

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
Dorset United Methodist Church

Finnish Customs, Trends in the Church,
Past Ministers

O.H. 90

MRS. SAIMA HURST

Interviewed

by

Patricia Beckwith

on

November 9, 1977

MRS. SAIMA HURST

Saima Marie Sopenen was born in Finland on May 5, 1901. Her parents were Sylvester and Maria Sopenen. Saima began school at Ashtabula Harbor until her family moved to Dorset, where she completed high school.

From high school Saima continued her education at Kent State University, where she earned a teaching certificate. In 1956, 1957, and 1958 she attended summer terms at Edinboro State University in Edinboro, Pennsylvania.

In 1927 she was married to Claude Otis Hurst. They became the parents of one son, Leroy.

Mrs. Hurst has worked thirty-seven years as a teacher. From 1921 to 1922 she was employed by the Dorset Board of Education. During the next four years, until 1927, she worked for the Youngstown Board of Education. From here she returned to Dorset School (1942-1954), which became part of the Jefferson School District. She continued on under the Jefferson School Board, 1954-1971, and from 1971-1975 as a substitute teacher.

Mrs. Hurst retired as a full time teacher in 1971 and as a substitute teacher in 1975.

Saima is a member of the Dorset United Methodist Church, the Dorset Albino Rebekah Lodge, and the Sunshine Chapter #89, order of the Eastern Stars. She is also a member of the Re-

tired Teachers Organization. She has received a fifty-year membership pin from the Dorset Lodge.

Her hobbies include sports, reading, and travel.

PATRICIA BECKWITH
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INTERVIEWER: Patricia Beckwith

SUBJECT: Finnish Customs, Trends in the Church, Past Ministers

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BECKWITH: This is an interview being conducted with Mrs. Saima Hurst for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program. This interview is taking place at 2678 Route 307, Dorset, Ohio, on November 9, 1977, at 10:00 a.m.

The first thing I'm interested in is your childhood. Can you tell me where you were born and a little bit about your early schooling?

HURST: I was born in Finland. We came to Ashtabula Harbor in 1905. I started the school in Ashtabula Harbor when I was seven years old. I was about five when we came to this country. We came right straight to Ashtabula Harbor. That's where we made our home. I lived there until I was in the seventh grade.

BECKWITH: Do you remember about your trip over?

HURST: Not a thing. I wish I did. I couldn't remember a thing. I was too young. My brother was seven, and he could just remember a little about it, but not much.

BECKWITH: Do you remember your family's impression when they arrived in this country?

HURST: No, not a thing. I don't remember anything about it because I was too young to remember all of that.

B: What are your early memories about attending school?

H: I was seven when I entered the first grade. I remember one time I was standing up to read and I was holding my book up like this, and all of a sudden the book went down and the teacher balled me out and oh boy! Did I cry! Imagine that!

B: Did you have a hard time reading; learning a new language?

H: No. My brother went to school before I did, so I learned quite a bit from him. I didn't have too much trouble, although we spoke the Finnish language the whole time at home and the whole community was made up of Finns, Swedes and Irish. We spoke our native languages. In fact, our next door neighbor, an Irish boy, always played with all the Finn children and he spoke Finnish just as easily as we did. He was a regular Finn as far as speech was concerned.

B: What were reasons that made your family come over?

H: Well, the only reason that they came was because they thought they could come over and get a good job and make a lot of money, and then go back to Finland, but that never turned out. They got attached to America and they liked it here. They went back for a visit once, but they still like America better than Finland.

B: I think that would be a very bold step to take.

H: Yes, it was because they only had just about enough money to pay for their fare and only what they were required . . . They had to have a little money before they could come into this country. I don't know how much it was. But it was difficult to pack up bag and baggage and leave your native land and come into this country.

B: Do you remember your favorite teacher in elementary school or high school?

H: Not too well, I don't.

B: Did you have any favorites?

H: I don't think I had any favorite teacher.

B: What did you do right after high school?

H: I went to Kent State. There was a college in Kent, Ohio. In the summer I took twelve weeks of training and that fall I started teaching.

B: After twelve weeks?

H: Yes, some girls only had six weeks of training, they didn't stay for twelve weeks. The first six weeks they stayed at Brady Lake. There were seven of us from Dorset that lived there. Miss Hickok was our principal, here at Dorset. She was our chaperone and Mrs. Lindsley was a first grade teacher. They were our chaperones and the rest of us were just students. We had a good time and then, they left and I went to the dorm and stayed for six weeks.

B: Was your education for teaching basically experience?

H: Well, yes and whatever we were taught for those twelve weeks. The basic training of teaching was not enough to get started but we got along pretty good. Well, I think you get more from experience than from someone just telling you what to do. You can go ahead and do it and you'll learn more.

B: I suppose if we needed teachers they might revert to that, but we don't need teachers so they have to make it more difficult.

H: There must be quite a few teachers now. When my husband was on the school board and one year there were so many teachers that when we went out blackberrying, they drove their cars way out into the woods and hunted us out to interview my husband for a job in Dorset.

B: How did you meet your husband?

H: We were both natives of Dorset. I met him mostly because he was a baseball player. That's what took my eye. I knew him real well.

B: When were you married?

H: In 1927, it would have been fifty years this year if he hadn't died.

B: Where did you live after you were first married?

H: Well, when I was first married we were living with my folks until our first baby was born, and she passed away. That fall we came to live in this house where I live now. I've lived here ever since.

B: Had your family always attended church?

H: Yes, the Finnish church.

B: What is that called now?

H: It was the Bethany Lutheran Church. Yes, I was brought up in the Finnish church and I went to Sunday School and summer school there. I learned all my Bible in the Finnish language. Then, I was confirmed when I was sixteen. I've been a Lutheran all my life until I married and my husband and I joined the Methodist church.

B: Where were you married?

H: We were married in Wayne. Claude's uncle married us. He was my classmate and his uncle. He was a preacher for the Congregational Church in Wayne. His name was Homer Hurst.

B: When your family first came to Dorset, what were your impressions of the town?

H: It wasn't what I was expecting. When I got down there, I was expecting to have a nice farm, but when we came to Dorset all we had were woods here. There were no buildings, nothing. So, we camped out that summer until they built the house. We got into the house that fall. We didn't have any brick roads; we had to paddle through the dust when we walked from our house to the store. This 307 road was a plank road. It was an old Indian trail. No electricity, nothing.

B: Were you pretty disappointed?

H: I was disappointed because I expected to have a nice farm. I hadn't even seen any of it and dad didn't say anything. So, we kept pretty busy that summer. We had to clear out trees, stumps, dynamiting stumps, and planting corn like the Indians used to around the stumps.

B: What are your first memories about the Methodist Church here

in Dorset?

H: Well, I just enjoyed the people and I enjoyed the church. I had been going to the Methodist church even before we were married. We walked from our house to both the Methodist and the Baptist churches. We would alternate from one to the other. We liked it. Any church, we were happy to go to some church.

B: Do you remember who the minister was at that time?

H: No, I couldn't tell you. I can't remember the ministers. There were so many in my time that I can't remember.

B: Do you remember your first impression of the church? How did it differ from your Lutheran church in Ashtabula?

H: Well, I really can't remember the first impression. Of course, it was different because the church ritual was different. The songs were different; some of them were the same tune, but different. They were different languages. After all, we were worshipping the same God. I didn't see much difference, whether you worship the Methodist way or whether you worship the Lutheran way.

B: So, it was a family tradition to go to church and this is something that you continued once you came to Dorset?

H: Yes. We used to have churches here in Dorset, too, in the homes. The minister came to different homes once a month and had services there for all, because there were a lot of Finnish families here. They used to have Sunday school in the Finnish language because parents like to have their children remember the Finnish language. Some of them could speak it very well, read it, and write it.

B: Did you take turns having the services in your homes?

H: Yes.

B: Do you remember any particular time that a minister came to your house to hold a service?

H: I remember the time we were supposed to have services over at my parents' house and my father hadn't been very well. On Saturday, I went over to their home to help my mother clean house. That night my brother came over and said dad had passed away. He was looking forward all day Saturday, to having church on Sunday. So, I guess he went to church a little ahead of us.

B: Can you say the Lord's Prayer in Finnish?

H: Oh, yes. (ACTUALLY SAYS IT IN HER NATIVE TONGUE).

B: Do Finnish people always try to keep their language alive in their children?

H: Yes, they try to. Well, I don't know if they really try to, but they had to because they couldn't speak the English language. My father could speak some, he could understand some, but my mother could speak very little, she knew very few words of the English language. We didn't have to learn it because when we lived on the Harbor all of the stores and everything else was in the Finnish language. The church and everywhere they went was conducted in Finnish.

B: So, in order to get accustomed to this country, you didn't have to speak English?

H: No, and they got along. Even in Dorset, they got along pretty well. Because my father worked he learned more than my mother did. My mother didn't go anywhere, she just stayed home.

B: What did your father do besides farm?

H: He used to work on the docks, on the harbor.

B: He just farmed when he came to Dorset?

H: Yes. These people, they had been farmers in Finland. So, everybody reverted back to their old way of living. They loved to farm, so they all got back to farming. It's hard to get rid of it once the farming is in your blood.

B: Do you remember anything different about how you celebrated Christmas in the Finnish tradition?

H: No, it was the same thing. We all celebrated the birth of Christ and we had the Christmas trees and decorations. We had Christmas presents.

B: Did you have Santa Claus?

H: Yes, we had Santa Claus. We called Santa Claus, Joulu Pukki. He came with his bag on his back. Of course when we were little, mother used to dress up. Of course, when we got older then we knew the truth.

- B: When you first started attending the Methodist church here at Dorset, do you remember having prayer services or evening services of some type? What were those like?
- H: Yes, they had a lot of nice singing and a lot of nice talking, preaching.
- B: Did you have a Bible study group?
- H: No, I don't think we did. I used to start from our house because I lived almost the farthest down on that road. As I started out I picked up all the children that wanted to go to the church. We'd go to church either the Baptist or the Methodist. Sometimes the Baptist because they were closer. We enjoyed the singing. We just loved the singing. We liked to hear everybody sing; I think that was more than anything else, with both churches.
- B: Where does your family live?
- H: They live on the Tower Road. Where the Berriers live, Debbie, her mother, her father, well that was our home. We came down in 1914 and Lehto's was the next farm to us. Then, Kukkolas, that was Edna Kyles' folks. We all came at about the same time, the same month; that was in May. My father and brother came in April, but mother and I didn't come until school was out.
- B: Did they come to get things started for you?
- H: Yes. I'll have to show you the house we lived in when we first came here. I have a picture of it.
- B: Can you tell me about your steambath?
- H: Oh, well, that's a must of the Finnish people and just about as soon as they built any kind of a building, they'd put in a steambath. So, that comes almost as soon as anything else does. You just build them on the outside; it is a little building of its own. Down there, they built a little fireplace in the corner. They make it out of stones and they keep it fired up until they get the stones real hot. They had a little boiler on top that would heat the water. As soon as it's real hot; and when it's hot enough in there they let the fire go out. Of course the modern ones have a chimney now, so the smoke goes out. The way we had it, when you'd go in there to take a bath and you just get up on that platform and with a bucket of water. Put the water on the hot stones and that makes a lot of steam and you take your bath.

B: Does this have a religious significance?

H: No, it was just for cleanliness. The Finn people had a thing about keeping things clean; their bodies and their homes.

B: Grandma Toppin told me about when she was a senior and all the girls wanted to go down to your steambath. So, Miss Hickok was told what they wanted to do. She told them not to come to school, but to go ahead. They had ten girls and one boy. That boy just couldn't figure out where all the girls were.

H: We had a good time that day. We went out in the woods and had a picnic. Then, we came in and had a steambath. All the girls asked, do we have to wear our bathing suits to take a bath. I said, oh, no, that they couldn't have a bath in a bathing suit.

B: Were you in Grandma Toppin's class?

H: Yes.

B: What are some of your other memories about your senior year?

H: I've forgotten so much. We had a lot of fun. We enjoyed ourselves as far as I know.

B: Did you ever go to the youth group at church?

H: Yes, we did, but it wasn't called what it is now. It was the Epworth League. We belonged to that and then we had turns being president of the Epworth League. I can remember I still have a folder from that.

B: Did you have parties?

H: Yes, we had lots of parties.

B: What did you do at them?

H: We just played all kinds of games, whatever it happened to be. Spin the platter, post office, but we were unfortunate because we only had one boy. That was terrible, we couldn't have too many parties. Of course we invited the junior class and there were quite a few boys in that class. We just didn't have too many boys in our community. I don't remember having too many boys that were in the Epworth League at church. It seems like there were mostly girls.

B: Did you have a Bible study or discussion type thing?

H: Yes we did.

B: Can you tell me about selling your shadow?

H: You'd put a sheet up there and then you would stand behind it. The boys would bid on the shadow and whose ever shadow they'd bid on they had to eat lunch with them. The girls packed a real beautiful box, too, and we sat together and had lunch in the schoolhouse.

B: Did you raise money?

H: Yes, for the class. The juniors entertained the seniors. We had to raise money in order to do that. We also had a pie social. Everybody would take a pie and the boys would bid on the pies.

B: Did the bids go up if it was your girlfriend?

H: Yes, they would. It was the same with the box social. You'd have box social, pie social, and then the shadow social. We had quite a lot of fun. Junior and senior banquet was always held at the schoolhouse. Then, alumni was held at the schoolhouse. Of course we didn't have a gym like we have now. The schoolhouse was big enough and we cooked our own meals. When we were juniors we waited on a table when they had alumni. They would not let us in on their business meeting or anything of that sort. Those who had husbands that weren't alumni, they couldn't go to the meeting either. It was just for the graduates. The husbands went down to the furnace room, and we girls played games with the husbands, while they had the meeting. I can remember playing drop the handkerchief as we ran around and around and we had more fun!

B: Do you remember in your teenage years whether the church was very strict?

H: No, I don't think it was too strict.

B: Well, I mean about things like drinking, dancing, and card playing.

H: I know at one time they were strict, when they built the town hall, they didn't want any dancing in there. After a while they got over that. That was during the time of Reverend Hulbert. His daughters were very much against

dancing. They said no dancing in the town hall, but they did anyway later on.

B: Do you remember not being allowed to do something at home, like not being able to play cards?

H: Oh, yes, my folks were very strict. They didn't believe in cards. They didn't believe in dancing either, or too many dates until I got grown up.

B: After high school?

H: Yes, and when you went away from home like going away to school, they didn't know what you were doing anyway. But, after a little bit in the senior year they allowed me to have dates, but not before that.

B: Did you take a more active part in the church after you were married?

H: Well, I taught Sunday school.

B: Which age group?

H: I think they were in the high school group. They took parts in a lot of programs and things. It was quite active in church.

B: Do you remember anything about any special Christmas program or anything?

H: I remember Leroy, my son. He was only about four years old, but he told us something about Santa Claus in a little poem. Bobby was supposed to give one too, but he backed out. My little boy over there died when he was two and a half years old. He didn't want to go and I didn't force him. Leroy did, he gave that little speech several places. There were so many Christmas programs that it's pretty hard to remember everything.

B: Do you remember anything about Bible school?

H: No, I didn't attend very much because I was busy at the farm all the time. I didn't have time to go to Bible school. We were married just about the time of the Depression years. It was pretty hard to get ahead.

B: Do you remember any specific things about the Depression?

- H: Yes. We didn't have much money. We had to try every which way to try to make a living at that time. We finally got into peddling milk in Dorset. We got cows one by one. So, we started a milk route. We bottled milk and it helped out. My husband worked in a store over at where his dad had a variety store over next to where Agardi's store is now.
- B: What was the name of it?
- H: It was Hurst Variety Store. He worked there and we peddled milk. That helped us to get along.
- B: Is Dr. Hurst your father-in-law?
- H: Yes, Dr. Levi Hurst. There were two doctors in Dorset. There was a Dr. George Hurst, too. George Hurst was Claude's grandfather. The two doctors practiced in Dorset for ninety years. None of the other descendants have been doctors. Only Jim, that's my nephew, the dentist and Sherry is a nurse. But, there are no doctors in the family. There is only one farmer; and the others work somewhere else. Grandpa George had seven boys and one girl. Lyla Pelky's trailer is right on this side of Lucy Hurst. That's where old Grandpa Hurst used to live, on that corner. Next to that one, George lived there. Grandpa Hurst lived where the Freemans have their office.
- B: Do you remember the church as being a lot more evangelistic?
- H: No, I don't think so. I think it's about the same. I remember the suppers we had, a lot of fish fries. Oh, the fish fries! We just had a wonderful time. Mrs. Sillaman could really sing. I used to love to hear her sing.
- B: What are some of your memories about some of the musical programs of our church?
- H: Well, I don't know. I enjoyed singing.
- B: Were you in the choir?
- H: No, I don't have that good of a voice. I just like to sing. Sometimes they had real nice choruses and then again they didn't have it. It depended on who was here.
- B: Do you remember working to get the organ?
- H: I remember that, but I can't remember what all I did, the work we all did.

- B: Has the church always had financial difficulty as long as you can remember?
- H: Yes, I think so. We always had to do something to raise money.
- B: What were some of the projects that you had besides fish fries?
- H: I don't think they made any money on the fish fries. I think that was just for good fellowship. Most of the money was raised from dinners and bazaars, that's all I can remember. We used to have a lot of nice Sunday School parties. We had all kinds of parties. Everytime we had a Sunday School party out there, they'd look around at every chair to see which was wired up with electricity. My husband was great on shocking them. That was so long ago. If they saw a messy chair they didn't want to sit on it. They figured somebody else had already had a shock.
- B: Was that for your class?
- H: Yes, they had a young married couple class. I guess they still have the friendship class, don't they?
- H: A few, I think Leta is about the only one that's left.
- I don't think she's in that friendship class. We were all young people and then we got to be a certain age, they said we had to go to the other class.
- B: I think that same group just stayed together.
- H: They stayed together, but they weren't called the friendship class anymore. I don't know who's in that class, whether they still have that class or not. We sure had a lot of fun. We had a party every month in somebody's home. We even had picnics. I think they were all women and later we invited the men to the parties. I guess they had a men's group at that time, too. Do they still have it?
- B: No, I think they combined them, I don't know when.
- H: The women had a friendship class and the men had a separate class. The friendship class was the one that raised all the money from church. They were the younger ones and they were the ones who could work. They had all of the bazaars and all of the dinners that were held for raising money.

- B: Do you remember any bazaar that they had 400 people there? Do you remember that one?
- H: Yes, I have a faint memory of it.
- B: Do you think that tithing was important at that time?
- H: No, I don't think so. I think everybody gave what they were able to give. So, much of the first part of my married life was during the Depression. People didn't have money. They had to give what they were able to give.
- B: Do you remember anything special about the men's class that you mentioned?
- H: They had a lot of men that came to it. They enjoyed it. I don't know what they did. I wasn't there most of the time, just only when they had the dinners. They served dinners merely for fellowship as I remember. They had races to see who could eat the most fish. I think my husband was in that. He could eat fish. Mr. Kyle, Howard's dad, Bill Kyle was the best person to fry the fish. He could do it better than anyone else. It was delicious. We had fish and potatoe chips, and I don't know what else. Maybe, the women brought pies for desert. I can't remember.
- B: I never heard of a fish eating contest.
- H: Yes, we had fish eating contests to see who could eat the most. Frank Stamey, who has been dead for a long, long time, liked to eat fish. The Clarks up on Allen Road was another one who like to eat fish. He was a good friend of Reverend Sillaman, too. Reverend Sillaman got a lot of people to come to church.
- B: What was Reverend Sillaman's special appeal?
- H: I don't know, they just had a way of making friends, both he and his wife. In the first place, when they came they were quite destitute, they were very poor. They had a lot of children, but they didn't have much. Everybody did all they could to help them get started. I think when you help people you begin to love them, and of course they love you.
- B: And the community felt responsible for them?
- H: Yes. They are both preachers, now she preaches. She has two churches and he preaches. I think one of the two boys is a preacher.

B: How many children do they have?

H: I think they had three boys and two girls, if I can remember right. I remember I gave them two beds that we had that were extra. We didn't need them. That helped them out until they got started. She was a beautiful singer and they were both friendly, he was a wonderful preacher. He just seemed to appeal to everybody.

B: Do you see this as the high point of the church?

H: I think it was. From here he went on to bigger things. This was the high point of his career.

B: Do you remember when our minister, here in Dorset, had to do four churches? He had to do Richmond, Dorset, Padnarum, and Cherry Valley?

H: I don't know. At the one church he just did evening services, then two were in the morning, like they do now, as Mrs. Manners does.

B: Do they have prayer services, then, if he had an evening church service, did he have a prayer service here at Dorset?

H: I don't know, but we had prayer services during the week.

B: What did you do at the prayer meetings?

H: Well, I guess, they sang and everybody that wanted to would pray. I guess they read the Bible and studied the Bible. It was like Bible study and prayers.

B: Do you remember any of the reactions or anything people said at the time, when the Methodist Church joined with the United Methodist Church?

H: I don't know anything about that. I never heard anybody say anything about it. I think it just happened that way and that was it.

B: They changed the name from Dorset Methodist to Dorset United Methodist. Several people felt that the other churches probably noticed it more than we did because their names would have changed a lot more than ours did.

What do you see as the purpose of our church? Do you think it's more concerned with Dorset and its people or do you think it's more concerned about worldly problems?

- H: I really can't say because I haven't been there enough. I think we're all concerned about everybody.
- B: Do you remember any of the anniversary celebrations that the church had?
- H: Yes, I remember some things about it, but I can't think of them. We just had a celebration; what was that celebration?
- B: We just had a fiftieth celebration and they had a eighty-fifth celebration and when they dedicated the new Sunday School rooms, they also had one.
- H: I remember there was a celebration, but I just can't remember which they were and what we did.
- B: Do you remember about the Sunday School? What were your impressions regarding teaching Sunday School?
- H: I guess they were all right. They were nice insofar as learning things about the Bible, I know that.
- B: Do you remember when they started thinking about building the new Sunday School room?
- H: I don't remember anything about that. There were four years that I was away from Dorset.
- B: Where were you?
- H: I was living in Youngstown and lost track quite a bit about how things were going in Dorset. After I came back I got married, but we were too busy with too many other things to do.
- B: Do you remember anything about Mrs. Moses and the paintings that she did for the church?
- H: Oh yes, Hugh Moses' wife. She did the Lord's Supper.
- B: Do you remember her? What was she like?
- H: She was like an ordinary person.
- B: Do you remember what encouraged her to do these paintings?
- H: No, I don't.
- B: Do you know who she dedicated the paintings to?

H: No, I don't.

B: Some people have said that she dedicated them to her husband and some people said to her husband's parents.

H: Probably all three of them, I'd say. They lived right up on the corner, Tower Road. The house is down now.

B: Next year is our 100th birthday. . . Do you mean the land that was donated for the church from the Smith's?

H: Oh yes, I can remember that. They had stalls for horses all on one side there, and they drove horses and buggies or horses and cutters.

B: Do you remember the building of the church?

H: No, I don't know anything about that, not 100 years.

B: Well, the building isn't a hundred years old.

H: I remember the basement; we had dinners down there. It was rather damp and cold down there.

B: That's why they built a youth center. What problems, do you think, exist in our church? What problems have you seen in our church?

H: If there are any problems I don't know of any.

B: What do you feel about the trend of the youth leaving the church?

H: I don't know because I just don't go to church and that's what makes me feel real bad about it. They started in and all of a sudden they dropped out. I don't know why. Jim dropped out first and then the two little ones. I know when Leroy was young he always went to church and Sunday School. But, he was confirmed at the Lutheran church. He took his confirmation down there. I said that because of my religious faith. The others were baptized in the Methodist church. I don't know why they don't go; I wish they would. I'd like to see them go back to church.

B: What do you think is the main reason why?

H: I don't know why; I have no idea. They just lost interest in going, I guess. I think it's something that is happening all over in the churches. Less and less people seem to go to church. It's not good. I think they should. I'm not

setting too good of an example, but there have been reasons. It isn't because I don't want to, I'd like to.

B: You don't have any idea of why people don't attend?

H: Too many other things to do; too much television is one thing. Of course, I hear they work all the time and I guess if that's the case they have to work. They don't have much time off. They start out at 5:00 in the morning and go out to the barn and then get ready and just rush, rush to go to school.

B: Do you remember the town festivals that used to be held in Dorset?

H: Yes. They were called street fairs. We used to have something else too, once a month. I can't recall what it was called. We had a few street fairs, we had a lot of fun there.

B: Do you remember anything about them? What went on?

H: It was just like any other fair. A lot of it was held over there where the mill is on that end of town. But they had it all the way through town. I had some programs of the street fairs and I took them to the lodge hall during that bicentennial and I never got them back. I don't know who has them. Then, we had farmer's institutes, or something like that. We had that. I remember that was quite a thing.

B: What was that?

H: They had a meeting and somebody came to be the speaker. They had a president, a secretary, and treasurer. I know my mother-in-law was a treasurer and secretary on that. They had nice talent for programs. I can't remember what the purpose of it was now.

B: Was it almost like an organization or something?

H: No, it wasn't an organization. Well, it was for the farmers. Even though we were in school we used to get out of school to go to that whenever they had that. It was interesting, they had speakers and they had a program.

B: Was it an educational type thing?

H: Yes, I think so, helping out farmers and so on. I remember

I got a notice from the bank that said the Dorset Farm Community, or whatever that was, had twenty dollars in that treasury. I didn't have anything to do with it. I had been an officer in that organization, but I wasn't the treasurer and I don't know what to do with it. So, I just didn't say to do anything. When you don't know what to do, I guess the best thing is to not do anything. So, I didn't. It was called the Farmer's Institute or something like that. It was always full. That was after the town hall was built and it was always full. We had a lot of people that came from all around. I don't know why they discontinued it. I guess there were just too many other things to do.

- B: Do you remember the time period that the Farmer's Institute existed?
- H: No, I can't remember. I believe they must have had a lunch there, too.
- B: I have a list of the old ministers. Are there any that particularly stand out to you?
- H: Oh yes, Reverend Edgar, I remember him. Reverend Shilling, I remember him, I had his daughter in school. I think I can remember Reverend Deutsch. I can't remember Reverend Henry King. I remember McElroy, Reverends Jones, Sillaman, and Stephens, Fowler, and Smith. Miller and Nuzem. That was Nuzem that used to have those fish fries instead of Sillaman. It was Reverend Nuzem; he was kind of a queer guy.
- B: How do you mean that?
- H: I remember Reverends Dean, Dylar, Kelley, and Hulbert, and Miller. I guess that's as far as I can remember back. I can't remember too much about Deutsch.
- B: Do you know any interesting stories about any of them?
- H: No.
- B: Do you remember your reaction and the feeling of the people when Reverend Won came? How did they feel about having a Korean minister?
- H: No one seemed to say much about it. I liked him, he was very nice. He came to the hospital to see me. Reverend Won, he said to come to church even if you can only stay for five minutes. You should go for five minutes. I can't

remember too much about Reverend King. Deutsch, I can't remember him. He was here for two years, but I didn't know anything about him, from 1964 to 1966.

