to have the prestige of graduating from the Rayen school do you think?
- B: No, if you wanted to graduate from high school and you wanted to go on with your education, you had to go to Rayen, if you lived in this area. Or maybe some of them went to South in those days, because there were just the two schools.
- C: So a person graduating from Liberty would not be able to continue his education in college?
- B: Well, it was only a three-year high school. That is the reason it was called in those days, "The Rayen," which it isn't now.
- C: What affect did this have on the student body, this influx of students from all around the whole area? Did it keep it pretty well divided would you say?
- B: Well, I think that in that way, they were in cliques, and they didn't all get together, except in your study hall. It was the only place that they were all together and unless you were in the same classes, you didn't become acquainted with them.
- C: To your knowledge how long did this going to your own high school for three years and then coming to the Rayen School, go on? How about when your husband was teaching there, were they still doing it?
- B: Oh, no. They were up in the other building. I'd say when they left the old building, that wasn't in operation.

C: When did your husband start teaching there?

B: 1923.

C: Now have you kept up with what has been happening at the Rayen School or Rayen High School through the years?

B: Well, for quite a number of years I belonged to the Rayen Wive's Club, which we had. Through that I kept up, perhaps I belonged to that for about 15 years or 20. Then when the teachers that I knew dropped out and I didn't know the ones that were teaching there, I dropped out.

C: Now in the recent dedication of the original Rayen School building, you were called upon to give a speech. What did you talk about?

B: Well, I talked about the same thing that I did here for you, about the status of Rayen in those days and described the study hall and told about those pupils coming in for their senior year around here. I made it very brief.

C: Is there anything else you want to comment on the high school, anything that we haven't hit upon that you would like to put on the tape?

B: I think that we covered it pretty well.

C: Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW