

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
Dorset United Methodist Church

Youth, Schooling, Groups, Functions,
Problems, and Women's Group

O.H. 89

LETA MELLINGER

Interviewed

by

Patricia Beckwith

on

October 20, 1977

LETA MELLINGER

Leta Louella Kelley was born on May 15, 1902, in Espyville, Pennsylvania. She was the child of Myron and May Kelley, and had a younger brother, Lyle.

Before her sophomore year in high school, the Kelley family moved to Dorset, Ohio. Here she graduated from high school and later married Albert Mellinger on June 1, 1921. Leta and Albert are the parents of one child, Inez Reeder.

Leta was first employed outside the home in 1941-1943 by Cozier Box of Jefferson, Ohio. She later worked for the Jefferson Area Schools as a cook for the Dorset Elementary School, 1963-1972. In June of 1972, she officially retired.

Both Leta and her husband attend the Dorset United Methodist Church. She is active in Rebekah Lodge, and the United Methodist Women.

Three hobbies are important to Leta; quilting, crocheting, and tatting.

This interview was conducted in the Mellinger home, 2637 Route 193, Dorset, Ohio, on October 20, 1977, by Patricia Beckwith.

PATRICIA BECKWITH

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INTERVIEWEE: LETA MELLINGER

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SUBJECT: Youth, Schooling, Groups, Functions, Problems of
Dorset U.M. Church, Women's Group

DATE: October 20, 1977

BECKWITH: To get to know you, first of all we would like to know a little bit about your childhood and about your early schooling.

MELLINGER: Well, I was born in Espyville, Pennsylvania. While I lived there my father was in the milk business, he made cheese. Then we moved to Jamestown, Pennsylvania and had a cheese factory down there with my uncle. And that is where my brother was born. They finally decided to move back to Espyville and they ran the cheese factory there. Finally my father bought my uncle out. We lived about a mile, maybe a mile and a half, from the school. So naturally I had to ride the school bus at that time. Then after we had been there for a while he went into shipping milk. It was quite a job to haul the milk out to the depot where they had to load it onto a train. So he moved the factory out by the tracks. Then a few years later we built a new home right beside the school house. I was in school there until we moved here to Dorset when I was a sophomore.

BECKWITH: Then you spent quite a few years there?

MELLINGER: Yes, all my grade school years and my freshman year, they had a high school. Later Dad sold

the plant to Rick McJunkin from Pittsburgh. And he ran it for them for a while. Then they wanted him to come up here to Dorset and take charge of the milk plant here. Of course my mother hated to come because she hated to leave the new house. At first we couldn't get a house. The company furnished a house for the formen. We had quite a time to find one. So he stayed until the middle of August at a hotel that used to be here in Dorset. And then we finally got a house. It was just about across from the Baptist Church. We lived there as long as he was at the milk plant. At one time, this milk plant was the largest milk shipping plant in the United States.

B: So he had a good job, right?

M: Yes, and he stayed there. And then they were going to change hands. There was another company that was going to buy them out. So he thought that he would make a change. That is when he built the garage over here at the corner.

B: Oh, I didn't know that he built that?

M: Yes, my dad built that. Then he just got started there when the farmers built the cheese factory over here.

B: You don't mean the Farmer family, you mean all the farmers of the area?

M: The farmers of Dorset. They decided to start a cheese factory. They thought they could get more out of it than they were getting out of the whole milk. Of course they knew Dad was a former cheese maker, and they were having quite a time getting anybody. So they came and wanted to know if he would come and make the cheese. Well, of course he had just gotten started in the garage, but he said that he would go over and stay until they could get someone. My brother went in here with my dad, so he kept the garage going. He was at the cheese factory for quite a number of years. Then he came back to the garage over here. He kept that going as long as he was able to. He got arthritis and it was getting hard for him to get around, so he sold the garage. They moved up north, in what was the former Baptist Parsonage as long as my mother was able to take care of him, and then they moved down here with us. He was layed up for a good many years and wasn't able to walk around.

B: Now when he built this garage, was this a mechanic's garage?

- M: Yes, it was just a general garage, like it is over there now. Of course he did sell gasoline, too.
- B: What are some of your early memories about your schooling? Is there anything special that you can remember about Espyville?
- M: I don't remember anything special. Of course back then they didn't have kindergarten so we didn't start school until the first grade when we were six years old. I guess it is natural that sometimes you meet teachers that you think you don't like, but then after you get another one you kind of look back and think. Oh, the teachers were very good. Of course living right beside the school house made it kind of handy, we didn't have to go over until nearly time for school to begin.
- B: You didn't have to get up too early.
- M: No. It was a good school. It was one of the best schools around there. I don't remember now just exactly how many students were enrolled. Of course there weren't as many students in a grade then as there are now. But the old school building is gone now. They have built a new building over there which I have never been in. I would like to. I guess they just built a new building at a time until the old one was gone.
- B: Did your family attend the church over there?
- M: We went to the Methodist Church. They had a United Presbyterian Church out east from the Espyville station. But we had always been Methodist. So of course after we moved to the station we went to the Methodist Church in Espyville. They had a good women's group there and they served dinners monthly. They would serve dinners monthly to groups like they do here. They had a very, very good women's society there. We used to call it the Ladies Aid. It seemed there used to be more women that were interested in it. I suppose there weren't so many outside things, and of course a lot of the ones now are working. Maybe that is one reason why they aren't keeping up the dinners like they used to.
- B: That is something that we could use.
- M: Yes.

- B: When your family moved, then, you just continued on with the Methodist Church in Dorset?
- M: We came down here to the Methodist Church. Of course Reverend Mayhew was here. He came right down and called on us. Of course it isn't that we had anything against the Baptist Church. I think it is a nice church, but we had always been Methodists and naturally you kind of look for the same church that you came from.
- B: Do you remember noticing any big differences between the church where you went before and this church here in Dorset?
- M: Well, over there they used to have services in the evening. It used to be they had services in the evening more than they do now. My dad, of course being in the factory, was never able to go in the morning. My mother, brother, and I always went. Then he would go in the evening. They had a young people's group. A real good young people's group, it was very active. I can't see where it was a whole lot different than it is down here. They have their women's group down here just the same way. Of course my mother got into it right away. I wasn't old enough yet. When you are used to things like that then you kind of like to keep the habit.
- B: So the structures were about the same in the administration and activities?
- M: Yes, they had a very nice church over there. They didn't have a place to serve their dinners at the church. They had what they called a town hall right beside it. That is where they usually had their women's meetings, and their dinners. Another thing that they had over there that my dad enjoyed: they started what they called the citizen's band. There was one man that lived just out of Espyville a little ways, that was a band musician and leader. I don't remember just who it was that started the idea, but somebody thought, well, why can't we get a band started here? My dad had never played any instrument or anything, but boy, he started out on the base horn and he would rather play that base horn than eat. They met every week on Monday evenings at the Town Hall for a practice. They would have crowds there for their practice as large as you would have for most anything that you would go to. Everybody was just so taken up with it. And they were even

asked to go to different towns to play for events that they had. And at that time, there were trains that you could go on. I know that there were several places that they were asked to go and they could go there right on the train. They would usually clear out a place in the coaches for the band. The people that were on the train would get after them to play. They just had more enjoyment in that band. When we moved up here, he missed that so much. About two or three weeks after we had moved here, the band from Espyville decided to come up and give us a surprise. They came up here and played out in the yard. They sure had an audience, all the neighbors around there. My father just enjoyed that so much.

B: Oh, that sounds interesting.

M: My dad's first factory down at Espyville caught fire and burned. They had just left to come home for supper. We were just sitting down to eat, and my brother said, "Where is that smoke coming from?" Dad looked out and saw it was the factory. He just made a leap down there. He said that he just couldn't understand because he would always look it over, he would go through the furnace room and check everything before he came home. That was the last thing he did before he came home. It just must have been something smoldering away there that he didn't see. He built it up again. They didn't make cheese. They shipped the milk.

B: That was more profitable?

M: Well, yes. They shipped it to Pittsburgh to the Rick McJunkin Company. Then there was another company that was going to buy from them. Dad's boss down there told him about it and he said they are wanting one for Rick McJunkin Company at Dorset and wanted him to come up and take over. And that is when we moved up here.

B: What are some of your memories about joining the church down here or starting to come to this church?

M: Well, of course there weren't too many. My mother used to live here. But of course that was when she was young. She was born in Dorset and left when she was around five or six years old. But of course she had a sister in Cherry Valley that we used to visit a lot. And there was a few from up this way that she remembered, or had kind of gotten acquainted with through my aunt. But I suppose it really

didn't seem like coming back home. But then when she was born here and it seems rather odd to move back here. Reverend Mayhew was the preacher here at the time. Dr. Keep lived right across from us up here and Mrs. Keep was very friendly, always ready to do something for you, and to try to get acquainted. Everybody was so friendly when you went down here you just began to enjoy yourself that you just went right along.

B: Everybody worked to make you feel welcome?

M: Yes, everybody. It seems as though they worked together. And of course you get acquainted through the women's meeting and group, too.

B: More on a personal basis than at church?

M: Yes.

B: So when you came here you were a sophomore?

M: I was a sophomore.

B: And you went on to graduate?

M: I graduated here from Dorset.

B: How many were in your class?

M: There were eleven, four girls and seven boys.

B: That always seems strange, more boys than girls.

M: I know it.

B: We were a small class and we had 102. And that is little.

M: You were at Jefferson at the time, weren't you?

B: No.

M: Oh, Andover?

B: Yes, that's right. But still that is a pretty small class. When you first started coming did you go to the youth meeting?

- M: Oh yes, they had youth meetings on Sunday evening.
- B: So you got acquainted that way?
- M: With the young people, yes. There were quite a number of them at school. Of course the school then was just the children from Dorset, it wasn't from Lenox, too, like it is now. And of course you got acquainted with them that way.
- B: Did you have special activities, parties?
- M: Yes, they had parties about once a month.
- B: Now at the church at the time, did you have Sunday evening services or prayer groups?
- M: Yes, they had Sunday evening services and then they had prayer meetings on Thursday evenings.
- B: So how did they work in the youth meeting with the Sunday evening service?
- M: Well, they would have that first. They would have the youth meetings earlier, then they would have the Sunday evening service.
- B: When did you get married?
- M: I got married, you mean the date?
- B: Well, how long after you finished school?
- M: Right away. The first day of June. Of course school was out in May, it was out earlier than it is now. Of course I got acquainted with Albert down at the school. His parents lived right beside the Methodist Parsonage. The janitor down at the church left and asked him if he would take it. At the time, he belonged to the Baptist Church, but they were meeting in the afternoon. So it worked out pretty good. His folks were willing for him to do it. So he went down there and then the Baptists changed their meeting time, but he kept on going to the Methodist Church. He felt that he should be there. He was taking care of the furnace, and especially in the winter he felt he should be there to keep watch of it. So after we were married he still had his membership at the Baptist Church. We got to talking, but I didn't want to influence him to join the Methodist Church.

But I felt that if he was going down there where he was paying and everything that is where he should belong. Because if you are going to have your name in another church, you should pay to that church, too. Of course that would be kind of hard to pay at two churches. So he finally brought his name down here. Of course he had to leave his folks up there, but they felt it was a good church.

B: They supported him in this?

M: Yes.

B: Did you work after you were married?

M: No. I boarded teachers right along. One of the teachers that we especially liked, not that we didn't like all of them, but this one was Beth Severn. She was from Cleveland.

B: Do you remember the date she was here, do you remember the year?

M: Oh, I can't remember the year.

B: Okay, go ahead.

M: She taught here for I think eight years. She belonged to the Christian Missionary Alliance Church; that is a missionary church. She just had a feeling that she wanted to go into missionary work. It sort of ran in that family. Her sister and husband went as missionaries to Africa. So she finally quit teaching and of course she had to take a course at the end of the year. She went to Africa and stayed, oh, I can't remember how long. It must have been 12 or 15 years. She stayed until she was old enough to retire. So, as soon as the time came she came back to the United States. She was going to live in Florida, because she was used to the warm weather over there, you know. We didn't get to see her when she came back, because she wasn't very well. She went down there, then her sister wrote to me later and told me that she had cancer. She just lived a little while after that. Boy, we just felt so bad, she was just like one of us. One of the family. Our daughter said she just seemed like a sister to her. She was just a wonderful girl. Everybody liked her here. She went to the Methodist Church here with us when she didn't go home. She had charge of the young people here. You should have seen the group that would come, they just loved her. She would have parties

for them. She invited them up to her home in Cleveland for a weekend. They took several carloads. I think there were about a dozen or fifteen of them that went for the weekend. They just thought the world of her. She was strict. She had discipline and all that, but she just had a way that, when she said anything, they knew that she meant it and they never crossed her.

B: It was nice to have someone who was trained as a teacher?

M: Yes, she taught the Sunday School class down here too. She had the young people's class in the Sunday School.

B: Then she went home during the summers?

M: Yes, she would go home. And we had a substitute that taught while she was home for the summer.