B: I was at Richmond then, I remember him.

H: Did he come to Richmond to preach?

B: Yes.

H: Maybe that was during the time after my husband had a stroke. He died in 1968 and he had two strokes. After his last one, especially every Sunday we went to Geneva. I had to take him over to visit his brother. He looked forward, always to that. I was trying to teach, milk cows, and had to take care of him. Before he had that last stroke, that was the real bad one, of course he was sitting in the house all day. So, on the weekend I had to take him out and that's probably why I missed Reverend Deutsch. I remember Reverend Shilling very well. In fact, he used to send me a Christmas card, I don't know why. But, now in the last few years he hasn't because I've cut down on mine, too. Claude passed away in 1968. Before that, I sold the cows because I couldn't milk cows, teach, and take care of him. That was a big job, just taking care of him. He got so that he could get up in the morning and get himself dressed. Then, I fixed him a lunch so he could eat. My brother was there to look after the fire. Because he had been here I could teach. So, I wanted to keep that up. I wanted to work up until retirement. You kind of have to look out for yourself, too, somewhat. They were tough years and I just didn't have much time to do anything else.

B: What has been your impression of a woman minister coming to our church?

H: Well, I think they can preach just as well as a man. I think Mrs. Manners is very nice. I liked her. All of the preachers I heard, then, I liked them all. I've had my troubles for the last twelve years. I can't remember that far back, that's 1912 to 1914. Oh well, we didn't come to Dorset until 1914, that's why I didn't know him. Of course Reverend Mayhew was a teacher in Dorset schools, too, as well as being a preacher. From him on I remember, all except one. I don't think I remember that Henry King either. 1966 to 1969 were my bad years and I couldn't attend church then. In 1968 I lost my husband, and then my

brother and my best girlfriend. She was like a sister to me, the only one I ever had. So, those were my years that I had tough times. That's probably why I don't know these preachers. All the rest of them I do know.

B: Do you have any ideas on a celebration that we could have?

H: I really don't know. Have you heard anything about this James Anthony?

B: No.

H: Well, I knew him quite well.

B: Did you teach him in school?

H: No, I didn't have him, I had his sister. That was the youngest one, I had her in the fourth grade when I first started here. So, of course, when I taught her in Dorset in 1921 and 1922, they didn't live in Dorset during that time. When I came back the second time, then I had Ruth Anthony, that's the youngest one of the Anthonys' time.

B: What are some of the programs or things that you would like to see our church do for the community or for world problems?

H: I'm in a poor position to say, because I don't come to church enough to know. My girlfriend down at Bethany, they have so many groups and there's a big congregation, but one week they are making up clothes for the world relief. They like to get together on Thursday. One week they had a blanket club and they made blankets. They have made clothes for babies. Another one, they had cancer dressing, and they'd do that one week. Then, another week they made layettes mostly for children. They make a lot. They make 35 or 40 quilts. They had a sewing machine right there in the church in the basement. Some of them do the sewing and the rest of them are tying. They don't quilt them, they tie them. They say a lot of them take the stuff home to get it ready. They make a lot of clothes. People donate materials and some of the materials they had . . . Well, the last thing they did was they got new choir robes. They took the other ones and tore them apart. They made quilts out of them, fillings for quilts. This is more for the elderly ones; they are doing this. There are some young ones. The younger ones have different groups that do things. All I know is about my girlfriend's group, because we go out together a lot. Her husband died about a year before mine did, and she used to live right next door to us when we lived over on Torver Road. They came to Dorset when we

did. So, we've been good friends ever since. She doesn't drive and I drive, so we take trips.

B: Did she move back to Ashtabula?

H: They went back to Ashtabula. Her husband went to work on the boats. They used to run this store where Agardi is, they had that store. They sold it to people from Ashtabula, I don't remember who they sold it to. She's always worked in the grocery store. In some stores she worked in she stocked the shelves, and she's retired now.

B: Do you remember the old mercantile?

H: Oh yes, that's where we had Hurst Variety Store.

B: Do you remember the church that was in there for a while?

H: I remember about it, I never went to it. I remember they had a church in there for a while.

B: Did you ever meet that minister?

H: No, I didn't.

B: I was surprised to learn that we had three churches.

H: Well, we had a church there, then they had a church in the old hotel. There used to be church services where the old depot was. Quit Johnson used to live there. I don't know if that building is there now or not. I don't know what the street is called. There was a building there and there used to be a store there. All I can remember is that there was a fellow there that was real, real fat.

After that some other people did live there and they had a church down there, too. I think the Allens went to that church. They had a son, he was a real nice boy. I had him in the sixth grade and he committed suicide.

B: At what age?

H: I don't know, seventeen, I think.

B: I had two boys like that. I had this Allen boy up here that shot himself. I remember that he went to church over there.

How many years did you teach in Dorset?

H: I taught twenty-nine years. I taught four years in Youngstown and one year at Jefferson District School.

B: Where is that?

H: Down in Stumpville. Plus four years, I was a substitute teacher. I knew everybody in Dorset, but I don't know everyone in Dorset now. They used to come to the post office when Edna was there. That's why I talked to them. They knew people, but there were so many that I didn't know.

I remember your dad working at the depot; your granddad, I mean. And I knew your grandmother real well. Of course I know your mother real well. In fact I know all of them. I know Archie, he was real tall. I didn't know George and Fred, the two older boys. They weren't here. One of them lived in Andover, I know. But, I remember Archie, he was a good basketball player. He was so tall. I remember all the girls, Florence and Mary. Lester died about two years ago.

B: Did you have any of my family in school?

H: No. I didn't have any of them, but I had Ellen Kaipainen. Of course, Ellen is a sister-in-law. I had quite a few when I taught in 1922. I've had so many of their grandchildren. I was showing a picture to John Kazar and I asked him if he knew anybody in that picture? And he looked and said, why, that's my grandfather.

B: So, has it been interesting to see all the families changing?

H: Yes, it has been. The saddest part of it is when they begin to grow up they begin to leave Dorset. They didn't stay. Very few have stayed.

B: Do you think the town has declined from what you remember it?

