

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Catholic History in Youngstown, Ohio

Personal Experience

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JOHN R. REDDINGTON

Interviewed

by

Mary K. Schulz

on

October 15, 1981

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: JOHN R. REDDINGTON

INTERVIEWER: Mary K. Schulz

SUBJECT: Youngstown's Catholic Churches, religious  
prejudices, Youngstown Diocese

DATE: October 15, 1981

S: This is an interview with Mr. John Reddington by Mary Kay Schulz for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, at Ursuline High School, on October 15, 1981, at approximately 2:15 p.m.

Mr. Reddington, can you tell us a little bit about your background and what it was like growing up in Youngstown?

R: I was born on the East Side in Youngstown on Charlotte Avenue in a predominately Irish-Catholic neighborhood. I went to the Immaculate Conception School and about 90% of the students enrolled there were of Irish descent at that particular time. I graduated from the Immaculate in 1925 and the first year after graduation I went to Lincoln Junior High School on the East Side. That was the first year of East High. East High took enrollment for their first classes in September of 1925. There wasn't a Catholic High School in Youngstown at that time for boys; this was 1925. So, my parents and Father Kenney, the Pastor of Immaculate Conception at that time, suggested that myself and Joe Nalley and a few of our classmates go to St. Charles High School in Baltimore. Father Kenney later became the Monsignor and he went to Cleveland.

Now, St. Charles was a preparatory seminary, but it didn't mean that you had to go to a major seminary; you went there for high school. And if they thought you had a vocation they would tell you, and if you didn't they

let you know too. We stayed there four years and at the end of four years I decided that I wanted to go to college and I enrolled for, I think it was a week, in John Carroll. The fellow I went up with, Joe Nally, who had been with me at the Immaculate for eight years and down at St. Charles for four years, his brother decided that he didn't want him to go to John Carroll and he would prefer that he went to St. Vincent's College in Latrobe. So, I changed my plans with the consent of my parents and went to St. Vincent's. I was in St. Vincent's a year and I played football and during one of the games I got hurt and necessitated an operation. So, I had to drop out of school my sophomore year. Right at that time was the heart of the Depression. In fact, I was operated on the day that the banks closed. And the surgeon that operated on me had about \$1.30 in his pocket after the operation. So, I was lucky that I was operated on before he found out that the banks had closed and he had money already cashed.

I recuperated and did nothing for probably sixteen months or so. And then, through a cousin of mine who was a physician in Pittsburgh, and had a patient in Manassen, who's son-in-law was manager of G.C. Murphy Company in Youngstown, I was able to get a job at G.C. Murphy as a stock boy, the lowest man on the totem pole. I started for \$10 a week. We worked from about 7:00 in the morning and about four nights a week till 11:00. At that time there was no NRA or anything. You came and worked until they told you to go home. Bus passes at that time were a \$1.00 and you could ride unlimited times. And that was the mode of transportation.

S: Was that a \$1 a week?

R: A \$1 a week, yes. Now, up to that time I had spent one year in public school and fourteen years in Catholic School, Catholic grade, high school and college. While I didn't complete my college because of the conditions at the time, I was in the class of 1934 at St. Vincent's. Now, at Murphy's I did continue my education because after a time they would take men in the stock room and put them in their training program. Their training program consisted of the equivalent of a four year course in business administration at Penn State. And you took three different tests during that time. First of all, you were graded on your performance in the store. And in the store, if it was judged on the way supervised, organized and deputized, your relationship with the girls, I mean how they reacted to your

authority. At that time there was a great emphasis put on window trimming displays, more so than now. They always said that the windows of your store was like your eyes are the windows of your soul.

Then they had every month, a written examination. Now the man that conducted this school for this training program was a former professor at Penn State and he had it down to a science. And then you had an oral examination given to you by your manager, store manager. So, there were three different ways you were graded. I spent two and a half years there, and then I was transferred to St. Mary's in Pennsylvania.

The reason I was transferred to St. Mary's in Pennsylvania at that time--and I don't know how it is now--but it was about 95% Catholic. The churches were manned by benedictants who did St. Vincent's teaching. However, I didn't take the assignment at St. Mary's because my mother was sick at that time and I had to stay home and contribute to the support because my dad wasn't working too well. So, they gave me another opportunity.

At that time you were more or less told, "You go there and report at a certain time." So, I was fortunate that they kept me, and the year after that I was sent to their home office in McKeesport, their experimental store. An experimental store was a store that the buyers would have an item and they didn't know whether it would go over with the whole chain. They would take it into the store and we would promote it in different ways. So, I spent a year there and during that year and probably for another year after when I was transferred to Ambridge, I would go out on special assignment. If there was a manager who was sick or they had a different promotion that they wanted, I would go out. And then I taught window trimming and stuff like that.

At that time I was going with my wife and her father had just died and we were getting ready to get married. This came into about 1937. She was the only one that was working in her family. So, she, through her employer, was able to get me an application to go into the Sheet and Tube's sales school. I resigned from Murphy's and came to Youngstown in 1937 and the sales school--it was still a depressed time--it was eliminated at the time. So, I took a job for a year in the seamless, in the mill and then while I was there, Mahoning Bank wanted to know if I wanted a job. So I moved to Mahoning Bank. I ordered their supplies for

about a year or so, and once a day I would go out and act as security on the floor while the regular policeman or security officer would go to lunch and stuff like that.

One Sunday there was an ad in the paper for an advertising salesman for the Exponent. Now this would be in 1941. So, I answered the ad and I was given an interview and I got the job. I think I got the job because of the fact that I had fourteen years of Catholic education and at that time, I think in 1936, Ursuline started with boys. There was very few of us that had that many years of Catholic education. So, I went to work for the Exponent and I worked there eight years. And downtown merchants formed an organization and they asked me to head the organization, and I was there for four years, and at the end of four years Bishop Walsh and the head of the Catholic Press Union asked me to come back and take over again the business end of the Exponent. From then till July 1, 1980 I was with the Exponent, thirty-four years. I started as a salesman and worked as a salesman. I did the two high school drives for Bishop Walsh. For the building of Mooney, I was secretary of the high school drive and while I was with the merchants I was secretary for the sesquicentennial celebration in Youngstown.