B: When you first started coming to this church here, did you think the church was more evangelistic or more missionary-minded?

M: You mean than it is now?

B: Yes.

M: I really think so. I don't know why but they seemed to be. They had a missionary group in the church and I really think that it was really more missionary-minded than what they are today.

B: Do you think that that helped attendance and so forth when they went out and got people?

M: I really think so.

B: Do you think that this might help us today?

M: It wouldn't hurt us.

B: I think that is one of our problems here.

M: I do too. This is something that we could work on.

B: I know that you think a lot of the women's group. Could you tell me about some of the things that you used to do when you were in the women's group?

- M: Well, we had a good sized women's group so that we had committees. We had five or six in each committee and we would serve dinners. At first we started doing it at the church, in the basement. One committee would take a month at a time. There were enough that it worked out so that just about twice a year each group would furnish the dinner. We had big crowds. They finally changed and started serving them at the town hall, where there was more room. We had large groups that came for their dinners there, too. Then they served dinners to other groups that had meetings, like they do now. But there were more then that seemed to take an interest in the women's group. Of course it could be that a lot of them are working now and are gone throughout the day. But now, of course when we have dinners we ask the whole church to furnish. Some of them don't figure that they are members of the women's group. They call it The United Methodist Women now. But it just seems though that the younger ones don't want to be tied down to it. Of course, I suppose with work they can't have them in the day time very well. So, the meetings that we have now, we don't have a very large attendance.
- B: These dinners and things, did they provide a financial profit for the church?
- M: Yes, we charged for the dinner. They pay so much a month. They pay toward the expenses of the church.
- B: Oh, so we could use it, right?
- M: Oh yes. Of course, now the women's society pays the taxes. And then there are, of course, different things that we have to send in from the things that are connected with the women's group.
- B: The conference you mean?
- M: Well, I suppose, in a way it is connected to conference. Although, it doesn't go in to them directly. It is sent to a group of the women's group. But eventually I suppose it goes towards the church.
- B: Do they have a special women's Sunday School class?
- M: Well, they used to have a friendship class. And they just had the women at first. It was a large class. They met in the Sunday School room in the back. They had a large group. Then they had a brotherhood class.

B: For the men?

M: For the men. Well, then they got going down, and they went in with the women's group. They used to have a Sunday School class with the ones around my age, older ones. But I don't know, so many of them aren't able to come anymore, so I am about the only one that goes regular.

B: You should feel lucky, right?

M: I have been going in with that other class. Thora Keep was the teacher but she just isn't able to come much.

B: What is your opinion of the dwindling attendance?

M: Well, I really don't know why some of them that used to always stay for Sunday School, just don't anymore. I could name quite a lot that used to stay for Sunday School. I just don't know whether it is because there aren't so many that stay anymore, but if they would stay then there would be one more. If only they would all feel that way. But I don't know, it seems as though there are so many things that go on on Sunday afternoon and they have to go home and get the dinner on or they want to go somewhere.

B: There are more activities that tie a lot of people up?

M: I think so. Things that they want to go to so they can't stay for Sunday School.

B: Do you think that that is the same reason for the decline in the evening services?

M: I think so. It gets so that hardly anybody comes. I think that has a lot to do with it.

B: How do you see the power structure of the church? Do you think that the people have the last say or the minister has the last say?

M: Well, they say that the minister has the final say. But I don't know. It seems as though the congregation ought to have something to say. They change the law so much and they claim now that the minister is the one who has the final say.

B: Well, at the same time, the minister can't go over everybody's head all of the time or he won't get any cooperation, right?

M: Yes. I think that might have something to do with it. They say, "Well, what is the use of going and saying anything, they will do what they want to anyway?"

B: Oh, for meetings and things like that, you think?

M: Well, yes, and for different things that come up through the conference and is brought up at the board meetings.

B: How do you see the relationship between our church and our community? Is there cooperation between the people of the community?

M: Well, I think so. Now there are a lot of people that don't go to church. You say anything to them and they don't want the church to close up. Of course there are a lot of them, that don't come, but when there is a wedding or something like that they want the church. But I think if you are interested enough, I think you should attend. That is the way I feel about it.

B: Is there anything that you can think of that we can do perhaps to help this cooperation?

M: Well, the last year or two they have a group that would go out and call on people and would try and get them to come. Maybe they would come for a little while and then they would dwindle out again.

B: So it was like a visitation service?

M: Yes.

B: Do you think that might help?