H: Well, as far as the farming is concerned, it has, because everybody was a farmer when we first moved to Dorset. Everybody was shipping milk. We had a big milk factory, and a big cheese factory up there. They made cheese right here where that lumber mill is. Over there by the depot there was that milk factory where they shipped milk in cans. They took it to Pittsburgh. Before that, there was

a cheese factory where the Mellingers live. That was interesting; to go into that building. It was kind of spooky, when nobody was there. We had a saw mill right there where Harts are. That was Websters, where the Webster house is, right next to your house. Right in there was the saw mill. Then, there was a blacksmith shop where they were shoeing horses. When we were kids we'd stand there and watch them shoe horses. They had a bowling alley after that. I don't know what's there now. Nothing. They had a breakfast shop there and then they had a bowling alley there. We used to go bowling there quite often. Those little bowling balls, ten pins, not the big ones. We had a lot of fun there.

B: My mother used to set the pins up there when she was little.

H: Sometimes you couldn't play because you couldn't find a pin setter.

B: When did you go to Finland?

H: Right after I retired, I asked Edna if she would like to go to Finland and she said that she would. So, we started to make the preparations. The funny part of it is as soon as I landed in that home where my mother was born, one that her grandfather had built, I felt like I had been there before. I felt perfectly at home in that place. I kept telling Edna, I feel like I've been here before. It was when I was a little girl, before we left. And everybody in that whole village, it was the farming country, were our cousins. I said, "You're my relative, I don't know how." They were so nice. We were invited out either to lunch or to supper or for coffee or for an evening. We just had a good time.

B: Was Edna born in Finland, too?

H: Edna was born in Ashtabula.

B: Were her parents from Finland?

H: Well, Mr. and Mrs. Kukkola came with us and they had two children. My mother and father came and they had two children. There were four of us that were kids and then, the four grown-ups. We settled in Ashtabula Harbor and the Kukkolas settled up in Ashtabula. I don't know why we went down to the harbor and they stayed uptown.

B: What about the old town hall?

H: We had a little town hall right where the new town hall was. It was right about where that building is now. The door was facing that road that goes to Leon. It was very small, but we had two big pot belly stoves. One was on one side and one on the other. We had a nice stage up there with chairs and everything. Of course, we had basketball games there. Every once and a while, somebody would knock down a chimney and they would have to stop the basketball game for a little while. Then, they'd have to repair the chimney. The girls had a basketball team then, those were the high school girls. It was a real fast and roaring game that these girls played. They really had a good basketball team.

B: Was that when you were in high school?

H: I was in high school, but I wasn't playing basketball. I might have been teaching at that time. We had a good time there, and then, on the stage we had shows and parades and things, programs of all sorts. I can remember several plays that I was in that were performed up there. We didn't have electric lights. We had these other kinds of lights. They were like kerosene lamps but they were a little brighter than kerosene. They had metal shields on them or something. We just had a real good time. The town hall was a lot of fun.

B: How big would you say the old town hall was?

H: It would be about the size of the stage of the present one. It wasn't very big. When the boys had to change clothes, there was no basement or anything, they would go out into the tool shed. In the winter time, they just about froze to death. They had teams, they used to play Lenox and some of the other places. They had a pretty good basketball team. The Dorset boys did. The girls did too. I know these two twins were players and that was the Hynninen girls, the Narki girl. And they were really fighters. They could really play basketball. I guess one time, they were practicing basketball in there and somebody did something. I guess they knocked the chimney down or something, and the whole town hall burned up. Then they built a new one.

B: Can you remember what year it burned?

H: I can't remember what year it burned, but I think they had a fire in one of the stoves. They had left it and went back to the schoolhouse, and it caught on fire somehow.

B: When did you come to Dorset?

H: I came into Dorset when I was in the seventh grade. I think the town hall burned down when I was in high school.

B: Then did they build the one we have now?

H: Yes, they built that one. I don't think they served any meals or anything in that little town hall, but we did have concerts. When I was in high school, we had two literary societies, the Spartans and the Athenians. I was a Spartan and there was a rivalry between those two. The contests were between a debate. We were real debators. They had a humorous reading and a serious reading. I remember Fred Hayes was one of the guys that could give funny readings. He was the best for humorous readings. Some of them had real good serious readings, too. We had, all over the county, a contest. One time we went to Rock Creek and Milton Mead passed out during his speech. That kind of upset our debate. But, the ones that were giving their recitations, they went on. Of course, we lost our debate that night. But, Milton wasn't the kind of fella that could lose. I don't know why he passed out. There was always an alternate. We had to go clear to Ashtabula on the train and then, we had to take a train down to Rock Creek. We took a round about way to get there. We didn't have any cars. There were only one or two cars in Dorset. I think Grant McConnell used to have a car. He was a postmaster, but I don't think anyone else had one.

B: What happened to the ball diamond?

H: We played ball, we had a good ball team. Burr's used to own that piece of land and they sold it to Claude's dad. They bought it, but Burr's didn't want anything built on that place. Of course, if the Burrs had seen what's going on in that store now they'd be turning over in their graves because they were very, very religious. They belonged to the Baptist church. What made them want to save it was for fear that something like that on that place, to make money. It was after Claude's dad bought that place that the ball diamond was built there. We had all kinds of contests; you know from all the different schools in Dorset. They were always tops in sports. They were good. We had nice field meets every year. The last day of school we used to have field meets. They'd have a picnic, but it was a field meet. All the people in town came for all day, you could donate money for prizes. First prize was a dollar, fifty cents for second place, and probably a quarter for third place. They had races, relay races, sixty yard dashes, forty yard dashes, 100 yard dashes, 320, and they had a half

a mile. Rupert Kyle set a record, but I think somebody has broken his record in the county. He was the best mile runner.

B: Did he hold the state record at one time?

H: I don't know. Gerald Comp was a distance runner, Jim's brother, Jerry, got drowned.

B: Wasn't he a minister?

H: Yes, and he was also a good runner; a mile runner. I guess. My husband had some records, too, when they were racing. I don't know what all. We had set records up in Jefferson, for the county. We were in all kinds of races; all kinds of sports. We were playing everything, but basketball, because we didn't have anyplace to play but in that little town hall, until we had the bigger one. All day long they would have races and all that stuff would be going on all day. Everybody stopped working to attend these. We had lunch; they served lunches of all kinds. The Finnish people make homemade coffee bread. We made some to take to it and we donated things. We had bake sales too, to raise money. The field meet was a big thing, nobody missed that for all the world. We tried to have it later on, but after the automobile came the kids wouldn't stay when they got to driving automobiles they'd get into their automobiles and away they'd go everywhere else instead of staying at the field meet. It was a big thing. They sold ice cream and hotdogs and whatever you wanted to do you could do. Then, they had all these races. At the end of that day the last thing was a baseball game. We'd always get somebody from another school to come and play baseball with Dorset. We had a good baseball team, they just couldn't beat us. We always won. We used to go to Jefferson to the county meet, boys and girls both. We used to run and broadjump. The best baseball thrower here was Beulah Kyle. Boy! She could throw that baseball. I couldn't throw it anywhere near as good as she did. She was a good ball thrower. Some of the other girls were good runners, but only three of us that went to Jefferson in that field meet. I guess, nobody else entered, but we three girls. So, I always got third place in everything. We used to have bloomers on. I have some pictures.