S: Was there a name for that merchant's organization?

R: Downtown Merchants and Property Owners.

So, while I was with the merchants, like I say, I had close to four years. Three years of that I had a leave of absence preparing to put on the sesquicentennial. And when I say put on a sesquicentennial, the sesquicentennial was highlighted by a parade which lasted--this was in 1954--eight hours, and it was judged the best parade in the State of Ohio for the Ohio State sesquicentennial celebration. Judge Woodside was chairman, then Clingan Jackson of the Vindicator, he was treasurer, and Chester Amedia was parade chairman. Jackson wasn't treasurer, Jackson was the editor of our Sesquicentennial Booklet that we put out and I helped him with that. I was the gopher, more or less, for all the different committees. I mean, they all channeled through our office. At times we had thirteen Chiefs and one Indian, which is true of any organization. I mean you have names on the letterheads that maybe they don't attend too many functions, but when the big event comes, they're there.

They had a high school drive here. It was headed by different priests and people in public office, I'm not going to say politicians. They had two drives, two years and it wasn't what they wanted. So, they reorganized it and when I came back to the Exponent they asked me if I would be secretary.

S: Now was that part of your job at the Exponent or was that a volunteer type thing?

R: No, it wasn't volunteer. I was paid for that by the diocese. I was paid for it in this way. I was still soliciting ads for the Exponent and still was a business manager because the men that I was going to replace had another year or so to go. But I came back with the idea that I would take his place. So, they figured what income that I would lose by devoting to the high school drive, they would compensate me for that. So, really when I say I was paid for it, I wasn't really; it was just a compensation for what I would have lost if I was soliciting ads.

S: I see. Getting back to growing up on the East Side. First of all, did you come from a large family?

R: No, I was the only child.

S: You were the only child.

R: Yes, when I was six months old my mother took me over to New Castle to see some of her relatives and we were on the inner suburban trolley that went from Youngstown to New Castle. And there was a wreck and it jumped the track and my mother was hurt and she was semi-invalid for years. But later on she became. . . It was a back injury and she couldn't have anymore children. Then my dad and her had to move in with my grandfather and grandmother because she wasn't able to function. So, I was raised with four uncles. My youngest uncles probably would be eight or nine years older than me. I was raised with four uncles.

S: Did your father work in the mill? What did your father do?

R: Yes, my father came from a large family and my mother came from a large family. My grandfather and grandmother were born in Ireland and they went to Scotland. He went to Scotland and her family went to Scotland because of the famine and all that and they

worked in the coal mine. Then they got married in Scotland and came on their honeymoon to the United States. I think that they came about the same time as the Barretts and the Barleys and they were always close. I think they landed around Lowellville, there was a big Irish community. And they went to Gibson Street on the lower south side where the Ohio Edison building is now. And then later on they moved to the East Side to Praitt Street.

My mother's family came from Pittsburgh. My grandfather Clarey was a track supervisor. He built railroad tracks and they started in Pittsburgh and he built the tracks for the B&O coming to Youngstown. He would be in one place maybe a year or so, and then they came to Youngstown. All my uncles worked on the railroad and my grandfather. Then we had another cousin from Pittsburgh that worked on the railroad that lived at our house. When I was born, I was born on the feast of St. John Regis on the 16th of June. They tell a story that why I got the name of Regis. My first name is John, but there was five Johns in the house. For a poor Irish family they had five Johns so they called me Regis.

S: You mentioned that you grew up in an Irish Catholic neighborhood. Was that typical? Did Irish Catholics seem to live in the same area?

R: Yes, I think that they did. I mean, now on our street there were the Galvans lived next to us, and then there were the Clareys and of course, my mother and father lived with them; next to them were the Gard's; next to them were the Bennetts; and next to them were the Sturgeons. Now, across the street were the Wellmans and the O'Briens and the Warrens. Now, I mentioned the Warrens and then the Thorntons, but I mentioned the Warrens and the Bennetts, they were Irish, but they weren't Catholic. The rest of the lot were all Irish-Catholic. You would go up the street and the next block were the Caseys and the Kelleys, and behind them were the McGonnegles and Drummonds. Oh, I would say when I was in the first and second grade, and then pretty soon the Italians started moving in.

The Gard's moved away, Mr. and Mrs. Gard died and her daughter came in, her name was Cunningham; then they moved away. We had neighbors, the Civarella's and the Civarella's, I think, were the first Italians on the block.

S: Now how did that work out? Did the Irish Community accept the new. . .

R: The Irish Community, I think, like today they looked at the Civarella's like they were an intruder for about maybe a week or so. But Louis Civarella built a retaining well between his property and ours, which enhanced the value of the Clarey Estate. When my father died, John D. Clarey, Louis Civarella was a pall bearer and the transition was beautiful. I mean, even to this day, the grandson of Louis Civarella has a printing shop in Niles and because I was with the Exponent, he called me up and put ads in the Exponent, I mean this goes back.

I remember that at one time there was a group of kids from the Immaculate had a stone fight with the Italian kids that were down around Prospect Street. See, when the Irish moved to the East Side, the focal point was the railroads. They lived on Pent Avenue. That was the first place when the Clareys moved. And why? Because it was closest to the railroad. They could walk to work. It's a place where they could get the train and stuff like that. There was the Welshes and the Murphys and Clareys and all them on Pent Avenue. Then it came Hines Street. Then when they got a few years under their belt, then they would move to what we called the Hill. The Hill on the East Side was Charlotte Avenue, Pruitt Street, and Forest Avenue and those were the new allotments that Palmer Realty built at that time and they were, well, like suburbia today, they were a better constructed home. Because these homes on the railroad track when they were built, they didn't have indoor plumbing and stuff like that.

S: So, when the Irish started moving on the Hill, they were moving into new housing? It was all new?

R: Yes.

S: Is there anyplace else in the city that you can think of that would be like your neighborhood?

R: Oh sure, I mean this was relative to the East Side because the Immaculate was a strong parish and it was true on the South Side at St. Patrick's and it was true to a certain extent at St. Columba. St. Columba was the mother church, I mean really the first. When they drew from Gibson Street where Cardinal Mooney came from and stuff like that. It was a march to suburbia really.

Suburbia of two and three miles rather than twenty miles today.

S: You mentioned the railroad. This seemed to be the place where a lot of Irish people worked. Why do you suppose that was?

R: Well, the history of the Irish people, I mean when they came from Ireland in 1848, when they started the mass. . . They came for years before that with the Potato Famine--now this is what I get from reading about the history of that. When they got to Boston and New York, which was in 1848 there were signs. My grandfather and grandmother told me. It said, "No Irish need apply." So, there wasn't jobs for them in those particular cities. A lot of them became petty gansters and thieves and stuff like that. And then the Civil War came and after the Civil War there was an expansion, an exodus to the West, and how do you go to the West? You went through the canals and the railroads, and those were the jobs that were open to them and that's the jobs that they took. And then later on they became, policemen, firemen. But I mean the railroad was their first outlet that they got a decent pay. And they weren't educated. I don't think my grandfather was ever in a school. My father, in fact, I think he went to the sixth grade. It was unheard of. When I was in the Immaculate in grade school, they pointed to two or three fellows on the East Side that had college educations and that was a rarity. And it was really in 1925, when I graduated from the Immaculate, I would say maybe 80% of our class went to high school.

S: When you went to the Immaculate and you said the Italians started moving in, into the Irish neighborhood, did they also go to the Immaculate, or did they have a nationality church of their own?

R: They didn't have a nationality church. The Slovaks had a nationality church, St. Cyril and Methodius. But if you remember, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, they never had a school, they had a Sunday School, religious education. And I think St. Anthony's was the first Italian Parish in Youngstown to have a school and that came years later when the North Side. . . I think the Italians that settled in Brier Hill and that either went to St. Anne's or St. Casmir's. The Italians were late in building parochial schools.

Now I remember in our class there was a Steve Conti, the

Conti Family. I think maybe there would be two or three in my class that were Italians. Now, there were other nationalities too, but I remember the Slovaks. Well for example, this Eddie Moranski, that's playing football with Michigan, he lived on Pearl Street, it would run into Charlotte Avenue on the East Side. I knew his family, his father was Eddie. They went to St. Cyril's. And they would walk from Pearl Street, down past the Immaculate, up over the tracks and up to St. Cyril's School.

S: Did that set them apart from the rest of the kids in the neighborhood?

R: I don't think so. Eddie was younger than I was. He had maybe two sisters and a brother. The brother was the oldest and the two sisters. I would say Eddie would be four or five years younger than me, maybe six. Now, I played with Johnny Moranski. There were Lutherans too, there were Protestants around the neighborhood, but I mean on our particular block it was all Catholic. There were, I would say. . .

S: You don't think there was any prejudice then between the Slovaks, the Irish, the Italians?

R: I think that the Irish, when the Italians moved in, they were furious. I don't think there was any prejudice at all. There was a few, well we call them colored families, moved on Pent Avenue and a couple of these fellows played ball with us. And to this day I meet one or two of them and they're as friendly, and there wasn't any prejudice.

S: You don't feel that you grew with any prejudice at all, or do you think that's because you were really in a neighborhood where most of your friends were Catholic and were Irish?

R: Yes, I think maybe till I was ten years old I didn't think there was ny internationality but Irish. Do you know what I mean? Because everything was Irish. You were there, your family, your friends and the fact that there were people going to St. Cyril and Methodius, I mean they were part of the deal.

The first Pastor at Immaculate, I think was Father Maloney, there was another one, Father Kenney, Father Grady. We did have assistants that were German. Now, there was a German school, St. Joseph's and it was only

a block away from St. Cyril and Methodius. Now, the German school, St. Joseph's, took a lot of Italian students. I don't know, I couldn't prove this, but I would just say off the top of my head, probably 40% of St. Joseph's school at one time were Italians. Now why were they Italians? Because they came from the Hollow.

S: I see, Smokey Hollow.

R: Yes, and that was an Italian settlement there. And it still is to a certain extent. There are people in the Hollow now that their grandfather and grandmothers settled there. It was a matter of geography. I think all of this was geography, the Irish were on the railroad.

Another thing that made the East Side change was the fact that they built the Truscon Steel Company out on Albert Street. There were a lot of former Immaculate people that became key men in their position. They hired people from the East Side.

S: Do you ever remember any type of prejudice as far as people being hired for jobs in the Youngstown area? Do you think that existed? Were there certain jobs you just couldn't get because you were Catholic?

R: There were slight prejudice. Sometimes it worked negatively and sometimes it worked favorably. A Catholic person could be seen at a particular job it was with, like these are Catholics.

S: So it was a token?

R: I experienced in Murphy's at one time, I was trying to get a job in sales promotion and it was given to another fellow who I didn't think was qualified as well as I, and yet later on in Murphy's, there was an Irish Catholic manager after I had quit Murphy's. He came from Baltimore and asked me to go back to be his assistant because of my Irish Catholic connections, because he wanted me to be like his man Friday and his assistant superintendent. He was having problems in a town with a store that wasn't functioning and he came to me on a Saturday. I went to lunch with him and he wanted me to get on the Capital Limited at midnight on Sunday and go there. I had been working at the Sheet and Tube at the time. So, you can see that there were problems. There weren't problems, but if you were a Catholic, like I mentioned at St. Mary's I was going to

be sent there because I was Catholic. I was going to be sent to this particular place because the Catholic who was in charge of it trusted me. Now, he didn't distrust all Protestants, but maybe he felt more comfortable in that respect because I had the--and I say it humbly--the expertise to do the job. I had experience with that. And I was trained with him because I went and I trained under him and I had home office experience too. So, I mean maybe it was secondary that I was a Catholic. You can't come out and say definitely because it's just an opinion.

S: Getting back to Immaculate Conception Church, back in the 1930s or the 1920s, did they become involved in community affairs at all?

R: Oh, definitely. It was through the efforts of Father, Monsignor John R. Kenney, that the Oak Street Bridge was built.

S: Really?

R: Yes, I mean, the tracks at Oak Street, it was a hazard. It was through his efforts and his efforts alone that he, a politic council and everything like. . .He opened, at that time, the East Side. Because you go down the hill on Rayen Avenue then you would cross the Erie tracks and the New York Central tracks, you would walk across a series of tracks and then you'd have a median strip and then you would have another set of tracks and it was dangerous. You would be in no man's land between these six tracks. You could cross these and maybe when you'd walk, say it was 100 yards, there would be another set of tracks. So, it was a detriment to the East Side. They wanted a bridge there for years and years. The bridge was open Father Kenney led the parade and cut the ribbon and all the kids in the Immaculate--and this was right after World War I--all the kids from the Immaculate marched that day. Definitely he was involved in that.

When we had First Holy Communion in the first Sunday in May, we always had a parade. From the church we'd go Oak Street to Albert Street around, led by a band. And every organization in the church, they had banners and the Holy Name would march; the men, the women from the Altar Society would march; the school children would march, the altar boys would be in full dress with their cassock and surplice and then of course, reading them and all eyes on the First Communicants, the kids with

white suits and the girls with the veils. It would be a half hour parade and the band blaring. The streets would be crowded with people of all nationalities, definitely they were involved in it.

S: So, you think the Catholic Community in general, not just Immaculate, really helped the growth of Youngstown?

R: Oh, definitely. Sure, as the Catholic community grew, so did the importance of their jobs. I think at one time it followed because the people that founded Youngstown weren't Catholic and the people that owned the Mills were English and Welsh and they started it and they didn't have the influx of their people so they had to deal with the Catholics and the Irish and the Italians. So, what happens, as they grew here and got more people, they became more important and as they became more important, they got more important jobs.

S: Talking about jobs, the Irish tended to go to the railroad, were there other nationalities that tended to go to certain jobs, like the Italians?

S: Growing up as a Catholic, were you aware of the existence of the Klan?

R: Yes, very definitely.

S: Did you ever see any of the Klan activities?

R: Yes, once I think it was around Lincoln Park Drive, there was a Klan. I didn't go to the meeting, but after I saw the burnt cross. Now when was that, I think it was around 1929 or so.

S: Now, was that geared strictly towards the Catholic?

R: No, the Klan were aimed at three segments of the population, the Catholic, the Jew and the Black.

S: Was that a fear of these three segments? Did they fear the Klan in Youngstown?

R: I think they did. I think at that time things were rolling over. It was the beginning of the. . . Well, the blacks came in because I think of the 1918 strike, they were imported in here. There were black people living here and stuff like that. And of course, the Jew, the merchants and the Jew educated his children; and through the parochial school system, the Catholic

educated his children whether they be Slovak, Irish, Italian, or Polish. You notice how many Slovak schools there are in Youngstown?

S: Today you mean? Yes.

R: National schools, St. Cyril's, St. Mathiass, Holy Name; you've got St. Joseph the Provider and St. Stan's Polish. And every one of those five parishes--I'm just taking them as an example--they're rich parishes, they have no debt. They're beautiful parishes and the people around them have beautiful homes and they're not mortgage rows or anything like that. They're homes are well kept and the church is well kept. So, these are things that people would see, to them, a menace their way of life. And that's all it was, to me I think it was a way of life. Here's somebody coming in and raining on my parade and we've been here before. Of course, there is a prejudice. Prejudice is born at home.

S: Do you think that still exists today to a certain extent?

R: Oh I think it does. It flares up. Don't you think 100,000 people going to a Notre Dame football game and 50,000 on one side wanted to win and 50,000. . . Alright, there's two prejudices there. There's a good prejudice and a bad prejudice.

S: Depending on which side you're on.

R: You could classify me as being prejudice in this respect; I don't dislike your Protestantism or whatever, your Judaism or anything like that, but I certainly think that the Irish are a heck of a lot better than somebody else. You know what I mean.

S: Sure, oh that's just pride in your heritage.

R: Yes, well some people can say it's prejudice too.

S: What about when Catholics, say in the lower South Side and lower East Side and North Side, decided to move out of the suburbs and the Catholic element started moving out to Boardman and Poland and Canfield? Do you think that was a very difficult move?

R: In 1925 or 1926 they opened St. Edward's and there was a lot of people. . . Of course, you move when your

economic status improves. You move too, when your family is pretty well established and your family has stopped growing and stuff like that. There's different stages for you to move. And around 1925, 1926, I can remember a famous saying of Father Kenney. He was an Irishman who went to Australia and then he came to Cleveland Diocese--we were in the Cleveland Diocese--and he's what they call an extern. He was adopted by the Cleveland Diocese. He was very pro-Irish. One day he got up on the pulpit and he said, there were two or three supportive Catholic families in the parish that moved, and he said one day in church, "You're going to move up with your equals." They had left the parish to move up around Benita, and Selma and these places like that because the North Side was growing.

S: You were saying there were very few Catholics in Boardman when the church was first built out there.

R: Yes, and as the church was established there, they started to move out there, particularly after World War II, and then it grew and grew. Like I say, I ran for Board of Education and I had one boy in St. Dominic's School. He was only in the lower grades then, first or second grade, when I ran for it. At that time it was just to see if they could get a Catholic on the Board of Education.

S: And did they?

R: No, I got beat.

S: But you don't think that when people tried to move out into the areas of say, Poland or Canfield that they ran into any type of prejudice?

R: In isolated incidents, yes, definitely, definitely. I ran into it when I was running. There were people that called me and said, "If you are so interested in the Board of Education in Boardman, how come you have your child in a Catholic school?" There was no Catholic school in Boardman at that time. "Why do you want to run our school?" That was at "our school". See, that's always the difference, when they come up with a prejudicial statement it's "our school"; it isn't their school, it's everybody's school. It is a fact that we have an option that we can go to a Catholic school and not to public school. Now, my second boy had speech impediment and it was a prolonged case of baby talk. When he was four or five years old I found out and I

took him to speech therapy. We were in Boardman and this woman with the Board of Education would take him for an hour. They did very well.