M: Well, it might, but they have tried it and it just hasn't seemed to last too long. I don't know, I guess maybe it's the way that you have been brought up to go to church. And I don't know, there is just something about it, the way I feel, it just hangs on to you. I wouldn't feel right not going unless it is sickness or something like that. It seems there are a lot of things that shouldn't come in the way of you attending church. That is the way I feel about it.

B: Is it hard to make other people see that?

- M: Right. We used to have an attendance in our Sunday School down here, way over 100 people. Can you believe that? And they had a young people's class. They would have a dozen or more, just in that one class. And our older class, we used to have a good class. That was one reason they built on the Sunday School rooms. There were so many coming that they just didn't have room enough. It would crowd up so. And it was hard when there was just a curtain drawn. You can't help but hear the other class. It attracts youngsters that way to kind of listen. And that is one reason why they built on this new part down here to have separate Sunday School rooms. Which I think is a good idea.
- B: Do you remember when you were younger, do you think that the church was stricter with regards to playing cards and drinking and dancing?
- M: Yes.
- B: Do you remember not being able to do some things?
- M: Well, I know my mother used to think it wrong. Now we play Chinese Checkers or Flinch, or something like that. My mother used to think it was terrible to do things like that on Sunday. But of course, there were a lot of things that some did that I really didn't think was right to do. But as I said, we didn't used to play those things on Sunday. Of course maybe I am just changing or something. I can't really see any harm in small games. There are certain things that I wouldn't approve of doing on Sunday.
- B: What do you think our church sees as its purpose?
- M: Gee, I don't know what to say. Of course you try to get as many new members as you can. I don't know just what to say.
- B: Do you think that our church is concerned about itself, or do you think it is concerned about the world in general?
- M: Well, I think probably they are concerned about the world, things that go on. I know there are a lot of things that are happening and going on that I know that they don't approve of. But I don't know, you just wonder, the things that you hear and the things that you see that is done! There are so many killings and things like that, naturally I can't understand. So many of the younger ones. This

breaking in and stealing; youngsters anywhere from twelve, thirteen or fourteen years old, and doing things like that. I just can't understand the parents, they can't help but know it. I just can't understand how they get away with it.

B: So you think that there is a concern about the activities that are going on?

M: I think in the majority. Of course, sometimes I think children that are left at home. . . I think that parents go places at night and get a babysitter; well, if you have youngsters, I think it is up to you to take care of them until they are able to be left by themselves. I just don't approve of just leaving them with everybody.

B: You think changing life styles and everything has helped create this?

M: Yes, I really think so.

B: Do you remember any of the town festivals that Dorset used to have?

M: They had a "Street Fair" for I guess a couple of years. It was held in back of the school house here and on the ball diamond. Then the last day of school they had a celebration. They would serve dinner, usually the junior class. It was when we still had the high school here. They always had a "field day" they called it, the last day of school. The band would play and they had a group of kids that would wind the maypole down in the front yard. They used to have that at the end of every year.

B: Did the community join in?

M: Oh yes, it was for everybody.

B: Did the church take any part?

M: They might have, although I think maybe it was more the school. But I think the last day of school was left up more to the school classes. Usually it was the juniors that served lunches to raise money for their senior year.

B: In 1922 there were four churches on our charge. They were Dorset and Richmond and Cherry Valley and Padnaram. How did one minister take care of four churches. I think it is hard to take care of two churches instead of four.

- M: Well, he would preach here and Cherry Valley in the morning. And then Richmond had theirs in the afternoon. And then every other Sunday night he would go to Padnaram. They just had church there every other week. Later they joined in with Richmond.
- B: So they just abolished that church and joined Richmond?
- M: Yes.
- B: And where does Cherry Valley fit in?
- M: Well, they still have service there. Of course they are in with Williamsfield now. They would preach here and Cherry Valley in the morning. They had their service in the evening, I think, over at Richmond. Cherry Valley and Williamsfield are of different charge now.
- B: And then he would have to come back for the Sunday evening service here?
- M: Well, I think they had it here every other Sunday night.
- B: And then every other Sunday night at Richmond?
- M: Yes. I think that was the way it was, it has been so far back.
- B: And he had to conduct all of the meetings at each one of these separate services?
- M: Yes.
- B: How do you feel about the education program of our church? The Sunday School and Vacation Bible School?
- M: I think vacation bible school is a wonderful thing for the youngsters. I would hope that it would help our Sunday School out a little bit too, which it did for a while. Although there are some that are coming now to Sunday School, especially since they have had Bible School. And of course the two churches go together. The Baptist don't have room enough to have one in their church, they don't have Sunday School rooms. They like to come down here with us which I think is nice. The two churches work together that way.
- B: There is cooperation.
- M: Yes, I think so.
- B: What do you think are some of the qualifications that a Sunday School teacher should have?

