

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

YSU Depression Project

The Depression Years

O. H. 98

BERNIS M. EVANS

Interviewed

by

Daniel M. Flood

on

October 24, 1975

## BERNIS M. EVANS

Bernis Mae Evans was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on July 24, 1908, the daughter of William J. and Catherine Evans. The seventh-born in a large family, Bernis spent her childhood in New Castle, Pennsylvania, where the family moved when she was five years old.

In 1919, the Evans' came to Youngstown, Ohio and Bernis attended St. Patrick's School, where she would later hold a teaching position. She graduated in 1922, and continued her secondary education at Ursuline High School, which at that time was "strictly a girl's school." In the fall of 1926, Miss Evans attended Kent State, going back to finish in the summers of 1927 and 1928. Meanwhile, she took extension courses at the old Rayen School on Wick Avenue.

In February 1927, Evans began teaching at Pancrattus Hall, a boy's school, where she managed second and third graders in every school subject. In September 1927, Bernis started at St. Patrick's School, where she would continue to teach until her retirement in June 1970 spanning a forty-three-year period.

A member of St. Christine Church, Miss Evans enjoys needlework as a hobby and crossword puzzles.

Terri Belloto

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INTERVIEWEE: BERNIS MAE EVANS  
INTERVIEWER: Dan Flood  
SUBJECT: The Depression Years  
DATE: October 24, 1975

- F: This is an interview with Miss Bernis Evans for the Youngstown State University Depression Project, by Dan Flood, at Miss Evans' home, 2144 Coleman Drive on October 24, 1975 at 7:20 p.m.
- F: Before we begin the actual interview, let me point out to you that Miss Evans has lead a very active life. Having attended the Kent State Normal School during the summer sessions from 1926 to 1928, while teaching during those same years, Miss Evans continued teaching for forty-three years thereafter, retiring in 1970. Now having experienced so many different facets of life, would justly call for an interview on these grounds alone. Today we are asking Miss Evans to recall specific experiences she had, whether they be good or bad, as she grew up during the Great Depression of the 1930's. Miss Evans, why don't we begin by allowing you to give us some very specific background information, such as when and where you were born, the names and ages of your family members, and the occupation your father was in at the time of your birth.
- E: Well, I was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on July 24, 1908. I was the seventh child, the middle child. My mother would have had thirteen children if all of us had lived, but eight lived and five died. We moved to New Castle, Pennsylvania when I was five years old. My father was in the interior decorating business.
- F: Was that in the year 1913? If that is the case, could you possibly remember any of the events that occurred during World War I?

E: Yes.

F: What were some of the reactions at that time?

E: Well, I can remember the parades we used to have to raise money for the Red Cross. The children would march through the streets with a flag and people along the way would throw in money for the Red Cross. I can remember Armistice Day, and how everybody filled the streets. The flags were flying and everybody was screaming and yelling that the war was over. It was special to me because my oldest brother was about ready to enter the service when the war was over, and so it was a great relief to know that he didn't have to leave the family and go overseas.

F: Did everyone have a feeling that this was the war to end all wars?

E: Absolutely, because that was the feeling everyone had that after this war was over, there would be no more wars at all. We were happy to know that at last the boys were home safe and sound. Although, some of our relatives lost their sons, we were fortunate that none of ours had to go into the service.

F: Did everybody feel that the isolationist policy after World War I--of keeping to ourselves--was a good policy? Was that the feeling?

E: No, I don't think so. I didn't have that impression as a child because my parents were the ones that would always say, "Who do you think you are? Do you think you are any better than anybody else? Those people have their rights and their thoughts, just the same as we have our rights and our thoughts. So there is good and bad in every nationality. It is up to you to keep up the good part of the culture." My mother and father said that everybody had a right to live the way they wanted to live, and they also had the right to their own opinion.

F: Were these some of the ideals that you had been taught by your parents?

E: Yes. I know if we would talk about someone, or some nationality, my mother would always say, "And who do you think you are?"

F: Was that the thinking for the Blacks too, at that time?

E: We really didn't have much contact with Blacks when I was growing up except when I came to Youngstown. I

can't remember having any contacts with them when I was young, but my grandmother did have a colored wash woman. In those days, they washed outside. I would sit on the wall and talk with her. I can remember one time my mother called me in to get my hands washed. I said, "I don't know why I have to wash my hands. Lucy's hands are black just like mine." My mother soon set me straight on that because we were never allowed to criticize anybody else.

F: Can you remember anything from the 1920s, the age of the Charleston?

E: Yes, I can remember that. I wasn't such a hot dancer, but my youngest sister, Mary, was. She was about seven years of age at the time. My father belonged to the Kiwanis and the Rotary Clubs. They would have picnics and she used to win all of the Charleston contests because her feet could go faster than anybody's.

F: Now were these like those dance marathons where they had to dance a long time?

E: No. These contests were just at picnics. They would have casual dances. Everybody would get up and perform. In those days, they always had to have a dance contest. All the children would get into it. She was the one that would dance the feet off of anybody. She was only about seven years of age, but she won all of them. As far as being a dancer, I wasn't. I never did much of that until I was older.

F: Well, can you recall any of your school experiences, possibly the teachers or the subjects that you were taking in school?

E: You mean when I was in school myself?

F: Yes, when you were in school.

E: Oh, yes, I can remember. We had all the usual things. I did have a good memory in those days. I can remember that I took elocution lessons at the time, and when I was in the eighth grade I had to learn [Longfellow's] poem, The Song of Hiawatha. Also, I took lessons from a private teacher, and of course, in those days we had a little more spare time in school than children do today. It wasn't rush, rush, rush, from one subject to another. Between classes and at certain times, I would be reciting poetry.

F: Was this like a one-room school?

E: No, there were eight grades in the school. It was St. Mary's school in New Castle. I can remember being in plays for the benefit of the war. There was a priest in Mahoningtown, a section of New Castle, who used to put on these plays. My older sister, my brother, and I used to be in them. In fact, I have a picture, I don't know just where it is right now, of me dressed in a Red Cross uniform. We were the nurses. There was a dying soldier and there was someone singing one of the war songs.

F: Was it, "Johnny Come Marching Home?"

E: No, it wasn't "Johnny Come Marching Home." It was "Over There."

F: Oh yes, George M. Cohan. Do you remember anything about him at all?

E: No, I didn't know much about him at that time because then, we used to go to the movies on Saturday. For five cents on Saturday I saw, "The Perils of Pauline."

F: Now these weren't the "talkies" right?

E: No, these were the silent movies.

F: What was it like to see those?

E: Well, really it was fun. They had the piano music in the background and the jerky screens. We got five cents and went every Saturday because there was a different episode and they left you hanging until the next one.

F: To make sure you'd come back?

E: Yes.

F: Do you remember the transition period, from the silent movies to the "talkies?" What was the talk at the time? How did the people react to that?

E: Well, I was older then. I suppose I didn't think of it. In fact, I can't remember. I can remember going to the old Market Street Theater, the Realto, every Sunday. One Sunday my younger brother went to the movies, and he was late coming home. When he got home my mother said to him, "Why were you so long?" He said, "I stayed to watch the two shows, to see if she won the race in the second show."

F: It was the same show?

- E: Yes, it was the same show. I can't recall the name of the picture, but it was a horse racing picture. He wanted to see whether she won the race the second time, too
- F: What about your years during and after high school?
- E: We came to Youngstown in 1919. I attended St. Patrick's School. I graduated from there in 1922 and then went to Ursuline High School, which was then strictly a girl's school.
- F: Do you recall if you paid any tuition at that time?
- E: Yes, the tuition was five dollars a month and that would be like \$150.00 a month now to pay.
- F: How many girls attended there?
- E: There were, only two from St. Patrick's that went.
- F: Because it was too costly?
- E: Yes. We rode the bus and the tickets were twenty tickets for a dollar. Of course, you could get the bus any time and any place in those days. I attended there for four years. When I graduated, there were thirty-two girls in the graduation class and that was the largest graduating class in the history of the school.
- F: Would this have been around 1926?
- E: Yes, 1926.
- F: Do you remember going to Idora Park? I heard that they had a swimming pool.
- E: Oh yes, I was out to Idora Park many times. We used to go rather often.
- F: What was that like? Was it a big amusement park then?
- E: Yes, it was a big amusement park. You could get on the streetcar at Market Street and ride all the way out to the park for five cents.
- F: Five cents for the trolley?
- E: Yes. You could get into the park and ride all of the rides for a dollar or a dollar and a half. My goodness, you could ride all day, because most of the rides were five cents.