B: You're lucky you have pictures left.

H: Yes, and most of the rest of them are of the farm. We wore bloomers and middies. I even won a ribbon.

B: Did you and your husband build this house?

H: This house was built long before the Civil War. I was talking to a friend of mine, one of my past classmates, his grandparents came from Erie and they settled here. They came here during the Civil War. They came from Erie and they lived in this house. This house next door to us was an underground railroad; where they hid the slaves. There are quite a few around here.

B: What was the name of the school where you taught in Youngstown?

H: It was Kincaid; Stambaugh School. There were two of them, one of them was Kincaid and the other one was Stambaugh that I taught in. They were tough little rascals; some of the kids had knives. Their parents were in jail and they'd have to take the whole family with them because they were always in trouble. One night we had something going on in the school, and very seldom were we there at night, but I don't know why we happened to be there that particular night, and the lights went out. Everybody was just petrified. It happened that Claude was out waiting for me to go home, it was on a Friday night. He was in the car and he wondered what happened. One of the teachers rushed to a telephone and called the police department right away. This school was right out in the country, it was right near the steel mills. It was a tough neighborhood. A few years ago, I went over to see that school and it was all rebuilt. I couldn't recognize it from when I was there. There were houses all around.

B: Were there a lot of immigrant children?

H: No, they were mostly Italians. The others were foreigners, they had been here several years, but I think they were all born in this country though. They were from different countries and the Italians were pretty rough. You had to watch those kids. They were something like the kids are nowadays.

B: What grades were these?

H: I think one time, I had first grade, and the second year I had first, second, and third, something like that. One of those grades. Before we consolidated we had first, second, and third grades in one room. When we started school here, Dorset first and second were together and third and fourth were together. I started in on the third and fourth in Dorset. The fifth and sixth were all on the main

floor. Seventh and eighth and juniors and seniors, freshmen and sophomores on the second floor. We only had six rooms. We had home economics down in the basement and the other room was mechanical drawing, or shop or something like that. I guess it's all together different now. The ones that came back to see the school during the bicentennial were surprised to see how it had changed. They enjoyed going around saying, "Oh, it didn't look like this." We had right in the upstairs hallway a little room walled in for the principal's office. The principal was Miss Hickok and when you took the kids into that principal's office they just didn't even wink an eye. She was a very, very strict disciplinarian, but you didn't have to use much force. Those snappy eyes of her's made you feel like two cents.

B: Was she pretty well liked by everybody?

H: Yes, they liked her very well. She was so fair, but she didn't stand for any of that foolishness either.

B: Did you teach under her?

H: No, I went to school under her.

B: Do you remember when she left Dorset?

H: No, I really don't remember when she left. When I first started in she was a teacher, then she became the principal of the school. She was good and a good teacher. We certainly learned things under her. She didn't stand for any nonsense. After she left we had some others, but they weren't as good. The boys used to like to play pranks on some of those principals. They planted a tree on Arbor Day up on the school roof. The principal was the kind of fellow that they didn't like very well. So, they liked to play jokes on him. So, Arbor Day, there was a tree there to plant and they put it up on the schoolhouse on top, where the school bell was, you could go through that trap door. So, the next morning when they came to school they got them all in assembly and he balled them out. The principal told them, "I know who did it." If you come and tell me that you did, then there wouldn't be any punishment. So, the boys decided, the one boy, that was Bill Davidson, wasn't in school that day and they told him to go up and tell him that he planted that tree up there. He did, and the principal said, "Well, I know you did it now." He just balled him out terribly. Then, the boys went back and told him because he was sick that day and he didn't even do it. He was madder than ever. You couldn't put too much over on those kids. Every morning

just before time for school to start he had a watch, one with a chain on it, he would play with it and he would ball us out and tell us what to do. A lecture every morning. We didn't like that very well. I don't think there's any use in lecturing them until you know that they did something wrong. He was a tough old guy.

B: Did you enjoy school teaching very much?

H: Yes. I liked it very much. I always wanted to be a teacher ever since I was a kid. I used to play school. If I didn't have anyone else, I'd take the dolls and line them up and send them up the road. I'd have the questions and I'd have to do my own answering. They didn't talk. If I could get enough kids together and they wanted to play school, we would play school. They didn't always want to be a pupil. They'd rather be something else.

B: What were some of the other games that you played when you were young?

H: We used to play tag and hide'n go seek. When we got a little older we'd play ball. We had a little miniature golf course at home that we used to like quite a bit. We liked to play cards, too. We used to have a lot of kids come from the harbor to stay with us around summertime. My father was great for having kids around. I don't know if my mother liked it, she had a lot of cooking to do while they were there. When it was raining, then we'd come in the house and play cards. That was the time when my mother and father were gone, they went to Finland. The kids came over and everyday we'd play cards. One little boy, the game we liked the best was hearts, and the queen of spades. Whoever got the queen of spades, that was thirteen against you. Every-time this kid would play and we gave him the queen of spades; boy, was he mad! He passed away now.

B: What are some of the changes that you've seen in education?

H: The method of reading, spelling and teaching have changed quite a bit. I don't like the idea of taking the drilling out of the system. You have to drill your multiplication and your facts. You don't learn them unless you drill them. You don't just take for granted that the children are learning them, because they don't. Some parents will help them to do it, but most parents don't have time, today, to do anything. It's just such a fast age that we don't have time. I don't like the idea of them having a piece of paper there with the facts on it to do a math problem.

- B: What do you think of consolidation?
- H: It has its bad points and its good points.
- B: Most people, from what I've heard, are very, very upset about it.
- H: They were upset at first. I think we've got too large a group to contend with it. When you have a smaller group you can do much better with them. It's just like a family, you know, if you had too much children in a family, it doesn't work as well as if you had just a few. But, I suppose when you have more students you have more subjects and you could have different kinds of education.
- B: Most people think that everything started to decline when the consolidation got started.
- H: I think what hurts the worst is because Jefferson and Dorset were always rivals in everything. They just couldn't stand to join them. Also, the kids wouldn't have a chance in Jefferson like they did in Dorset. I can't believe in that because everybody can go to Jefferson and have just as good a chance that they want to. It's up to them. The school isn't there to hold them back. They are holding themselves back. Like I say, so many of our students that went to Jefferson have made big for themselves.
- B: Could you tell us from a teacher's point of view?
- H: Well, they have more things to choose from, but their classes are too big, and the teachers can't supervise them like they do down here. That's the worst part of it, because they don't even try. They just let them go. But, like here, they were supervised all the time. This is good. Although, when we went to school, why, we just got on the playground and played, nobody had to be there with us. We had noon hour or recess periods. No teacher was out there on the playground. If a couple of kids got into a fight and somebody would rush right in and get the principal and he'd get out there and separate them, that's as far as it went. That part, I don't know, it's kind of tough, when you have to be with the children all the time. It's a long day. Now they've changed it and they don't have to be with them at lunchtime now. That's a nice break. The kids used to go anywhere they wanted to during lunch period. If they wanted to go to the store they could go to the store. They don't do that anymore. You could go and eat your lunch wherever you wanted to, outside or in the room. I remember

we were in the eighth grade, I guess. We always used to go to the store and get a penny sucker. That's all the lunch we had. We'd chew on that all lunch hour. I guess you had to be back on time, if you weren't then you were punished. Of course, now, you don't dare let them go out on the playground by themselves. You get in trouble and you're liable. Somebody starts a law suit.

B: Yes, people are very quick to sue.

H: I know they are. I think it's these lawyers, but I know one of my students is a lawyer. I had him in third and fourth grade. They can see loopholes in something right away and then they have a big law suit. You've got to have insurance against everything. Of course, there are some teachers who lose their temper and they don't know what they're doing and get after the kids. We're living in such a fast age. Before people were calmer, they weren't as wild as they are now.

B: What reasons do you see for that change?

H: Well, everything is fast. We're just going faster and faster. There's faster automobiles, we should go back to the old horse and buggy days. Of course they had horse and buggy races too. They'd get their horse and buggy and go down the road and race with them. They're building faster airplanes.

Children are exposed to everything nowadays, with the movies and television. We didn't have the movies like they have now. We didn't even go to the movie often.

B: Do you remember silent movies? Did you go to silent movies?

H: You'd just have to read what it said on the screen. The pianist would play on that piano. We had a cousin that used to play at one of the theatres down on the harbor. She was a real good musician, she would just play and not even have any music. I just watched the picture and whenever you needed fast music or slow music she would play it the way she wanted to. They used to go so fast, the characters, they didn't move slow. They were funny. Then, they had the movies up at Jefferson we used to go to. It was ten cents.

B: Do you remember any other prices, like for milk?

H: Well, we had our own milk and eggs. We had our own cows and

we raised our own chickens, and our pigs. So, we'd take our eggs up to the store and trade them for groceries. We'd take our milk to that milk factory.

- B: I would like to read for you a story that was written by Mrs. Hurst, this is when she was in college at Kent and she was assigned to write an essay. She chose an essay on her own life, and the title of the story is, "MY OWN STORY."

MY OWN STORY: I do not know very much about my ancestors, but from the stories told to me by my parents and others, I will give a few facts for the background of my own life. Both my father and mother were born in Finland. After their marriage, as it was the custom of the groom to live in the home of the bride, they lived with her parents. Grandfather's farm was rather large and as he was getting old he needed young hands to help him with the work. But, father was not satisfied with the simple country life. Many of his friends who had visited the New World told stories of the wonderful country across the Atlantic, with its places of interest, easy modes of accumulating wealth, and enumerable opportunities for social advancement. The people were so zealous over these prospects, thinking only of making money easily and quickly and of returning to their native country to spend the remainder of their lives in comfort, that they made all preparations to settle, for a time, in this wonderful country. Among these people who desired new and better opportunities was my father. He wanted to try his fortune in this new world. Immediately, he began to make preparations to leave his native land. This was a very big sacrifice for him to make, but the wealth and opportunity seemed to call so loudly that he responded. He thought he would be gone perhaps four or five years and then return with riches as some of the others had done. In the spring of 1905, he left his home with his wife and two children and a number of friends for America. I was the younger of the two children. We went by boat to Hall, England, then to cross the country by rail to Liverpool. In Liverpool we boarded a boat and landed in Philadelphia. From there we came to Ashtabula. I was still too young to remember much about crossing the ocean or remembering my life in the other country. Often times I have regretted that I cannot recall these various experiences. Someday I hope to visit that land as my mother and father have wished to do, but not to make it my home. America is our home.

People who have returned with the intention of spending the remainder of their lives in the land of their birth, have come

again to America. They have become so accustomed to American ways that America seems home to them. A few people have traveled back and forth so many times that they are not satisfied in either country. They cannot tell which one they want to call their own.

My earliest recollections are the days I spent visiting school with older friends. I enjoyed school so much then, that I always wanted to become a teacher. At the age of seven I entered school. I was more fortunate than most foreign born children because I was able to learn the language, having learned from playmates. My school days were very happy ones. During the winter I attended the public school, while in the summer I attended summer school conducted by our Lutheran church for the benefit of those who wished to have children read, write, and speak their native language, and to know something about the land of their forefathers.

Religious training was the predominating element. The Bible was the chief textbook and the other books were based on the Bible. During my seventh year in school, father decided that he wanted to live on a farm again. Great was our joy when he told us that he had purchased a farm. We children, had often played make believe farm life as we had seen how farmers live when we visited their farms. The following spring was a very restless time for me in school because we were making all our preparations for moving. I was anticipating all kinds of good times for myself as well as for my friends. During the summer vacation we moved to the farm. As we were traveling on the train to our new home, I was imagining the kind of a farm home I wanted to live in, with a cement walk, beautiful gardens, and other conveniences that could be purchased. Upon my arrival, I was disappointed, instead of finding an up-to-date and beautiful farm, I found a large track of land covered with trees and brush and only a small portion cleared.

Another corner had another piece of land fenced for a pasture where a cow was slowly grazing. On this terrain was a little one room shack which served as a house for the summer. No neighbors were seen because of the thick brush and it seemed to be a long way off to where anyone lived. Although, in reality it was only a short distance.

The first night I slept in the shanty with my parents. I was kept awake nearly all night from the sounds of the

whippoorwill and other creatures of the forest that I had never heard before.

After the first night, my brother and I went to a neighbor's home for the night. And ate our meals at our home. Our little shanty afforded very little shelter. Especially during heavy storms, for the boards and the walls did not come together. Rain came in through cracks in the walls and holes in the roof. I can almost say that I had a taste of pioneer life and can sympathize with the early settlers of America. The only thing lacking to make our lives on the farm the first summer seem like the life of pioneers was that there was no Indian raids. The summer was a busy one for us all. We were all engaged in clearing land and growing crops. While the carpenters were building the house and the barn. When school again opened in the fall, we were ready to move into our new house. It seemed very home-like and comfortable to us after our summer of hard work and cramped conditions, although it did lack some of the conveniences of our city home. The primary entrance into the new school left me very much at a loss for the school was far different from the one that I had been attending. But, I soon became accustomed to their ways. During winter my brother and I attended school, while in the summer we helped father on the farm. Now our home is almost like the farm that I dreamed about in my childhood days. I graduated from Dorset High School and attended normal school during two summers. This year I intend to finish my work at the college and receive an elementary diploma.

Sima Sopenen

Sima's story was later printed in the Kent University newspaper, the Kentonian.

END OF INTERVIEW