M: Well, she should know her Bible. And she should prepare her lessons before class. Now, I won't say that they all do it, but sometimes there are times, especially when you are working, it is hard. I think the pupils should at least study and go over the lesson before they come to class. But I think this is common and I am guilty. Sometimes I don't study my lesson like I should before I go. And I know the teachers that we used to have, that is in our older group, I know well enough that they were prepared before. Mrs. Kananen, she was a wonderful teacher. And Mrs. Basey that used to be there, she was a wonderful teacher. And I know they prepared theirs. I think they were pretty well read on the Bible anyway. I think that makes a lot of difference.

B: What do you think about the music part of our church?

M: I love the choir. I think it just adds one hundred percent to the service. And it is just too bad that we can't get more of the younger ones to come. It just helps so much. In the summer it just seems that there is something lacking in the service without a choir. Of course sometimes they have a special number. But as far as the choir, I think it makes an awful lot of difference.

B: Mrs. Sillaman?

M: Oh yes, Mrs. Sillaman was really the one that got the music going. And it was when Reverend Sillaman was here that we got our first organ. She played the organ and she was very, very musical. And they had a big choir. There were more of the younger ones that seemed to be involved. They had a good influence on the young people, the Sillimans did. He was so right down with you.

B: On our level.

M: On our level is right. And then she was a good worker in the women's group, too. They had a choir the year round and it just seemed so good. I think music helps one hundred percent.

B: Albert brought up one point. What do you think of the hymnals that we use?

M: I don't know. Of course I am not musical or anything like that, but there are so many of the songs that I have not even heard. I like the brown books much better. A lot

of other ones say the same thing. And some of them say, "Well, why did we ever get them?" And I have heard them say the same thing at other churches, too. Although when they got these there were a lot of other churches that I had been to where they had these books, too. But there are just so many songs that are in these books that weren't in the old hymnals.

B: So what is it about the old hymnals that they like?

M: There were more songs that you know. Then of course, these brown books that we use for Sunday School, I think those are more down on your level. Songs that you know.

B: Do you think people are willing to get rid of them?

M: Of course, some of them think we ought to keep them. Well, I suppose in the church maybe we should. It seems though that the minister could pick out a song that we know.

B: Every once and a while.

M: There are some songs that I am pretty sure that a lot of them don't know because they don't sing out very much on them.

B: That is embarrassing.

M: I know it is.

B: I think one of the special things about our church is the painting. Could you tell me about Mrs. Moses and about her painting?

M: She was wonderful. She was a sister-in-law of Ruby Van Winkle. They belonged to our church here. She painted that picture of Christ up in the front. And then she painted that one of the Last Supper, and praying in the garden, and she must have said something to Ruby, she would like to, if the church would like to have it, paint a picture of each one of the disciples. She just does it freehand. She just wants a picture to look at. So she asked and naturally they were willing for her to do it. So she painted a picture of each one of the disciples and they are down in the Sunday School rooms. She would just do it freehand, and it just seemed so easy for her. The church was very, very well pleased

about it and so glad to have her, because they felt that it would just add a lot to the church. They are so good, you just can't realize that they are just freehand that way.

B: How long did she take to do them, do you remember?

M: Oh, I don't know, but I imagine probably several months. Of course she would just work at it. She didn't work steady all the time. She would work for a while and then she would get tired and stop.

B: It was sort of a hobby for her?

M: Yes, it was a hobby.

B: We were talking about the building fund of the church. Why do you think that the people are more willing to give a special donation to the building fund rather than give the regular church offering?

M: Well, I really don't know why they would rather. Naturally they would like to have the church fixed up nice and all that. But they should remember that it takes money to run the church. There is the pastor's salary and every year it is automatically raised, we have nothing to say about it. That is automatically raised by conference. And then there is a certain amount, I forget what it is called, that has to be sent in. It is so much for each member that you have. That has to be sent in, it is the conference claim-ance, they call it. There is so much every year and Albert tries to divide it up into about four payments. And sometimes he has to squeeze a lot to get it in. When he sends it in sometimes there isn't much left in the treasury. He just goes by faith, I guess that there will be enough come to pay the preacher the next Sunday.