F: Oh really?

E: Yes, five cents a ride. Of course, they didn't have all of the refreshment stands and game booths they have now. It was strictly an amusement park. Maybe they had ice cream or something similiar, but not a variety of food that you could choose from.

F: Now, did they have that large swimming pool?

E: That was when I was in high school because I can remember going out there and swimming. I think you could swim for twenty-five cents. One of the girls who was an attendant at the pool belonged to my 500 Club. One night she was wearing this ring. I said, "That's an Ursuline High School graduation ring." She said, "I found it, in the sand at the pool." So I looked in it and I saw the initials. I called up the girl who owned it. She had lost it out there and was so happy to get it back

F: After you graduated from high school, did you attend Kent State during the summer?

E: In the fall of 1926, I started at Kent State. I attended up until Christmas. Then I had to come home and in summers of 1927 and 1928, I went back. In the meantime I took extension courses at the old Rayen School on Wick Avenue. These courses were given by Kent State, which at that time, was called Kent State Normal School. It was strictly a teacher training school and only those studying for a teaching profession were enrolled.

F: Is that when you really got into teaching?

E: No, I had been teaching in the meantime. I started to teach in February of 1927 at Pancratius Hall which is now St. Paul's Monastery. It was a boy's school. The enrollment consisted of nine or ten boys.

F: What subject did you teach at the time?

E: Everything.

F: Oh really.

E: Yes. I had second and third graders. I taught everything and I lived there. They had ten boys, three nuns, a housekeeper, and myself.

F: You lived right at the school?

E: I lived right at the school there.

F: How much were you being paid at the time?



- E: Well, I was being paid fifty dollars a month, which was quite a bit in those days.
- F: Plus room and board?
- E: Yes, plus my room and board, which was quite a bit in those days. In September of 1927, I started at St. Patrick's School. I was there until 1970. In fact I taught at both Oak Hill and Glenwood schools.
- F: You mean the new school as well as the old St. Pat's?
- E: Yes. I taught in some of the rooms in which I had gone to school.
- F: The same classrooms?
- E: Yes. Although I was in the higher grades, some of the rooms that I was in when I was substituting or helping out, were the very rooms in which I had attended school.
- F: So when you started at St. Pat's, what was the salary? Was it the same, about fifty dollars?
- E: Well, we started at seventy-five dollars a month, but during the Depression, we were paid sixty dollars a month.
- F: In 1929 when the stock market had it's crash, what were the reactions of the teachers at St. Pat's at the time? Was there any talk back and forth that they felt that something terrible was going to take place?
- E: No, I don't think so, because I don't think that we realized the impact that this would have on our lives. We didn't have any stocks and bonds to worry about, but I know that everybody just tightened their belt buckle up and thought, "Well, we will have to do the best we can "
- F: Did the children attending St. Pat's eat well or wear the best of clothes at the time? Did you see a big change from the 1920's to the 1930's?
- E: Yes, there were always those that had a lot, those that didn't have too much and then those that were just in between. During the Depression, there were more of the children who couldn't afford various things they needed. We understood that so we just went along with the children. We didn't press them for anything that we knew they couldn't buy or couldn't have. The teachers and the nuns would collect things like paper and pencils that could be given to those who couldn't afford them, so they wouldn't be too embarrassed that they weren't able. During the wintertime, and during the worst of the

Depression, I can remember everybody gathering up odd gloves and odd hats, just anything to keep them warm. Many times they would come and they would have cardboard in their shoes. It didn't matter what it looked like. The children themselves didn't care how they looked, as long as they were warm and had something to wear.

F: What was the attendance like? Did it drop off because of sickness?

E: No. In those days, the attendance was much better than even the more affluent times because they came to school to keep warm and to get something to eat.

F: Did you have a lunch program for the kids?

E: Yes, we had a lunch program. The children who could afford it, paid five cents but those who couldn't were given free tickets

F: What was the lunch like?

E: Well, we usually had hot dogs. They called them wieners in those days and potatoes and vegetable soup, food that would fill their stomachs and yet wasn't expensive to prepare.

F: Who prepared the meals?

E: The women of the parish, the Ladies' Aid, prepared it.

F: Who subsidized it or paid for it?