We moved thirty-one years ago from Boardman. We were in Boardman right after World War II and moved back to the North Side. And he went to Harding for two years. While he was at Harding he met a group of teachers who were wonderful with him. They, through the speech therapy and his training with the Youngstown Board of Education and all that, they corrected that. Now, at that time, the Catholic School had no speech therapist. So, there's a place for public education and if you have the need for it then you could use it.

S: Getting back to the churches, was St. Columba the first church in Youngstown? Do you know?

R: I think it was.

S: Then the other older churches would be Immaculate and St. Patrick's.

R: St. Patrick's and St. Anne's. St. Anthony's was 1898; St. Casimir's was 1896; St. Cyril and Methodius, 1896; St. Edward's, 1916; Holy Name, the Slovak, 1916; Immaculate Conception, 1882, they're having their centennial next year; St. Patrick's, 1911; St. Stan's, 1902; Sacred Heart, that's on the lower East Side, 1888; St. Columba, 1847.

S: So that was the first.

R: Yes. See, St. Patrick's Church, 1911, really St. Columba Church took care of that. There again, the bridge, the South Avenue Bridge and the Market Street was the link there to St. Columba.

S: Who do you see as major Catholic figures in the Youngstown area over the years? You mentioned Cardinal Mooney.

R: Monsignor Kenney on the East Side was, in my opinion, was a major. . . Monsignor Kane, who started St. Patrick's. John Gerrity, a contractor, who built St. Patrick's church. There was Dr. Kenney from the East Side, he was like an assistant priest I think. Dr. Kenney was like that doctor for the Irish on the East Side. In the 1920's there was a Dr. Hardman down at Sacred Heart and more or less everybody in Sacred Heart

went to him. All these fellows made house calls, there was no going to the hospital. There was a hospital, St. Elizabeth's, I think, in the city, but they always made house calls, and they walked a lot of times.

Hugh Grant, I think he was the first Irish Catholic bank president. City Bank at one time was what they called the Catholic Bank. Most of the churches put their money in the City Bank. It failed in the bank depression.

S: How did the Catholic community react to parishoners during the Depression?

R: Now the Immaculate through Father Hofer and Father Reedy at that time. I think they were as charitable as they could be. They didn't have the resources that they would have if things were better, but they did organize a baseball league in the summer, a parish league where it would be like an intramural league. They didn't have one particular team to represent it in the Catholic League, but they provided lots of free time--I mean you spent your free time.

Now, like I said, I was fortunate during the Depression and after I got hurt and through my connections with a doctor in Pittsburgh, a relative, I was able to start at \$10 a week, I worked almost all during the Depression. So, I was working for \$10 a week and \$12.50 and \$75 a month, so I wasn't too hurt in the Depression. I had to watch and of course my dad wasn't working and it helped that I was working.

S: You mentioned before that Youngstown was originally part of the Cleveland Diocese. When did Youngstown become a Youngstown Diocese?

R: It was established May 15, 1943, canonically erected that would be July 22, 1943. The Youngstown Diocese was established May 15, that would mean the Holy City of Rome decided that there would be a Diocese and then July 22, 1943 the boundaries were set.

S: And what are those boundaries? Do you know off-hand?

R: Yes, there are counties, Astabula in the north, then you go Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana, those are the four counties that border in Pennsylvania; and to the southwest would be Stark and Portage.

S: And who was the first bishop of the Youngstown Diocese?

- R: James McFadden. He was Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland and when the Diocese was started in July, he came down in July 1943.
- S: And then after him was Bishop Walsh?
- R: Yes, Bishop Walsh was coadjutor for awhile and then Bishop McFadden got sick and then he was Bishop until he died and then Malone came in. Malone came in, he was ordained a Bishop in 1960, appointed Auxiliary Bishop in 1960 and Apostolic Administrator in 1966 and was appointed Bishop of Youngstown, what we call the ordinary, in 1968. Then Bishop Franzetta was appointed Auxiliary July 29, 1980.
- S: Do you happen to know what year the Cathedral burned?
- R: Yes, I would say it burned 1954, the last day of August.
- S: Now did that affect the Catholic community?
- R: Oh, I think it threw them together. It was a historical site and there was a lot of nostalgia with the older people. It was a cathedral, beautiful cathedral and they had no trouble raising enough money to restore it. It was something that drew them together. I think any calamity--if you remember the show in 1950, anything like that where everybody is involved, it draws people together, people from all over the diocese. If you go down and look behind the cathedral, you can see donors from every part of the diocese that have contributed to the different things in the cathedral. The cathedral fund raising was not like our high school deal or Mahoning County thing, it was a diocesan thing.
- S: Do you see much difference in the diocese of Youngstown today than it was when it first began number-wise?
- R: Do you see much difference in the way of life today as when you went to grade school?
- S: Yes.
- R: Yes, very definite. When I started with the Exponent in 1945--they started in 1944 and I came the year after, January 2, 1945. We started up on Rayen Avenue and there was Bishop McFadden, Monsignor Prokopf and one secretary and the Exponent had the two offices behind the Bishop. And there was Monsignor Heinrich, who had an office from us and one secretary and he was the

Chancellor of the Diocese. Now, at that time, that was the personnel of the diocese and Exponent.

S: Can you remember what the circulation was at that time?

R: The circulation of the Exponent started out about 8,000. The Exponent was part of the Universe Bulletin, that was the official paper of the Cleveland Diocese. And the Universe Bulletin was run by the Catholic Press Association. The Catholic Press Association put out the Toledo Chronicle, Universe Bulletin; and we in Youngstown, being part of the Cleveland Diocese, had what they called a Mahoning edition. Then when we became a diocese, Bishop McFadden immediately started the paper. He came here in July of 1943 and he started the paper right away. They started printing January 1, 1944. They were in existence almost fourteen or fifteen months; they were in existence, but they started printing January 1, 1944, and then in 1945 I came.

S: Was the Bishop always the final say of what went into the paper?

R: No.

S: There was an editor that had that job then in later years?