B: I have a list of old ministers, and I was wondering if there were any that were really special to you or that stood out in your memory?

M: Well, Reverend Mayhew, he married us.

B: That is important.

M: Reverend Paulson, I remember Albert talking about him, but that was before we came here. Mayhew was here when we

moved here. And of course naturally I remember him because he married us. And then there is Reverend Kelley. I remember him because that was my name.

B: Was he a relative of yours?

M: No, no relative whatever. And his daughter was Haskell Keep's wife. Reverend Kelley was married twice, his first wife had died. He had two or three children. He remarried and Haskell Keep's wife was one of the daughters of the second marriage. And Reverend Keane, well I remember all of them.

B: Is there any one special?

M: Reverend Sillaman, I guess he would be kind of a special one.

B: Why?

M: Well, he was the kind that when anyone wanted something, he would get in there and get things started. He would be right in it. Where maybe some people would speak about it but not get in and do anything themselves. He was quite a hand to go with a lot of the men, he liked to go with them on trips. Hunting and fishing and stuff like that, he was up on that. And Reverend Won. I remember when he came we wondered just how we would like him, being from another country. But he was, after you got acquainted with him, very nice. He wasn't married when he first came here. It was a little hard to understand him at first. He didn't talk too loud and that bothered Albert. There would be some words that he would pronounce just a little bit different than we would.

B: I remember that.

M: But then he was quite a man to mix in with the other men. And of course Reverend Briggs, Albert and I always thought a lot of Reverend Briggs. And his wife, she was a good worker in the women's group, too. And we hated to see her go.

B: Do you remember some of the other people's remarks about having a Korean minister come in?

M: Well, they didn't know how it would work out. They thought, "Why do you have to go to another country to get a minister?"

He never had been naturalized. But he said that the reason that he didn't was that he felt that he might go back to Korea. But I understood that he wasn't going to go back. I think probably now he will be naturalized if he hasn't already. And when he moved from here, they went out to New York, he wanted to finish up his scholarship.

B: I think he is very intelligent.

M: Yes, he was. He would come back to conference every year that he was gone. And when he came this time, he came to our church down here. She hadn't come yet because he flew and she just didn't want to with the baby. They had a little girl. But anyway, they have a church now, it is down south of here and they are in this conference.

B: So he finished his school?

M: Yes, and he is back here now and has a church.

B: Honest opinion, what do you think of having a woman minister now?

M: I didn't know about it at first. It does seem rather odd in a way, but I guess you get used to it. I like her, I like her very much. It did seem kind of odd at first. I know one man who was coming to the church down here and he said, "I won't go there anymore, I won't go listen to any woman preach." They feel that is a man's job. I don't know, in a way it seems it would be more natural to have a man in the pulpit.

B: That is just because we are used to it.

M: I guess so. But as I said, a woman has a right to be a minister just like a man, if she feels that she was called to do that. I think maybe they are getting a little more accustomed to her now.

B: From any of the ministers, is there any one sermon that stands out to you? Was there any particular sermon that you really enjoyed or really got a lot out of?

M: You mean of hers?

B: Any of them?

M: Oh, I don't know.

- B: Okay, next year is our hundredth anniversary, is there anything that you can suggest that we might do for the celebration? Is there anything that you would like to see done?
- M: I think we ought to have a nice celebration as far as that goes.
- B: You mean a party?
- M: Yes, I think they should have something special to honor it.
- B: What do you think that our main problems have been in the past?
- M: In what way do you mean that?
- B: What problems do you think the church has had to face in the last hundred years?
- M: Well, I know one thing, the finances of the church is one thing that they have quite a time to keep ahead of. And I think it just seems that the young people don't come out like they used to. I think if we could have something to get them started again, that would make a lot of difference in the church. Because us old ones are soon going to be gone. If those young ones don't come along and take a hold and go along with the church, where is the church going?
- B: And other problems such as the women's group?
- M: Well, I know the women's group, there are a few that come, but it is just the older ones that used to be in it years ago. But I think maybe one reason why the younger ones don't come is because a lot of them are working and are gone through the day. Of course they could have a meeting in the evening. I know Inez's church has their meetings in the evening because there are a lot of their members that work usually, and they have their meetings in the evening. It usually is at the homes.
- B: Do you think that that is maybe something that we could try or experiment with?
- M: Yes. I don't know whether they would come or not. But that is probably why that the young ones have kind of dropped out of it or hadn't started going.

- B: Is there anything that you would like to see us start doing in our church? Is there any special project or special emphasis that we could put on activities in our church? Do you think more effort should be spent in what direction?
- M: I think all of us could probably do more than we do. Maybe if we would work a little harder and get some of these started that haven't been coming.
- B: So work on our membership?
- M: Yes. And I think if we can get our members out, get them to come, I think our finances would come along better. Naturally, if they come to church they would give. There are quite number of the members down here, that don't live here anymore. I know of Arthur Brotzman, to name one. He has lived in California for years and years and he sends three and four checks a year up to this church. He has kept up his membership here. He has always belonged here, he says he hates to take it away because his mother and father belonged here. And he just feels like it is his home church. He doesn't like to take his name away from here. But I know he supports the church where he goes, just like here. He is just that kind. And then his sister is the same way. Although I don't think her name is here, but there are several that live in other places that send checks to the church.
- B: Is there anybody that you think I should interview for this project?
- M: Oh boy. Well, I don't know whether Gladys would do it.
- B: I hope.
- M: Dorothy Hart might be a good one. She has been a member of the Baptist church for a long, long time and she might be able to tell you about things back then, because they were going here when we moved to Dorset. She might know more about the background, that is years before than what I would know. Of course Louise Haines might, but she just really isn't well and is just home from the hospital, so I wouldn't bother her with it. But maybe Haskell Keep would kind of enjoy doing it. The family have always been good members and supporters of the church. Haskell has moved and changed his residence now, since he has gotten

remarried. Which I think is all right, his wife goes to Andover. He has taken his name off here. And Dr. Keep, his father was a doctor here. They had a choir back then, and he sang in it. They had a big choir. He was a wonderful base singer.

B: Haskell?

M: No, Haskell's dad, Dr. H. A. Keep. Of course Haskell is a good singer too, I remember the last Sunday that the Doctor was there. A man got hit with a train. The Doctor was in the back row of the choir. I didn't know anybody came in but apparently someone came in the vestibule and motioned for him to come out because he went out through the Sunday School room. He went over. And that is the last time that I saw him alive. But I can just see him standing up there yet. He was a big tall man. We had a good big choir then.

B: He was called to an accident?

M: He was called to this man's house. No, he was sick and then the Doctor got hit with a train, coming home. It was back when they had the flu epidemic. And this man just got worse. And that was the way it was, he got hit by the train on his way back. He didn't see the train.

B: Wow, that was a shock, wasn't it?

M: It sure was.

B: How did you get interest in your quilting?

M: Well, I was really brought up from my grandmother. She used to quilt, my mother quilted, and the women's group, the Ladies' Aid they called it, they quilted at the church. They had a quilt on there practically all the time because they would usually make quilts, and sold them when we had our bazaar. They also quilted for other people. So when I got old enough and got married, I went to the meetings and I just loved it! I don't know, there is just something about it that is just facinating. Sometimes you quilt a while, and then you stop because your fingers get kind of sore, but I don't know, there is just something about it. My mother and I would quilt down there at the church every meeting. We had a good big turnout down there to quilt, too.

The older ones could come out to quilt.

B: Do you have any idea about how many you have made?

M: I wouldn't have the slightest idea. I have made quilts myself and I have given a quilt to each one of my grandchildren.

B: Which is how many?

M: Three. And then when Agnes was married, I had two or three quilts that I made for her when she was married. And of course, when I don't have any quilts to quilt for others, then I quilt one for myself. I got one or two upstairs now. I have one I have quilted and another one that is ready to quilt, but then they begin to pile in. But I don't know how the word gets around, but there are two of them now that I have quilted for people who live in Florida.

B: So you are famous nation-wide!

M: Well, I don't know just how famous. I just like to do it. If I have anything to do all right, and if I have to go someplace, all right, but then some days I like to sit out there and quilt all day long. And then maybe I will quilt a little while and get tired of it. But I just take them with that understanding that I will get it done as quick as I can.

B: And you don't have to rush or anything?

M: Not rush. I don't want to say that I will have it done at a certain time because then that makes me nervous.

B: Is there anything else that you would like to add? Is there any one characteristic or one special thing that you can say about our church? Is there any one thing that stands out to you?

M: Well, of course, the women's group is what stands out to me, that is what I am interested in. I like the music, I say that is one of the main things of the church, too.

B: Is there anything else?

M: No.

B: All right.

END OF INTERVIEW