E: The parish paid for it. Monsignor Kane, our Pastor, also started the Novena to the Blessed Mother, the Miraculous Medal.

F: This started right during the Depression now?

E: Yes, he started it during the Depression. There were at least six or seven services every Monday. The people came from all over town, and even the bus company put on extra busses to bring the people. These special busses were marked "St. Patrick's Church." They would bring the people right there, wait for them till the Novena was over, and then take them back to town.

F: Well, St. Pat's was always, as I can remember, and still is today to a majority of people, "the" church in town.

E: Yes, it is. It was to me since it had been a part of my life for fifty-one years. The people would come in droves. They would just pour into that church. Every service was filled, every seat was filled. They would come in and out.

Monsignor Kane was so happy with the response from the people and many of them attributed jobs and all that they had received to this Novena. Of course, it isn't drawing the crowds now and they don't have the same number of services, but to this day, they still have it.

F: Do you feel that people turned to God and religion because of not having much?

E: Yes, they did. People then were even more religious, but they believed in this Novena. The strong belief they had that it was going to work is, I think, what helped them to get through many of the difficult times.

F: Now what about the St. Vincent DePaul Society at the time?

E: Well, the St. Vincent DePaul Society, at that time, took care of as many needy families as they could but, of course, then there were so many. The people went to city places where they would give out food. I can't recall, but I think it was a building down on Front Street. They would give out flour, sugar, staples and things that people needed but nothing fancy.

F They would just receive the bare necessities.

E: Yes, I can remember many of the people going down there and getting cans of soup and vegetables. That was about all that they would have. There were other things. I didn't have much to do with the agencies because I really don't think that they were very active at the time. I mean we didn't have as many as they have today.

F: Was this before 1935?

E Yes, that was before they had all of these agencies or if they did, there were very few people that knew about them. Most of the Catholics went to St. Vincent DePaul or their parish church where they would get help, and we didn't have too many people, that I can remember, who had to use these agencies.

F: Do you remember the number of students that went to St. Pat who were non-Catholic? Can you remember if there were any at all?

E: Yes, one year I had a Protestant boy and two Jewish girls.

F: That is the same as when I went to school in the early sixties, but then today, it has changed so much.

E: Yes, I don't remember having any non-Catholics in school, except when we went to Ursuline.

- F: Now, was Ursuline mostly for the elite?
- E: Yes, the high school for girls. When I was there we had Catholics and non-Catholics. A few, not too many non-Catholics, but it was the only all-girl's school in Youngstown.
- F: Do you remember the first couple of weeks of teaching in comparison with the classroom learning at the normal school?
- E: Yes, of course, coming from a big family, large classes didn't bother me, but I can remember in those days, we had fifty or sixty students.
- F: In a classroom?
- E: Yes, and sometimes we had as many as seventy and seventy-five in a classroom. We were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling and English.
- F: Were the kids troublesome or were there any discipline problems at all?
- E: No. In those days there were very few problems because all you had to say was, "I'll call your mother," or "I'll get your brother or father." That was it. You couldn't say you'd reach them on the phone, because most of them didn't have phones, but you knew how to get in contact with them. That is all you had to say.
- F: Did the parents support you?
- E: They backed you up, no matter what.
- F: Do you remember any parents at all that didn't agree with your methods or protested?
- E: Well, once in a while you would have a few come in, but they were few and far between. Most of the parents wanted their children disciplined. They left it in your hands. They would say, "When they are in school, you take care of them. When they are at home, I will take care of them." They wouldn't tell you to let them know and they'll take care of it. Well, you know yourself, some parents today say, "Well, I'll take care of it." If you have to correct a child in school but wait till the end of the day to punish that child, you and the child would have forgotten what the punishment was for.
- F: Yes, and what is the point in doing that.
- E: There would be no point. You had to do it right then and there. If you waited till after school and then

called their parents and told them, you would have forgotten it ten minutes after it had happened, and so would the child.

F: Plus the child will probably think, "Hey, these teachers don't have the authority to do it on their own."

E: Right. We had very little trouble with discipline in those days because they left it up to the teacher. When they were in school, they were in your hands. Parents left the teacher in charge.

F: What was it like for you during the Depression? What was your life style like?