R: Yes. Well, the Bishop is chairman of the board. Like I say there's three papers in the Press Union, the Bishop of Cleveland is the chairman, the Bishop of Toledo, the ordinary, I'm talking about their Auxiliary Bishops and all. The ordinary, who was the Bishop, would be number one Bishop. Like now with Bishop Malone, he's on the board, the Bishop of Toledo is Bishop Hoffman, and Bishop Peala in Cleveland, those three are on the board, and they set the policy. Now, when I say policy, they set the policy about political advertising. And political advertising, you can accept political advertising, but you can't say anything detrimental about an opponent. You can say all the good thing you want about him yourself. But you can't say the mayor was a crook or something like that. That's the difference between the Catholic advertisement for politics.

S: So then, eventually, the Catholic Exponent did have an editor?

R: When it started it had an editor; the Chancellory had

nothing to do with it. They came down here with a businessman, a secretary, and an editor, and they also had a secretary for the editor.

S: So then, how much freedom did that editor have?

R: He had all the freedom in the world.

S: Was that a lay person?

R: Yes. They never had a priest editor here. They've had priest editors in Cleveland and Toledo.

S: Do you remember the editor's name?

R: The first editor was named Norman Gebal.

S: So, he really ran a free press in other words?

R: Yes.

S: Except for certain policies, which you just said.

R: The policies would be the policies that say, Mr. Maag would enforce with the Vindicator; common sense policies. I mean you wouldn't advertise or take anything that was pro-abortion, contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church. They were very frank and honest.

Right now there's a controversy between Bishop Malone and Father Madden. It's brought on by the followers of Madden about Malone and stuff like that, but all that stuff is in the Exponent. They don't hide it.

S: How would you classify the paper as to how it looked. It used to be a full page paper, is that correct?

R: Yes. It used to be a regular newspaper. And I'll humbly say this: I was instrumental in getting it to what we call tabloid, because I think the paper is really a newspaper-magazine. It goes to press like on a Monday. And supposedly, if the cathedral would burn down today, a Thursday, they couldn't have it in because it's already printed. So, I mean it isn't like television. It isn't up-to-date news.

S: Because it comes out weekly, and it was too hard to. . .

R: Yes, but that didn't change the concept of the. . .

Because I think, in our particular instance, the Exponent was better off having the format of the tabloid. The tabloids in the Catholic Press are predominant now. When I say, "In the Catholic Press," I mean the different diocese have converted to tabloid size.

S: Is that strictly for practical sense?

R: Yes, there's a lot of pluses to it, not going into too much detail, but there's a lot of pluses to having a tabloid. There's disadvantages too. If you lose 7% of your advertising space--and this is getting technical--see, what we call gutters here and stuff like that that you don't have. And then, which is very rare, you can't take a full-page ad like in the Vindicator. You can take it if you run it this way. See, this is how a full-sized paper is run. What a tabloid is, just like this, you just turn it around and you crease it.

S: Do you have any idea what the circulation is now?

R: Yes, 39,000.

S: Do you think that the paper has as great an influence over its readers as it used to, say, back in the 1950s?

R: I would say yes. The paper is growing despite all the economic problems we have. Right now it's \$10 initially. Before I left the Exponent, they have raised it almost every year. Postal rates and paper itself have gone crazy.

S: So, it's \$10 a year now.

R: Yes.

D: Do you remember what it started out at?

R: Yes, I think, \$2.50, I lobbied, before I left, for a \$10 price, that was two years before they put a \$10 price on it and I told them before I left, "There'll come a day when you go \$10, you'll have to go \$10 so, why don't you go two years before that date?" Now, you lose every time you raise the price of subscription, whether it's TV Guide or anything else. You lose about 5% to 7%. It's a natural reaction, this is statistics. What you lose there when you increase it. . . They went from \$8 to \$9. Do you follow me? If you went from \$8 to \$10, you'd lose those anyway, but you'd still pick up maybe \$30,000.

S: Do you think the paper has changed in attitudes at all over the years? Has it become more liberal?

R: Liberal is in the eye of the beholder. What's liberal to you might not be liberal to me. This is what happened, after Vatican II, the paper lost circulation.

S: Why do you suppose?

R: Why? Because I think they blamed the messenger rather than the message. The Exponent printed things that were going on in Vatican II and the changes and stuff like that. Now, the changes in itself weren't bad, but the implementation of the changes that were made by over-zealous people and stuff like that, and the interpretation of the changes caused people to drop their hands. I mean you were at that stage that you knew exactly, and you had reservations about things. For example, the Latin Mass, there was a segment of the population that all their life had nothing, only the Latin Mass, and all at once the Latin Mass was grabbed from them and put in the closet. Now, say that they represented 25% of the population; 75% of the population were satisfied, but how about the 25% that were in the closet? They deserved their way of life too. It is just like the guy that wore a straw hat all summer and all at once they didn't make straw hats. Right?

S: Yes. You first started with the Exponent selling advertising. How did you get advertising for a Catholic paper? Did you go strictly to Catholic merchants?

R: No, the first day I started was January 2, 1945. It was about six below zero or something. I spent one day in the office learning the rate cards. Now, I had been hired the first of December and they wanted me to start for Christmas businesses, which I did because I gave my notice to the bank. So, it started and I had sold a couple ads like to the Yellow Cab and different ones that I knew. On January 3, it started and I went downtown, went on the Market Street Bridge and walked the Market Street Bridge and got on the first block on Market Street and I worked that one side of the street. Then I went up to Warren Avenue and worked down and at 7:30 I think I sold my first ad that night.

S: So, it wasn't easy in the beginning.

R: No. To use an expression, "Hell no, it wasn't easy." First of all, it wasn't a prejudicial thing, it was the

fact that hardly anybody knew about the Exponent. They had 8,000 circulation from the Universe Bulletin. Now, they had advertisers, maybe sixteen or seventeen family businesses that were in. Like Florence Mall was in, and John Campbell, insurance business and stuff like that, where a man would come maybe once or twice a year and make a quick sweep of the Catholics in business and they would give him token ads here.

S: What about say, Strouss's and McKelvey's and places like that?