E: Well, it was very simple because we had to give up a lot of things that we were used to. We had to do without many things that we would have normally been using such as clothing and food. I can remember my mother saying, "If this Depression is ever over, I'll never look at hamburger again." She had one hundred different ways to make hamburger. She had one specialty she called the NRA. That was one of the national relief agencies. This was NRA, and we had hamburger every which way. I can remember going to Oles Market and getting five loaves of bread for a quarter. Also, if you had a dollar you could get a pork loin that was a yard long. In those days, we would walk down over Market Street Bridge to the old Oles Market and then walk back home again.

F: Now was Pyatt Street Market there at that time, too?

E: I can't remember too much about Pyatt Street Market, but it was there.

F: You went primarily downtown?

E: No, you went to Oles Market if you had cash. Most of the people dealt with the neighborhood grocers, where you could charge until payday.

F: Do you remember the cost of milk at the time?

E: No, not really. I can remember bread being five loaves for a quarter. You could buy an ice cream cone then for a nickel. You went to the store with ten dollars in those days, and you could hardly carry the load of grocery bags home, but some of the things I can't quite remember what they cost.

F: Do you remember any tragedies during the Depression that took place, possibly with students and their parents?

- E: One tragedy I remember having was during Easter vacation. One of the children in my room had wandered down into Mill Creek Park. He fell over the cliff and drowned in the water. That is the one tragedy that I can remember happening all during the years that I taught. Any other tragedies, I just can't recall right now, Dan.
- F: What about going back a little to December 7, 1941, the day of the Pearl Harbor attack. Can you remember this?
- E: Yes, I can remember that very, very well because we were sitting in our living room, and we didn't have our radio on then. Evidently it wasn't working or something. My sister happened to be up at a neighbor's. She came tearing down to tell us that Japan had bombed the United States at Pearl Harbor. At that time my brother, Bill, was on his way to Panama. They had to reroute the ship, we found out later, of course, and took it a different way for security measures. He was taken into Panama. I remember everybody saying at the time, "Well, this isn't going to last very long because the way their country is, their homes aren't very substantial. It won't take this war very long to be over "
- F: So this was the way they felt about going to war?
- E: Oh, yes.
- F: The reason I asked this was because after World War I, being that you lived, you felt that this was the war to end all wars but on December 7th, it just started all over.
- E: Yes, but I remember that it seemed like a big family. A family itself might be at odds with each other, but when anybody does something to anyone in a big family like that, then all of the rest of them get together to unify. It seemed that way with our country.
- F: Do you remember any other events? We discussed some experiences of the Depression. Can you recall the incident of the Lindbergh baby?
- E: Yes, I remember the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby, and how everyone in the country was concerned, especially people close to us. I can remember everybody offering their prayers and making Novenas so that the child could be returned safely. We were all terribly upset and shocked when we learned that the baby had been killed.
- F: Do you feel that it was as great a shock as John F. Kennedy's assassination?

- E: Well, at that time it was because he was a national hero. People looked at him as a hero and a father. Everyone felt that he was a national hero and they loved him. They just felt and went through, I think, the same feeling that Lindbergh, his wife, and everyone who was related to the child went through.
- F: Did they feel that after this person who committed the crime was caught, deserved exactly what was given?
- E: Well, I think most people did. They felt that he had committed a hideous crime and that he should pay for it, as far as I can recollect.
- F: What about Franklin Delano Roosevelt? Did you have any feelings about him?
- E: Oh, yes.
- F: Did your mother have feelings about him?
- E: My mother, was hard of hearing. She wore a hearing aid. Everytime he was scheduled for one of his fireside talks, we had to go and make sure she had plenty of batteries in that hearing aid so that she wouldn't miss one word of his speeches. She would sit in front of the radio, and there wouldn't be a sound in the room. Every word was heard.
- F: Was this at the time when everyone could hear the radio or everybody had their own speaker?
- E: Oh, no. There was one radio in the house.
- F: Could everyone listen to it at the same time?
- E: Oh, yes. I mean it was just like a loud speaker. Everyone would pull up their chairs and sit around the radio. There wasn't a word said during his speech.
- F: Did you feel that Roosevelt was a man you could trust and have confidence in?
- E: Absolutely. I always had trust and confidence in him. I also can remember the night of his death.
- F: That was in 1945.
- E: I even can remember we had a flank steak for dinner. I mean it's funny, but we had a stuffed flank steak for dinner. There wasn't a bite eaten out of that steak because everybody was too stunned.
- F: They were sick to their stomachs over it?

- E: Yes, it was terrible. I can also remember the invasion of Normandy.
- F: Oh, really?
- E: Yes. It was on the last day of school, June 6th. At that time my brother-in-law landed in Normandy three days after "D" Day. He went through France and Germany with Patton. Their unit was called the "Ghost Corps". They fought in the Battle of the Bulge.
- F: What was his opinion on Patton? Did he ever talk about him?
- E: Yes, he liked him. He said Patton was a strong man. He supported him. I can remember how everybody was the day that war was declared, and the feelings that everyone had of how soon it was going to be over. It wasn't going to last any length of time because they didn't think that Japan had a chance.
- F: People felt they wouldn't even stand a chance against us.
- E: That is for sure. I can remember, as I said, that they invaded Normandy, and it was the last day of school. We went to Mass and prayed that the war would soon be over. Then we came back to school, and the children were given their report cards, and sent home, but I think the first thing that everyone did on these occasions was to pray, and attend the Novenas. Out at St. Dominics, during the war, they had this Novena to St. Martin Depores. I can remember my sisters and my sister-in-law going out there during the war. I think it was on a Friday night. The mothers, fathers and wives would make this Novena so that the war would soon be over and all the boys would be home.
- F: Miss Evans, is there anything else about F.D.R. that you would like to bring out on this tape?
- E: Well, I can remember when he closed all the banks. The people, and especially my father, said, "This is the end of the Depression." He felt that from now on, things would be on the up and up. I think most of the people in the country felt the same way. That was the best thing he could've done. It was the only thing that was going to bring us out of the Depression.
- F: You say that you were still living with your father at the time of the Depression? How did he feel?
- E: He felt, well my mother and my father both felt that Roosevelt was the one man who was going to pull us through all of this. After having gone through a lot of mishaps themselves, and not being able to find work after being



employed for so many years, they felt sure that Roosevelt was the only man in the country that could do it. It proved that they were right, and that F.D.R. was the one that really did bring us out of it. He sent us on the road to recovery.

F: Are there any other events of the 1920s or 1930s that you would like to share with us?

E: How about the Ku Klux Klan?

F: Yes, that would be interesting.

E: Well, I can remember them marching along Hillman Street. They would gather and have burning crosses at the old Hillman Street School, in the school yard. We would stand there and watch them. No one seemed to be afraid of them, but to the children then, it seemed like a Halloween parade. They didn't realize what they were doing, they only thought of it as people dressed up for Halloween. The older people didn't seem to resent them. There was no booing or jeering, but I think a lot of them were quite worried and didn't want to show it to the children. To the children it was a lark.

F: What was the reason for the demonstration at the time here? Was it against Blacks or against Catholics?

E: As children, and even as young adults, we didn't feel that they were demonstrating against anything. In those days, you were taught by your parents that everybody had a right to their own way, if that is the way they felt about it. My mother and father never condemned them or taught us to condemn them. They felt if that was what they wanted to do, that was all right. It was their way of doing things, and they didn't seem to put too much stock in the idea that they would ever harm us. We were just watching them parade.

F: Were there many Blacks around Youngstown at the time?

E: There were a few families.

F: Which side of town?

E: The south side.

F: Can you remember some of the street names where they resided?

E: There wasn't any certain area. They were scattered here and there. They were few and far between but there wasn't a special section of them. We never thought of them as any different than ourselves. I can remember going swimming down at South Side Park, and they swam with us. We

rode in the streetcar with them. We had a few of them in the schools and in the organizations in the church. We never, as I say, thought of them as any different than ourselves.

F: Was there any change between the 1920s and the 1930s with the Ku Klux Klan?

E: No, I don't recall too much change. It seemed to me that they just faded out because people didn't demonstrate against them, they just let them go their way. So, I guess like anything else, if you don't have any opposition, there is no fighting.

F: There is no sense to keep on going.

E: No, because in those days no one seemed to oppose them. I can't recall having thought of them as any different. We knew that they were against something, but I don't think we even thought about what they were against.

F: Were the mills in the Youngstown area going strong at the time or were they shut down, too?

E: Yes, they were going very strong, but at that time, as I say, I had no connection with the mill, because my father was in a different kind of work. He was in the furniture business, with the firm, Rice and Associates, which was an interior decorating firm located on West Federal Street. After that, he worked for Homer S. Williams, and then he was with G. M. McKelvey. He was always in the furniture and decorating business. So really there was no one in the Sheet and Tube until during the war when one of my brothers worked in the mill. My brother-in-law worked at the Sheet and Tube during the Depression. He was a clerk. Many fathers of families worked in the mills. As far as anything that went on, I knew that they had a store. Did I tell you about that?

F: No.

E: Sheet and Tube had a grocery store and Miss O'Dea's father was in charge of it. He was a meat cutter there.

F: Now where was this store located?

E: It was right down at the mill. I can remember, during the Depression, my brother-in-law worked there. For ten dollars, he would get an order that would fill your kitchen table. During that time, he would buy the food. We could go over to his house every payday, or he would bring the bundles or bags of groceries to us.

I can remember Mr. O'Dea and the cuts of meat he or Margaret O'Dea, his wife, would bring us. We would have something for them in return. I can remember one time when they needed some wallpaper for their house. On our third floor, we had one large room and then two cubby holes. Our boys called them heaven, purgatory, and hell. Heaven was where they slept, purgatory was one of the cubby holes, and hell was the other one. So we were talking one day in school and she said, "Oh, we need some paper for our living room." I said, "Don't buy any, we have a lot in purgatory." My father had been in business and we stored it up there. Rice and Associates went bankrupt and he lost most of his money. That was right before the Depression. So he had rolls of paper stored up in what we called purgatory. After school, she came over. We loaded her with rolls of paper. Then we got on the bus. They lived out on Shehy Street then and we rode all the busses out to the east side with all that paper. I came home with homemade bread and other food her mother had given me. That was the way it was. People helped each other and anything they had, they would give to the other. They were concerned about everyone. You worried about people, even though you might not have had anything yourself, you worried about whether people in your neighborhood were getting enough to eat. If one person would have a windfall, then everybody close to them would share that windfall.

I can remember my brother, Kenny, worked at Shoaff's Moonlight Inn, way out on Market Street. We lived on Breaden Street and every night he walked out to the Moonlight Inn and that was out past Midlothian Boulevard. I think he would get \$1.25 a night and Mrs. Shoaff would give him a meaty ham bone to bring home. They lived in our neighborhood, on Parkwood Avenue. Everyone tried to help and the boys in the neighborhood all took a turn on Joe Morgan's milk truck, delivering milk in the morning in order to pay for the family's milk bill.

F: Oh really?

E: Yes, all the boys from different families would help. They would work so long in the morning, and so many days a week to help pay the milk bill. That kept many a family in milk just by letting the boys help him. That was just the way people were. Everyone tried to do what they could for everyone else. It wasn't this, "Well, I've got it so the heck with everybody else." Everybody was concerned in the neighborhood. If a family would be given clothes and there were some that they couldn't wear, then they would go around and try to find someone to wear those clothes.

F: Sometimes I think that it was through these hard times that we began to appreciate people for what they really are.

- E: Yes, that is it. Nobody kept to themselves, everybody knew what was going on. I mean, they weren't nosy or nibby. They weren't running here, there, and everywhere, but if you needed them, they were there. If you needed somebody, you always knew that you could go there or they could come to you and ask for help. As far as I can remember, everyone would get together and what they had and couldn't use, they would always find someone that could use it. They would always share with each other.
- F: That is really something. It is beautiful that way. Is there any one particular lesson or one idea that influenced you from the Great Depression? Is there anything that still sticks in your mind as something that should be constant today?
- E: I learned that it is not what you have, or how much you have, but what you can do for others, and what others can do for you. I felt from then on that people were people. You don't look to people for what they can give you, who they are, or what they are. It is just for the way they are.
- F: They should be respected just because they are people.
- E: Yes. You really knew then who your friends were. The ones that stuck with you through thick and thin, no matter whether you were up or down, were still your friends.
- F: Now after teaching forty-three years and living through those years, I am sure this philosophy stuck with you from the time that you were little all the way till now.
- E: Yes, sir. That is the way that I feel about it.
- F: I would like to thank you very much, Miss Evans. You certainly have given us a wealth of practical information and philosophy on how it was to have lived in that unforgettable period which all of us know as the Great Depression. Thank you again.
- E: You're welcome, I am sure.

END OF INTERVIEW