R: Strouss's, when Bishop McFadden started the paper, he went to Clarence Strouss and Clarence Strouss told him that he would give him so many inches a week, now that was basis where he started the paper. Now, that was int the Exponent when I started because they had it a year. And like I say, the paper was in existence for a year, they had a salesman and they had a manager here. Like I say, they had sixteen advertisers when they came from Cleveland. They might have had fifty advertisers by the time I got there. But they had a fellow that was a professional newspaper salesman. He worked different special events and deals. He was a good salesman for special events. Now when I say special events, if you had a church opening or something like that, you'd go to the contractor and stuff like that. That isn't regular advertising. So, when I started out, I started out primarily to get smaller ads. And that's what I did. I said to myself on the third of January, "I'll come home when I get an ad." Thank God I found one.

S: Has it always been a self-supporting paper or has the diocese had to subsidize?

R: It was based on Bishop McFadden's idea that started in Cleveland, the Children's Crusade. If you were in Catholic grade school, they had an Exponent drive all that time.

S: I remember that.

R: Yes, and the children sold the Exponent. It was up to 38,000 before Vatican II and it was primarily on the efforts of the children. After Vatican II--and I won't say turmoil, but the changes in the church, it went down to 21,000.

S: Oh, that much.

R: It got to a point around 1974 where it had to be subsidized for about \$10,000. I think the diocese put that much in one year. At that time, Bishop Malone appointed the then superintendent of schools, Monsignor Hughes to be the liason man between the Diocese and the Exponent. Monsignor Hughes and I started a full-sized, six-county, diocesan drive to get new subscriptions. What we did, we had a tape recording of the benefits and the qualifications of the Exponent. It was prepared by Father Swartz, who was here at first. And it was a very humorous and light presentation, but it had a definite message. We went to the senate of priests and showed it and got their permission to go and we divided the different deaneries. Now, a deanery comprizes the county. So, there's six countries in the Diocese, each county is a deanery. Now, they have divided Mahoning County into two deaneries and Stark County into two. There's eight deaneries. So, we went to different rectories. Maybe like in Mahoning County we'd have four or five meetings. We'd have a meeting at St. Lukes, and then we'd have one at St. Charles to take care of the South Side; we had one at St. Edward's and St. Anthony's. We went up to Warren and we had it at St. Mary's and Girard. We asked them to have what they called the Parish Coverage Plan.

Now the Parish Coverage Plan in the Exponent would be this, that the Parish would pay the Exponent so much a subscription and it was always lower than the price of the regular subscription. Alright, suppose that the subscription is \$10; proponents for the crusade, for every subscription they give \$1 and for every subscription they put a \$1 in for advertising. Now when I say advertising, subscription blanks and the mailing and everything. So, you're probably coming out with \$7.50 or \$8.00. So, we take off and we charge the parish, say, \$6.

Say it was \$5.10, that's fifty-one issues, so that's 10¢ an issue. They would have 600 families, so that would be \$60 a week. Then we would supply them with material and with envelopes that they could put in their packets. They could ask for \$1 or \$4 or \$5 a year, whatever it was that they wanted. So, they would get that. It was proven that they got 50% back. So, in other words, it would cost a parish with 600 parisoners \$30 a week. So, you would take \$30 a week and you would multiply that by fifty-one so that would be about \$1,530 a year that we thought would be for Catholic education. You couldn't hire a teacher for adult education for that. That's how we qualified our presentation.

So, we went to all these places. Bishop Hughes, he was the spearhead. I was the guy with the tape recorder and all that. He gave the spiel and then I gave statistics and that. We went all over the diocese. We got home maybe at 11:00 or 12:00 some nights after being down in Canton or Southeast Stark County and stuff like that.

At the end of the year, when we completed the drive, we had a circulation of 47,000. We won the award for the most outstanding presentation of circulation in the Catholic Press in 1975 and we got their awards in Denver at a convention.

Now from 1975, from 47,000 plus circulation, we're down to 39,000. I say 39,000, I think that's right. So, the attrition is about 8,000, which is good. Because we peaked at that time. We had a bishop and a sales manager making a hard sale with the soft presentation but it was hard. It was this or that, you know what I mean.

S: Yes.

R: And the bishop behind it--when you went in there, they knew you were being sent by Malone. So, while Hughes and I got the credit for doing it, it was Malone's ingenuity that sent us out to do it.

S: How big is the staff of the Exponent now?

R: The staff of the Exponent, now they have an editor; they have a secretary, a girl that handles the society, and they have a feature writer--that would be three--and then for each major city in the diocese--and in Youngstown they probably have two--they have what they call correspondents or stringers. A stringer is something that somebody sends in, like you're in Girard and there is something special in Girard, you send it to the Vindicator; well, we call them correspondents. They have one in Alliance, one in Ashtabula, one in Canton, one in Conneaut, East Liverpool, East Palestine, Kent, Mantua and Suffield they have one, Massillon they have one, Niles, Ravenna, Salem, Lisbon, Leetonia, and Columbia, that would be one territory. Warren, Champion, Vienna, and Wellsville; they have thirteen correspondents and three people in. Now, that is taking care of the local news.

The NC News, which is state and national and international, is taken care of by people up in

Cleveland. Like I say, the Exponent is one third of the Catholic Press Union. Editorial, Greely and all the canon columns and stuff are taken care of there. So, I would say on a twenty page paper you would have eating out, three local stories, you have 30% of a twenty page paper with local news, diocesan, not local news.

S: Now, is the Exponent printed in Yougstown?

R: No, it's printed in Chagrin Falls. It's all computerized. They have these tapes and send them to Cleveland and they're put on a machine. It's all off-set. It's very updated now. Of course, it's done by offset printing. I mean they've done away with mats and cuts. Then they also print this Catholic directory. I edited this Catholic directory for many years while I was there. And again, they had a 6 X 9 book and I ~~and~~ changed the format completely on this. This is an 8½ X 11 and we put in the names and addresses and phone numbers of every sister.

S: And does that come out yearly?

R: Yes, it comes out yearly. It generally comes out the last week in October or the first week in November. But since I left they've been putting it out after the first of the year. They haven't been able to. . . Well, it takes time to do.

S: One last question, what really were your responsibilities' there at the Exponent.

R: Well, I had charge of the advertising. I had charge of the buying of all supplies and that, running of the office. We were entirely separated from the editorial. Like any newspaper. there's a separation of church and state; they're two different operations altogether. I don't go in and tell them how to run a story and they don't come in and tell me how to put the ad.

The solicitation of the ads, the collection of the money was all for the weekly Exponent, and then we had the responsibility to put this out and also the campaign, the circulation. It's the ABC's, advertisement, business and circulation. I was in charge of all that.

S: Where are the Exponent offices located?

R: The Ohio I Building. There again, they were in with the chancery. They were on Rayen Avenue where now the

Catholic Tribunal is. I said to them that I didn't think that we had to be so close to the powerhouse. So, Bishop Malone agreed with me. First of all, I told him that I didn't think the quarters were suitable for it. He said, "Would you move?" I said, "Yes." So, we got away from the apron strings and moved to the Ohio I Building and became a separate entity.

S: Is there anything else you can think about you'd like to mention?

R: I could talk to you all day.

S: That's okay. Anything that comes to mind either about the Exponent or about the Catholic Community in Youngstown?

R: It has changed with the times. It has grown. It's like the immigrant that came over here, my family that started at the railroad tracks on Ten Avenue and moved to Pruitt Street and to Charlotte Avenue. My Grandfather and Grandmother Reddington moved in 1925 to St. Dominic's. They were the second house on Mistletoe. My father and I, when we went to see them, we got off the streetcar on Indianola and walked to Mistletoe. So, it is the growth.

And it's the same way the Exponent didn't stop. I mean, for years the Exponent wouldn't take political advertising and I fought that for years. I finally, through Bishop Hughes, convinced him. Now, there was a priest in New Orleans that started this. I mean the Catholic Press wouldn't have anything to do with politicians. I mean these are the people that run your government and right away you're labeling them as second class citizens. So, I was convinced. I went to conventions and I was convinced of that. We couldn't sell them for a long time. Walsh wouldn't buy it, Malone did not take the change, and after a couple years and meetings and that he said he would do it on probation. We did it for a year and found out that it wasn't a monster. Then Cleveland, Toledo, the three papers; Columbus, Steubenville, all these papers in Ohio are taking political ads. Do you know what that means/ That means since the time they've taken them up to this date it means millions of dollars in revenue.

S: Why do you suppose they stayed away from political advertising?

R: Like I say, they treated those people like second class citizens. They didn't want to get involved. At that time, they thought that they would be labeled saying that the Catholic Church was going out for "X" candidate, which they weren't. All they were doing is the same things as the daily paper is saying, "This man is putting an ad in." They have their guidelines. Of course, now the Internal Revenue Service has come up and said you can't do that. If a guy comes into Catholic Exponent today and wants to put an ad in on abortion, he's running on an abortion ticket, you have to take it.

S: Wow, what do you do in a situation like that?

R: Being smart, you punt. It has never happened. But there was one paper that was almost sued. Now they can take your non-profit organization deal away from you on that. It's one of these quirks. Some guy found out about it. I don't know who it was, but anyway there's a directive out about it. I had to refuse a couple of fellows and they were very nice about it. One guy up in Trumbull County, who spent a lot of money with the Exponent, came out with an ad calling his opponent a crook. I called him back and I said, "This is alright if you want to put it in the Warren Tribune. Don't give it to me and embarass me." So, what I did was just try to stress upon him that he was hurting me personally. "Okay, put my picture in and give me a nice ad," and stuff like that.

Now, they don't take cigarette ads yet. Youngstown doesn't take beer and wine ads. But Toledo and Cleveland do take beer and wine ads. The Vindicator doesn't take whiskey ads.

S: But the Exponent won't take beer or wine ads?

R: No. Did you ever see a whiskey ad on television?

S: No, I don't think so. Are there any other kinds of ads that the Exponent won't take?

R: They have a dress code, yes, which has changed a little bit. At one time they wouldn't take a picture of a hose above the knee, you know what I mean, pantyhose and stuff like that. But that's all changed gradually. Now, they won't take something that would offend you. You know what I mean.

Now, I had an occasion where I took an ad that the

Vindicator refused. It was the time that a school levy--and if you remember in New York City, the Great Give a Damn. You know the expression, "No, I don't give a damn?"

S: Yes.

R: And one advertising agency came out with that "Give a Damn for the School Issue." So, the Junior Chamber and these people in the advertising agency called me and asked me if I would take it. They said the Vindicator refused it. So, here was an instance where I called Bishop Malone and I said, "Bishop, this is the ad that they want. What do you think?" He said, "You're running it. Do what you want." So, I took it because I thought I'd be hypocritical if I didn't. "Give a Damn" means something. It doesn't say God Damn or anything like that. Damn it itself is not wrong.

Two days after I printed the ad I got a woman calling me up and said, "I quit taking the Exponent because you're using filthy language." I said, "Did you quit taking the Vindicator?" She said, "No." I said, "Well, look on page such and such today and see the ad for the burlesque." And I said, "If you're so damn insistent about shielding your kid from the word "damn", what are you doing about the burlesque ad?" She hung up on me. So, how the church has changed you can see.

S: What do you think is the future for the Exponent?

R: I hope it stays because they pay my insurance. (Laughter) The future of the Exponent, it will last. The Catholic church will last.

S: You think so.

R: Yes, and I think the Catholic Press is more important everyday now, because if you want Catholic news you're not going to get it in the Vindicator, you're not going to get it on television. When they try to document something in thirty seconds, they can't do it.

S: But do you think people want Catholic news?

R: Certainly.

S: So, there's still a need for that?

R: Yes, I think that the Exponent can improve and it will

improve. I don't think it should be a house organ for the Bishop. I never thought it was a house organ. He's the Chairman of the Board and I can say this--and I'm not polishing the apple because I have nothing to win--but he has been very cooperative, and I think that he has served his purpose as the publisher and chairman, by when things were looking bad, he took it upon himself to appoint the rightman to rectify. His cooperation with the Exponent at all times has been super.

S: Well, I'd like to thank you for the interview.

R: You're welcome.

S: It has been a pleasure. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW