

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Canfield, Ohio

Personal Experience

O.H. 1733

KATHLEEN SITTIG

Interviewed

by

Charlotte Agustin

on

August 24, 1995

KATHLEEN (KAY) SITTIG

A native of Youngstown, Kay (Brunswick) Sittig was born on August 29, 1928, of Elmer and Rosannah (Denison) Brunswick. She moved to Canfield after her marriage on April 22, 1950 to Charles E. Sittig. They have four children: Scott Edward (42), Nancy Elaine (40), Charlotte Louise (38), and Carol Jean (35).

She has received a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education and a Master's Degree in Education from Westminster College in 1950 and 1968. Mrs. Sittig has taught music at various schools, the last being in Canfield High School, from which she retired in 1988. Her love of music continues in her community choir events and the formation of the bellringers group, the Belles and Beaus. In 1995, the group celebrated their 20th year with a reunion performance at the Canfield Fair of all past and present members who could attend. The group evolved when the school did not want to continue it after Mrs. Sittig's retirement. The Canfield Fair has permitted the group to practice on the fairgrounds several times a week and store their equipment there.

A member of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Mrs. Sittig was active in the Canfield Womens Club II. She had earned the Woman of the Year award in Canfield, four awards from the Freedoms Foundation, and Woman of the Year in Arts in Youngstown. She wrote and published a book based on the notes of Marion Fowler. The Fowler family owned and operated the Canfield newspaper *The Mahoning Dispatch* until 1968. Mrs. Sittig enjoys writing and collects antiques as a hobby.

A: This is an interview with Kathleen Sittig for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on the History of Canfield, Ohio, by Charlotte Agustin, on August 24, 1995, at 350 Fairview Avenue, at 1:00 p.m.

What was your mother's maiden name?

S: Denison.

A: Were they both born in the United States?

S: Yes.

A: You were born in Canfield?

S: Youngstown.

A: And you were raised in?

S: Youngstown.

A: What part of Youngstown?

S: The North side.

A: Do you miss the old days there?

S: The North side was a wonderful place at that time. In fact, The Rayen School was a very academic high school and the ladies who taught in many cases were the offspring of the pioneer families of Youngstown. Employment outside of the home would really not be acceptable, so they went into teaching. So we had a lot of the classics and that kind of thing. And I owe a great debt to my fine foundation of high school.

A: You have been in music as a music teacher?

S: Yes.

A: When did you start? Where was your first teaching?

S: I first started in Pittsburgh. I taught in Pine Township and in Mars, Pennsylvania my first year. And then my husband came back to Youngstown, so of course I did as well. I taught at South Range which was then Greenford. I did that until I

started having my family. Then I had a number of years off while I had my four children. I went back into tutoring in the Canfield system early on and I got back into it in 1966. I went to the high school in 1966 and was there until 1988. It was a lot of happy memories.

A: Twenty-two years at Canfield?

S: Yes.

A: So you have been there to see more than just one generation?

S: Oh, my yes. It is really a shock when somebody comes along from the next generation. One of my ringers said my mom asked me, "How is Mrs. Sittig?" She said, "Oh, she was nice." And her mother said, "Well she was always nice when I had her for choir." That was my first shock in the passing of time.

A: Time does creep up on you.

S: It sure does.

A: When you first started teaching in Pittsburgh, what year was that?

S: That was in 1950.

A: Did you notice much of a difference in the 1950's from when you initially started and then when you came back into teaching in the 1960's?

S: A little bit. That is really why I went to get my Master's because it was not possible for me to go on in music. So I got the Master's in Education simply because I had been out of the classroom, I felt, too long. There was a little bit if difference, but nothing compared to the beginning and the end of the tenure at Canfield. That was the real change.

A: So what kind of changes did you notice?

S: Attitude changes with the students. In the early days, if I would say, "If we do not learn this music, I do not know what we will do." And people would get right to it. But toward the end they would say, "Oh well, too bad." Particularly when we were putting on productions and you had to get deadlines met. I think partly schools have kept adding. During the time I was there, there was girl's tennis, girl's volleyball, golf, etc., and I am certainly not anti-athletic, but as these things were added, nothing was ever taken away. So as always, the bright youngsters

were in everything. So consequently it made it very difficult because you were pulling and pushing and you did not want to do that with students.

A: That meant also that you had a lot less of their time?

S: Exactly.

A: And also I would imagine, did it decrease the number . . . Is choir a choice?

S: Choir is an option. And we had up to a couple hundred students. In fact in 1970, when we got robes, we bought 150 robes. I can remember the first night we used them, there was a girl in the bathroom crying because somebody had gotten the wrong robe and she thought that there were not enough to go around. That is how many we had, 150 kids in robes that night. As the options increased, of course it got more difficult. More students to take time, particularly out of the eight periods in the day, something that is a real challenge today, I know.

A: So what was the average size of the choir in the eighties when you were there?

S: We would run 85 or 90, it was still pretty good size. But then toward the end, it got more difficult to schedule because they went to the quality point system. Now they have rectified it somewhat, but there was a time when certain courses would give you more quality points than others. If you took time out for band or choir, you were not getting five points for an A, which other courses might give you. And if you were a real competitive student, you were going to take as many things as you could, to accumulate quality points.

A: What was the purpose of this system initially?

S: Well, it was a ranking system, to rank students so they would come out with the number one and the number two student and so on.

A: Rather than by the number system?

S: Exactly. They spent a lot of long hours on that. I cannot tell you exactly what the status is on that right now, but they really struggled and they tried to make it fair. And that, as you can imagine, is a very difficult thing. It is like trying to balance apples and oranges.

A: That is not a system that is in every school system. Is that primarily just Canfield?

- S: As far as I know, Canfield is the only one that has done that.
- A: When did they initiate that?
- S: I just cannot even tell you, but it was somewhere along in the late 1970's.
- A: So it was after you started?
- S: Yes.
- A: I did not realize that and it interests me because what was the motivation for it, truly verses a numerical system? Did they feel that somebody was being cheated under the numerical system?
- S: I do not know. You would honestly have to go to Bill Kay, who was in charge at that time. I was so negatively biased that I cannot give you a straight answer, especially because it hurt choir so much. It is a constant struggle, but I am sure that they have always tried to excel, so they must have had a reason that they thought it was important to do.
- A: When they talk about quality points, you are sacrificing something in terms of quality education and in terms of giving a student a different view on life verses taking what they need to round out their own life.
- S: Exactly.
- A: To look at it in terms of a bottom line mentality. How much can I get out of it and what is going to give me the most instead of what do I personally need for my education and growth. Which I gather that was your point.
- S: And it was.
- A: That it very interesting. That might account for the such extreme competitiveness in the sports teams, for example, which excels the average competitiveness of high school sports. And I had thought that it had something to do with coach attitudes. I realize there is something there. I wonder what happened to the schools in the 1970's. Did they have a change in the school board or was it the same school board?
- S: There is always a change in school board. I think partly we reflect here in our community what is the American way. If you sit back and watch the television and the actual mobs that attend the athletic events, you know that this is going to

reflect because this is the thing that Americans seem to rate so highly. You have to remind them of Pablo Casals who was playing his cello in his 90's and saying, "Look it is wonderful to do your weight lifting and all of that, but remember there will come a day that you will need a companion for your soul, and music is one of the things, all of the arts." So many times when you read the papers you see the arts get cut. I am very concerned about this as a nation because this is where our soul is.

A: Partly is that how your got started in the Belles and Beaus in terms of frustration with that?

S: No, not really. Actually it was an economic thing because we had done these shows which I had written.

A: Now this is the high school choir?

S: The high school choral department, we did seventeen spring musicals and they all had a different theme. I would announce the theme after Christmas and then you could prepare anything that you wanted, a solo, a duet, an ensemble, any small group participation that had to do with that theme. I would, at the same time be preparing the choir along the lines of various styles and periods of music that would correlate. Then we would have an audition and the kids would rate their peers on who would get into the show and they were very selective.

A: This is the choir?

S: The choir itself. They really did a better job then I would have done because I might have been looking out for Janice who takes vocal lessons and she should really have a chance to sing. If she did not do a good job, she did not get rated. So anyway, when these shows did come about they really were very creative and they belonged to the kids because they produced them. My husband was part of the team. He would spend every spring vacation on the stage building the set and he would have a crew of boys who might have been potential trouble makers but whose talents could be used. So we did seventeen of these and we earned a lot of money because at that time everybody in the community would come and we would have them for three nights. So while we were doing this, we had bought a Baldwin upright piano. We bought 150 robes, and bought jackets for Madrigal Singers and we had bought this that and the other. I was going up to a choral school up in Chautauqua, I was thinking of all this money that had accumulated in our activity fund. I was smitten with the thought of handbells, it just absolutely fascinated me.

A: This happened about what year?

S: It was 1970. When I arrived at the conference, I was seated by an elegant lady and I talked about the weather and all the things that you talk about to be proper. I said to her, "Do you know anything about English Handbells?" And she looked at me so oddly and said, "Strange that you should ask. I just returned from the Whitechapel Foundry in London." Well, I just picked her mind for five days. And when I came home, I said to my husband, "We will never get to England. If you could have met this lady," of course I had literature that she had given me, "you would know that is the right choice." Before I parted with her I said to her, "What really is the difference between the ones from the American factory and the English Foundry?" She said, "Well it is difference between a Ford and a Cadillac." So with that I sat down and ordered five octaves of bells which is unheard of because usually funds are prohibitive. So when we started the program I knew that someday I would have to leave school and I said I do not want to be on this earth without bells. So my husband allowed me to buy 81 additional bells.

A: In terms of the first five octaves, how many bells was that?

S: That is 61 bells.

A: And how much did that cost?

S: They cost, at that time, around \$5,000. At this time, those five octaves are worth about \$14,000.

A: So you still have the same difference today in terms of quality of the English?

S: Oh, yes. They are just the sweetest bells on earth and we are so very happy that we did decide to go in that direction. So we bought these bells that we permitted the kids at school to use the whole time that I was there. Then when I left, there was no one there that wanted to continue along with the program, because it obviously took a lot of time. Anyway, they sat in the closet and subsequently, I was finally allowed to buy them. And happily the Belles and Beaus continued. I called the Fairgrounds and they were just wonderful and said, "Oh, we would love to have you." So we rehearse over at Colonial Inn. And the serendipitous part of it is that we had no idea whether the kids wanted a school activity or whether they wanted to ring bells. But one of the things that we had not anticipated, on the scholarship tests, "What have you done for the community?" is one of the questions. Now instead of those bright kids having one more activity, they could have this great chunk of time that they had given,

and we have actually earned some kids some scholarships because it is unique and it catches their attention. They will write about English Handbells and the person reading it has never heard of this. That has been wonderful and plus the fact that I have adults also ringing on Sunday nights.

A: It sounds like you were excited to meet this person initially. You had an interest in bells prior to meeting this lady.

S: Well that it is very perceptive of you because, yes my husband and I had rung Carillon at Westminster together.

A: Rung the what?

S: They had an old Carillon, a tower of bells. Those are rung from a keyboard. He was doing that and then when I came along we did four part harmony which was very popular on campus and we loved it. We had an initial love of bells to start with.

A: Is that where you met him?

S: No, we went to Rayen School together. We met, I was a freshman and he was a senior, we met in the band.

A: What did you play in the band?

S: I played Trumpet.

A: And what did he play?

S: He was percussion.

A: So he became a teacher as well?

S: No. He finished at Westminster and spent the year as a YMCA secretary and found that he could not function behind a desk. So he went as apprentice carpenter through the ranks and became a construction superintendent of a very large company. He spent twenty-seven years in the construction field and then he was asked to teach mill work out at the Mahoning County Joint Vocational School, which he did for ten years.

A: You started in 1966 in Canfield. Were they doing these music programs prior to you coming there?

- S: No. There was nothing actually happening. The school itself, the "new" high school they called it, was not very old. There was no program tradition as far as that goes, there was nothing really happening in that Choral Department, in fact that is why I was asked to go there. Music is just as creative as you want to make it. Every year you have different students and every year we had different themes. We would do Handel's Messiah at Christmas time and we would do a lot of periods of time. But when it would come to the theme, if it was a roaring 1920's theme we could just out loose and have fun with that kind of music for a while.
- A: That is what kids need at that age. Something that takes a lot of energy, that is a challenge, and something that they want to learn along the way. Was that continued after you left?
- S: Unhappily, there was a six year interval where they had two ladies that were not, in my opinion, not qualified to work with secondary students. Now they have gone out and sought out a wonderful lady who has a master's degree and seven years experience. I am just thrilled they found her. Her name is Kelly Scurich and she is married to one of my former students Tom Scurich, who is also a professional musician. I have great hopes for the Choral Department now.
- A: Actually, I am sure you know this from your historical research of Canfield, there is a strong musical tradition in Canfield. A theater tradition which kind of got here somewhere during the early part of this century. And like you said the 1960's there was a major gap. I do not think the war was the major break although it had something to do with it. How interesting. In terms of the bells, I do not know that much about them myself, but it seems like you had a interest in British traditions.
- S: It was quite accidental. I knew nothing when I sat next to this lady and asked her for information about the kind of purchase. I then preceded to go to handbell festivals and workshops and that kind of thing so I could learn all that I could learn. We had a three year waiting period from the time the bells were ordered until they would come. The Whitechapel Foundry has made such bells such as Big Ben and the Liberty Bell and they do towers all over England. Handbells are just sort of an accessory so when they would get to your name on the list they would be very unhurried and they would make your bells. It happened to be at a workshop at Jekyll Island, Georgia, and I had to admit I was being a little bored. All of the groups looked the same. They had their outfits, no matter how a piece of material looks at the fabric store, when you put it on a whole group of people it looks like the kids in the Sound of Music. Suddenly a group got up and they began to ring. They were from Lancashire, England, and I had never seen the

style that they used. Instead of ringing the bell out in front like all the other groups I had seen, they picked them up from the table and rang them toward the body and put them back down on the table which automatically damped the sound and clean, clear, fast, and it was just marvelous.

A: Much more control over the sound that you are making.

S: Yes. You are not making the extra motion. See the other way you are picking up the bell to move it out. So I waited in line, so many people wanted to talk to this man, and I said that I had two questions I had to ask. I said, "I wonder if you think I could teach my kids how to ring the way your people rang." And he waited, those thirty seconds while you think that was a dumb question, and he looked at me and he said, "It occurs to me that you have the same wrists we have."

They were not wearing gloves, so I said, "How many leathers have you had to have replaced?" And he said, "Well these bells were cast in 1904 and we had seven replaced." I came home and I never said to my students that there was any other way to ring. I said, "This is how you ring." We never wore gloves and we just simply started. And that wonderful man was a math teacher. I think it was because he was a teacher that he would answer my questions because there was no one here who had ever heard of off table ringing or ever done it. We went down to Ohio University and performed. People were saying, "Why are you doing that?" It was kind of interesting because they had done it for centuries in England and I thought that they had a lot to teach us. So that is how it started and he brought his group from his school over and then we took our group from our school and we went 1978, 1981, 1984, 1987.

A: To England?

S: Yes. And that is how we covered many, many stops and concerts in England and in Scotland and Wales. There is a strong British influence. Infact my husband and I have been over nine times.

A: It is amazing where something will take you.

S: Yes. It is interesting because it is like a pebble that you put in the water and you get a circle and the circle keeps growing larger. Because this summer Tom and Kelly Scurich had company, the chap with whom Tom stayed when we were in England. This year, friends are leaving the day the fair opens to go to Wales because of the people that they kept in their home when we had the Chepstow Male Voice Choir. And he it just goes on, I could tell you hundreds of connections and it is just fascinating.

A: Actually what you have done is built a very vibrant part of the Canfield community.

S: Well, I did not realize it, it was just a part of the doing. We did stop going overseas with the students because of the terrorism.

A: So even England became that unsafe?

S: Well, it was our thoughts that if we took your child and something happened we could not live what that. So that is what curtailed our traveling. We had four wonderful trips. We stayed three weeks at the minimum and we would stay in ringer's homes. The view that you get is so totally different and remarkable.

A: In terms though, when you started the first few years did you do it as an age requirement? Did you aim specifically to high school students or has it always been open to pretty much anybody that is in the community?

S: Interesting enough, the students themselves have carried it on. Because I am not at school, I have no contact. Sometimes all that it would take, if I would put my hand on the shoulder of some good singer and say, "I bet you would be a good ringer. Why do you not give it a try?" I did that to Diana Lewis, and because of that, I got Vaughn, Gaven and Bevan, and the father and the mother. All I did was say to Diana that I thought she would be a good ringer. You see, I do not have that contact, and you know the kids have carried it on themselves. It is remarkable because they are awfully selective. They know what is required. We rehearse three hours twice a week. So they know that it is a commitment if you make it. It is not like singing where it is okay if you miss a few notes or something. But it is not okay if you are missing a ringer. They have just carried it on, the bubble has not burst.

Now this last year is the first year we ever had someone who was not a Canfield student. A lady called me and she said my granddaughter is a good ringer. And of course you think, "yeah right". I know how biased I am. Well her granddaughter is. I have to admit I stalled a little bit, I said, "I have someone else coming in on Tuesday, and I will have to get back to you." And what I wanted to know on Tuesday, of course, is if it was okay with the kids. Because you know kids can be very provincial. They said to have her come. Well she just rang beautifully. Now I hear they going with her places, so there was no problem. That was a first. Someone from another school!

A: A big deal.

S: Yes, it was.

- A: It is interesting in many ways actually. You often hear about how insulated society is. How the mental attitude of Canfield is. How it insulates its neighbors or even sometimes its township neighbors and that has reflected to a certain extent to the children of the schools and how they interact with others. And the fact that it was a big deal being from another school.
- S: The fun was to watch this integration as it took place. The only question was if she could ring. We have had such an array of Chinese Americans, Indians, we have had a real international flavor. And I find that interesting that maybe ringing the bells is a universal appeal rather than a select group as you mentioned about Canfield minorities.
- A: It is an attitude. Whoever is doing it, it can be universal, but it is an attitude. People sometimes it is the "Us, them," attitude is often a lazy way of dealing with the world. But that is fascinating. So you are the director, the founder and director. Are there any other adults who co-administer with you?
- S: Well as always, my husband and I are the team. Because he is a cabinet maker from the very beginning, the very first time we went to one of these workshops, he was looking at how the bells were stored and how the tables were made. And I have to tell you I am so proud of our equipment because it is absolutely the last word. We can truly come to a site set-up and be ready to ring in ten minutes. It is because he has got everything down to a science, I would never attempt to do it without him. He polishes the bells twice a year. He takes them completely apart, every last part and polishes them inside and out and repairs anything that needs done. Now there is a service done in South Carolina that will charge you \$100 an octave to do that. You can imagine with five octaves of bells twice and some in the middle triplicated, we could not even begin to do that.
- A: Do you charge for the performances that you make since they are a community group?
- S: Yes, that is the way we support ourselves; we are a self sustaining group. With the students we aim to use all the funds that earn in one academic year. And we have been pretty successful in that because we will have a spring tour and we will hire a professional bus. We have to have a 48 passenger bus to accommodate the amount of bells and tables we have. And that is a safe way for us to travel and we are all together. We aim to use up the money so that no one would think for a minute that the Sittigs have a profitable thing going with the Belles and Beaus. It is strictly as the kids earn the money, they use it up. We start over in the next year.

- A: So essentially, you and your husband are donating your time?
- S: Oh, yes. Every minute of it, but we love it.
- A: Obviously. There are many rewards as satisfying or more satisfying than money.
- S: That is absolutely true. You know at Christmas time people in the audience have asked me, "When do you celebrate Christmas?" And I tell them, "I am celebrating it right now." It is just so much a part of us, particularly because bells are so popular at Christmas time. When we were doing the U.K. tours we would have to earn maybe \$14,000, so we would have as many as thirty concerts in the month of December. Sometimes we would be out two and three times an evening going from one place to the other.
- A: Does that sort of force members to exclude other activities?
- S: We have discovered that for a many number of years, a number one graduate, the valedictorians of the class, and it was interesting because it went along for three or four years that this person was in the Belles and Beaus. It was a perfect example of a young person knowing how to budget their time. These kids were all in speech, and this and this and this. What I have noticed is the really bright kids, I can think of Su Ting Fu who is now going to medical school and I cannot imagine the list of all of his things that he was doing. And I remember Karen Chiu; she is an attorney now, we would have a break, she was with the kids. She was popular and had a lot of friends, but she would have her book with her and she was reading her Spanish or whatever. And you can watch these really bright kids and see how they function, it is fascinating. They know how to budget their time.
- A: How many do you have? Do you break it down in that you have to have so many students?
- S: Yes. We have to have ten in order to function comfortably.
- A: Ten students?
- S: Yes.
- A: And then how many adults?
- S: We like to have ten adults.

A: So this comprises one musical unit?

S: Yes.

A: That performs together?

S: No, they perform separately.

A: I have never made it in twenty years. Now that my kids are older maybe I can.

S: We have performed at the end of the year maybe with one group first and another second or whatever. It is just interesting the color of the groups and the things they perform are often interlace, and in another way they are totally different. Students have the ability to ring with abandon. Adults are all in another profession. And they do not want to do something that would make them look foolish. The reason I say the color, last Christmas we had the adults first at the St. James concert over in Boardman Park, we then cleared the hall and the students came and their audience arrived. I could almost not get through the first number. Here we were in the same hall with the same bells and the same acoustics and the when the students picked up the bells there was a totally different sound. There is a brilliance that the adults do not get.

A: They are afraid?

S: Yes. It is really interesting. Now putting them in competition with other groups that are intergenerational, I would put them up any time. But it is so interesting about the contrast between the adults and the students as far as the sound that they get. And it is abandon the kids have. And also they learn their parts and then they are secure.

A: So one person rings more than one bell?

S: Oh, yes. Now this is the advantage of "off table" ringing which is the method that I explained to you. We call it off table and that is literally what it is. You are picking the bell up and with a flick of the wrist you ring it toward yourself and then you return it to the table without any extra movement. So therefore the active people, particularly in the treble range where the bells are smaller, will ring fifteen or twenty bells. And that is the challenge. The challenge of it is because now they have something that they have to improve upon their own skill. We had a girl last year, Chandra Walker, who was at the second table ringing treble for several years. And then last year she said, "I want to go back there." And she meant to the middle table in the back which is a whole different range, reading a

different clef and a totally different technique with ringing larger bells. But I think that is what kept her interest in ringing that fourth year. The “off table” ringing is preferred not only because it is English, and I feel that is a very pure form but it is also very practical.

A: And also it seems to allow for more challenge and more intricacy, and more interest.

S: Yes, it does.

A: How many tables do you use for a performance?

S: We have six tables that are six feet long, that fold in the center, and go on dollies and move. We cover them with three or four inch foam, which is the pad that damps the sound. And then we have the black cloths that go over that so it makes a dressy appearance.

A: Now, you were talking about leather on a bell, is that the handle?

S: Yes. American bells have plastic handles. But English bells have leather handles. The reason that we do not wear gloves in addition to the fact that they get in your way when you are trying to turn pages, but also the oil in your hand keeps that leather perfectly softened to the degree that it needs.

A: Until you pointed it out, I was looking at it, I thought it was a metal handle.

S: No, it is leather.

A: How did they come up with the concept of leather? If there not some flexibility in it that affects your ability to create the sound?

S: The thing of it is, and this bell is a broken bell so it has a bad sound, but you see what makes an English handbell an English handbell is the stop clapper. I can go back and forth with this and I am not making any sound. But if I make a flick of the wrist then it activates the clapper. That is were you get your sound.

A: So would the leather not take some of that click and not transmit it to the clapper?

S: No, actually in the case of “off table” ringing, we also have stiffeners. You see, there is a piece in there that helps to keep that rigid so that helps someone who would hold the bell down to far and that would crack the leather. But you are

taught to hold this bell up by the collar and get a good grip on the bell and it is a flick of the wrist that does it. We have only in twenty years replaced two leathers.

A: So if it was a rigid handle then it would perhaps create some injuries in terms of repetitiveness?

S: We never have. Now the English Handbell Ringing Association of America has made a big deal over carpal tunnel. And I am often asked why my people do not wear any wrist guards or anything. Here is where the videos come in handy. And I tell people to watch, they are getting their whole body into it. They are not standing. I believe that is the secret.

A: So you take videos to teach others how to do it?

S: Yes. I have done a lot of workshops. In fact, the fun part is that now I have been flown all over the country to teach off table ringing to the same people who were saying, "Why are doing that?" Now they have changed the question to, "How do you do that?" So that has been kind of fun.

A: Have you recorded?

S: Yes. We have a very nice cassette which I will give you one before you leave. We have done a couple before that. But this one we did in England and interestingly enough, they not only know how to cast bells, but they know how to record them. The reason I say that is, the American people seem to get the microphones too close and they pick up just individual sounds. The church where we recorded was like nine hundred and something date on it, one of these all stone, in a little town. Microphones were way up.

A: No fancy acoustics?

S: No, just pure. I was very proud of that group because they made that record in one day. The man said, "Now, you will want to have a session tomorrow." I said, "No, we are moving on." And he said, "Well what about a trial record?" I said, "Send it to me when it is pressed. He said, "Well I have never done one in one day." I said to him, "Well now you have." But you know, students are so wonderful. You can push them, but you have to be so careful because if you got them too tight then they would not have been able to ring. It is fascinating the dynamics of their performance that day because they knew they had to get it right and I had to be flexible because again you cannot get so tight that you cannot get the dynamics.

- A: So you keep a group of twenty people. Do you ever create alternates so if somebody is sick?
- S: We would like very much to have a second team. Frankly, people do not like to make commitments. One of the things that we have done is interchange between the teams. And that helps, where we have an adult ring with the students or vice versa. I think in only twenty years, we have only canceled once and that was the night that we had black ice on the turnpike and we decided it was unsafe, but other than that we keep punching. In fact, I had a hideous accident on December 2, 1977, I was driving a van with students and a lady crossed the center line and I was almost fatally injured. The students got me from the back and the lady across the center line in the front, something that absolutely devastated me. But my husband carried on and did the schedule. He kids me a lot and he says, "Why is every emergency you have always around Christmas time?" This is where you team spirit comes into play too, because that teams spirit made it work.
- A: Do you have a waiting list of people that would like to join then?
- S: The kids will go back to school now in September and hopefully they will bring four people because we have lost four people to graduation. And if they do not, then I will have to nag at them and say, "Come on now, let us get with it now."
- A: So the group is open to high school students and then they become too old and then they are not allowed to participate?
- S: Well, it is automatic, they just leave the area. They go off to college or they go off and get a job. We have on our adult team several who are former four year students. They are a great plus as you can imagine, I would love to have several more. They have taken up with the adults then. That is kind of an adult/alumni. Several of the people are parents of ringers. In fact, that is how the group started. It started itself by people coming to me and saying, "Now that you have left school are you not going to do adults, and if you do, we would like to do it," and things like that.
- A: At this point, what more would you like to do with it?
- S: I would just like to continue as long as I have my health. I feel that it brings such a lot of joy to a lot of people, not only the people that ring but the people that listen. So really God willing, as long as I and my husband are able, I would just like to continue. We do not have to have an adventuresome goals. We have rung five times with the Akron symphony. We have some experiences that a lot

of people would say, "Been there, done that." But it is so interesting the wonderful people you meet. That is really my dream, that I can keep my health and my sanity.

A: Keep up what you are doing because it is so much fun. Approximately how many performances do you put on a year?

S: Well, we have cut down quite a bit because we do not have the large financial goals that we once had when we were touring in the United Kingdom. I would say without any question we have fifteen at Christmas and two or three in the fall and two or three in the spring. The adults of course, have many fewer because they are all earning a living. I hardly ask, maybe a couple before Christmas and a couple in the spring.

A: So you do not meet during the summer?

S: No, we stop after graduation and come together at the Canfield Fair.

A: So that is where your equipment is stored so you have a permanent home there?

S: We like to feel that it is. As long as we behave, we are trying very hard.

A: So actually in terms of your performances that you do at the fair is kind of a trade off for the use of their space?

S: Yes. We know that ringing bells is not appropriate at a county fair. But at the same time, we are so grateful to them, we do want to be visible. We do not want them to suddenly say, "Well, these people are always around here, what is it that they do?" And they seem to be well received. We have been at the Education Hall, and it has been a plus for them I guess because it draws in a lot of people and then while they are there they look at the displays and that is a plus. Again, it is one of those situations that works cooperatively.

A: Growing up in Youngstown, as a different view point of Canfield than living there, how did that change what preconceptions you had before coming here? How many did you find to be true?

S: When we moved to Canfield in 1953, everybody said, "Oh, way out there." And the community was small enough that Ralph Fowler met me on the street and said, "Oh, you are the lady that moved into the house at 11 Maple Street." Now that house was built in such and such. So that gives you a little idea.

A: That was your introduction?

S: Yes. And of course Ralph Fowler became one of my very precious friends. It was small enough that somebody new, walking over to the village could be picked out. There was no Democrat precinct here at the time.

A: What was it?

S: It was Republican, born and bred. So we thought that it was a nice community and it turned out to be that. A wonderful place for your children to grow up. Actually our last family member graduated from Canfield in 1978, you could still run around anywhere at that time, day or night really. We notice with, I suppose a little bit of regret, some of the changes. For example, the sidewalk and the lights on the village green are very pretty. And as that was torn up I felt as though every inch of grass that was being disturbed was taking away something that belonged to all of us. That is an odd concept maybe, and now that it is finished it looks very pretty.

A: It is just a different green.

S: Yes. I have to say I resent when I go by the experimental farm and I see all that equipment over there, building a "classroom". And I think, "That was a wonderful farm. Do we need that equipment in here?" And so I think everything that has happened is not for the good of the community. Of course you can imagine I am violently opposed to the turnpike commissioner making us take their interchange.

A: I unfortunately could not make that meeting. In terms of the route that they were planning to, was that tear up parts of the neighborhood here?

S: No, not on our street. It just would change the whole community. And it is just not that, I know I think Dr. Chiu, who is not only a very close friend, but a very intelligent and important member of our community. And his question was so lucid, "Who asked for this?" And there did not seem to be much of an answer.

A: Normally the state responds to traffic patterns, whether somebody asks for it or not. I do not know what motivated their planning.

S: They say they listen to communities, so I hope that they are listening.

A: I had thought that one of the things that might be an advantage to the turnpike exchange is to eliminate some of the traffic downtown.

- S: They seem to feel that it will only make it worse and it will end up being a three lane highway.
- A: In other words because they would not change the traffic flow in Canfield but feed more into it.
- S: Yes, I think so.
- A: Like I said, I have not a chance to look at either side, and I was kind of curious. I know that traffic, for example, the population in Canfield has increased substantially. Actually, through the early 1900's it was pretty stable up until the past ten years and there has been a population explosion, twenty years really they started building the swamp lands. I call them swamp lands, it might not be fair, but they were wet areas and a town that people avoided at that point. And that has substantially increased not only the number but the type of people that now are in Canfield.
- S: That is right. Even the school has moisture problems, and the auditorium for example.
- A: You mean the new school?
- S: The new school, 1966, Marian Fowler's notes said, "There was a sawmill where the high school was built. It takes more than a puddle to run a saw mill."
- A: What saw mill was it, I wonder.
- S: Well, it is in the old atlas, there is a picture somewhere I think, you will have to look it up.
- A: There is so much information. I wish they would put out atlas' like that today because people would have a better idea of what it is today. Right now there is not much of a way to get a handle on it, even when you drive around. And even driving around does not tell you things, it does and it does not. Appearances can be deceiving. So then, you are part of Canfield. You have developed a substantial part of it. And it is a part that is vibrant, but also does not like to grow beyond a certain place or stage because then it becomes completely different. And so of what you have created, that interrelationship and the ease of creating relationships, for example, and keeping them going that the feeling of comfort with being here and being with other communities changes past a certain point if you get enough strangers it is not as easy to do.

S: Yes, that is true.

A: And perhaps that is part of the reasons that these kind of ideas, like the turnpike interchange, is a frightening idea.

S: Yes. I think there are so few communities left to which you can refer to as an old New England town. And with our green and the potential to keep it that way, we need to be very watchful.

A: So the visual aspect of Canfield itself is very important to you.

S: I know that our visitors that came to us from Chepstow, in South Wales, visited in various communities. They went to Greensburg, down in Pittsburgh, North Carolina, and visited many places in several areas. And they wrote back and said that Canfield was the prettiest town. And we feel that just because they drove in and saw the benches and the green, that is probably what made them say that. Because Greensburg is a very spiffy community. I do not know how their business district looks, but they have a lot of very gorgeous homes.

A: There are a lot of aristocratic landscapes in the south, and that is a very interesting comment. Are you a member of the Historical Society?

S: No.

A: Would you like to talk about that?

S: Well, Bill Masters had asked me if they have offended me in some way. I said if you had someone in that organization if they said, "Good morning" to me, I would say, "What do you mean by that?" For example, the ladies had the boys from the vocational school working over at the Bond house, their instructor was a man by the name of Art Amendol. They were participating in maintenance class, doing refurbishing work. And the lady said, "Do you wash the windows?" Mr. Amendol said, "Mam, we are trying to teach students a skill." In my opinion, why did the lady not wash the windows? I had this go around with the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers which is a huge organization that ring bells and direct bells. And I said to the national president when I left school, I said, "I love to teach and I have more time now. I am not much for committees or politics." She said, "They kind of go together do they not." I stood there while she pulled the blind down. I thought if I have to be on your committees and go to Amarillo, Texas, when you have a board meeting and I have to play all those games in order for me to be the one to instruct a class over in Akron or somewhere in my area, then I am sorry, I am not available. In my lifetime, there

are only twenty four hours in my day as there are in yours. And I choose to do with it what I at least have a concept of being more meaningful. I said, "I like people and bells." And she just kind of looked at me. Now I have had some invitations but nothing to the degree if I would play that game.

A: I have often wondered why is there not more preservation of what people care about.

S: For example, my little booklet, which was done simply out of love for Marion and Ralph Fowler. When I was in the process, one of the very active members of the Historical Society said, "Well there is more to the history of Canfield than Marion Fowler's notes." I said, "My dear, I know that. You just go on out and get it because you and I both know what it takes to put together a work." And my object then was that all of her accurate notes of a lifetime not be lost. And Ralph had the notes in the safe at the Dispatch and I had her own tapes. I got into some Indian names - spellings of the early American Tribes. I went over to him and asked him if I could see her notes. And when he handed me the notebook, I was suddenly smitten by the beauty of this. I said, "Ralph, you are going to publish this are you not?" "Oh no. I cannot read her handwriting half the time." So I stood there knowing that this was a torch that I was holding. I said, "Well, if I write it will you edit it?" He said, "Oh, I would be glad to." Because I perceived Ralph, I knew not to bother him with details. When I had a chapter done, I ran it over to him and he ran that office like it was the New York Times. You could go in there any hour of the day and he was not standing around gabbing, he was doing printing business. And he would show you a copy that his father had marked on the margin where there were two mistakes on the whole entire page. His father had written to the typesetter that they could not stand for work like that. Two mistakes.

A: Marion Fowler, you know her personally. What was she like?

S: She was the most remarkable woman you ever met. She was the only spinster who could understand family life. She had a mind like a steel trap. She not only loved music, she studied it. She had volumes on the operas. She would go to Cleveland every spring and check into a hotel and go to the opera every night. She read as Ralph did. Ralph would read five newspapers everyday, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Vindicator, etc. Marion was the kind of lady, you know, we had a death in the family she brought over a huge casserole. When I returned the dish, it was an old fashioned Granite Wear. I said, "You will not be doing much of that casserole again soon." She said, "I will if you need it." It was just her way of operating. If anybody needed anything, you would see Marion walking down the street with a

dish. She did beautiful needle work. Many of the Presbyterian Church's altar clothes and things, she hand stitched. She took care of the choir robes. I cannot really remember all the things to tell you. She called us up when the library was being built and she said, "You know Chuck, there are some beautiful Peonies and they are just going to throw them away on the truck. Can you not come over and get them?" As a family, a brother and a sister, they had the most remarkable values. It was an absolute privileged to know them.

A: He had been characterized as someone who was less than his father. That he happened into things because of his family, and that he was not a success so he ended up in the printing business. I would hear the rumors and they seemed so invalid because of the things that he has produced.

S: I have to agree. I think the discrepancy comes in that Ralph was a very private person. If anyone tried to invade his space, he would immediately be turned off. I think he went into the printing without prior knowledge. But at the moment that he did that, the father had broken his hip. His brother Dana was helping out in the print shop and Ralph and Marion both were both the first to say that Dana was the partying boy of the family. They would make remarks that would make me know that Dana was so unlike the two of them. When it came to that moment, Ralph was out of town and he called up and he said, "Mother, do you want me home?" And she said, "Yes." And he said that he was on the train the next morning. And he never left the print shop after that. But he made the remark that his brother did not know from straight up. It was out of love and loyalty to his family really, even though I was not there at the time, I heard him tell it. So I do not think it was a matter of that he did not really have anything else to do, so I might as well be the printer. It was because the mother said, "Yes, I would." And he said, "I was on the train the following morning."

A: What was he doing at the time?

S: Interestingly enough, this was not a very well known part of his life, he was following dog races and being an accountant. He could add figures at sight. And he had worked the dog races over at Canfield and he did such a marvelous job that they asked him if he would like to come out, I think it was going to be at Milton Lake. Then they said that they were going to Jacksonville and they asked him if he would like to come with them. So he did. This is not a part of his life that he would tell. But on his 98th birthday, we were together as we had been always, couple times a week for dinner. We were at the Tavern in New Wilmington, that was the place he liked to go. I said, "Ralph you said there was seven years missing because somewhere along the line," because I had the Fowler family history. I said, "What did you do, leave town?" And he said, "Yes,

I did exactly that." So then he told us about these years and I tell you it was just the most charming conversation. When we got home that evening I said, "Can you imagine someone 98 years old making us laugh and enjoy ourselves the way we did?" He told about going to Butte, Montana in the 1930's. After the conversation was completely finished and we were still eating I said, "Ralph, I cannot imagine what Butte, Montana looked like in the 1930's." It is like when the Belles and Beaus would go on a trip, we would always be handed an envelope containing a couple hundred dollars, "something special for the kids". For someone at that age to perceive those young people was amazing. We would have what we called the "Fowler Dinner" and we would always have our last night dinner in London as a kind of an end of the tour celebration. To me that was remarkable. And to me that scholarship that he left at Westminster college was also remarkable.

A: Is that how that came to be?

S: Absolutely. In fact, I am going to do something before the next commencement because that was presented as a scholarship to Westminster College and I want to know why it was not said that it was a Fowler Liddle Scholarship. That was how it was set up. He designated that a boy will have it one year, starting with a boy the first year, and the second year will be a girl. But if that could not be accomplished an exception could be made. It would be for tuition, room, books, and other things as needed.

A: Has it been used?

S: Oh yes. It is just that they did not name his name.

A: So they had three children, they had Marion, Ralph, and Dana.

S: And Ralph's wife's name was Ethel Liddle. And they had no children and long before the time that ladies had professional jobs. Ethel was an executive at Farmer's National Bank.

A: That was a rather unique situation and I always wondered how that came about.

S: Her father was employed at the bank years before. She was an extremely professional lady and a beautiful lady. She had gorgeous white hair and always wore vivid colors, and she just was the personification of a lady. You can imagine white gloves and the pearls.

A: Where did Ralph meet her?

- S: I suppose here in town. They had a wonderful circle of friends. They were just an adorable couple and they had been married 67 years or something like that when she died.
- A: I can imagine that was a big gap in his life.
- S: I think so because I can see him yet standing there holding her hand when we were going over seas with the Belles and Beaus and we stopped to say, "Well, we will see you when we come home." I said to Chuck, "Look at him holding her hand, that is beautiful."
- A: So the relatives in his family were his brother's children.
- S: No, actually two Christmases before he died he stood right in that door way and he said something that made me incapable of responding. Luckily my son Scott had the presence to answer. He said, "I have not a living relative." And Scott happily said in our behalf, "Well, Mr. Fowler we are so honored that you had Christmas Day with us." That choked me up because I thought what an awful thing to be the end of the line. Because the person that inherited the house and the belongings and so on was a niece of Ethel's. So Ralph truly had no living relatives.
- A: His brother did not get married or have any children?
- S: He was married and he could have been divorced, I never heard the details. But I am fairly certain that he was married at one time.
- A: He did not come back to Canfield?
- S: No, I could not tell you what really happened. And of course Marion was never married.
- A: Did she have a job so to speak?
- S: Well, the only thing that she actually ever did was write a dear little column in the Dispatch. And she would help him check the various columns as they came in. But that was about it. She simply devoted her life to being this wonderful person and going about doing good.
- A: Do you still have Marion's notes?
- S: No. Ralph had them in the safe. Whether or not the Historical Society got them,

I do not know.

A: Are there other community groups that you belong to or have been affiliated with in Canfield?

S: I was a charter member and still am member of the Canfield Women's Club II and that has been a real nice group of ladies. As you know, a market on the green for 25 years and the results of that all went to scholarships. We gave \$5,000 scholarships at graduation time. I was always very proud because I thought, we were a little group of 25 ladies and we do not do a lot of special things. Our scholarships are pretty substantial and through the years we gave a lot of them.

A: So that was the purpose of the organization was for Canfield Women to do a community service?

S: Yes. I was chairman for 14 years and when I took it over there were 15 booths and when I ended there were 260. I had done it for 14 years and I thought that maybe that was long enough. The City Council would give us a hassle every year as to whether we could rent the green or not.

A: I was curious about the relationship with the City on that. What was the problem?

S: I cannot tell you except politicians being educated beyond their intellect. I thought we went about it right. We heard all this rumbling from the Council so we went around and polled all the merchants up and down the street and we found that there were a couple. Mr. Yeager was one, but most of them said, "We love it, we have the biggest day of the year. Do not worry about it." So we thought then that is settle. And then the next year would you believe when I wrote for permission, did I not get the same hassle back, "We will have to discuss this. We do not know if we can have the green." I said to my husband, "I think I shall resign as the chairman, I have done it for 14 years and maybe the ladies will think this is long enough. My feeling was I refused to fight with that Council every year over the same matter. Of course there is always one lady in the group who gets up and says, "Well, I will do it." So that was okay. She did it for the remaining years. It was probably good in the end because they did it for that much longer. Why any little town would resist that when indeed many towns would give there right arm to have a little festival that brought as many people.

A: I take it from what you are saying is that certain people were afraid of competition?

- S: When the bank was open on Saturday morning, we did have a problem. The parking . . . we had to get people that would watch those parking lots. Well, they closed the bank on Saturdays and we did not have that problem for a while. The merchants who complained, Mr. Yeager said that people parked in his parking lot and people did not shop in his store. Well, at the same time people were shopping in volumes at his store that day. So after we had polled people, we thought that it was just kind of a fantasy that had grown out of hear say, that the merchants really did not mind.
- A: So every year some merchant on the green had a complaint and that motivated the Council.
- S: Yes, there was always a hassle. God bless the Junior Women's League now, I hope maybe the ground work has been laid.
- A: They took over your activity?
- S: We passed it on to them.
- A: So the Canfield Women do not exist anymore?
- S: We exist, but we just thought that it was time for us to stop. Many have retired and gone to Florida and this kind of thing. So it was getting difficult for us to have personnel. We could handle the work leading up to it. But on the day of the market, we were finding it pretty hard. I think 25 years is a good enough record.
- A: Whose idea was it?
- S: Somebody in the Canfield Women's Club, I cannot even remember. It started as a little garage sale on the green and just grew.
- A: It seems like the political process in Canfield is there to get in people's way of things that they want to do as a community.
- S: Ralph was never terribly vocal about political things. As I say, he was so private you would not even know if he was for or against something. I suppose in a close relationship you could have asked, but again there are certain things that you do not socially do. I only ever remember seeing Ralph angry twice. Once was when he donated some money to the War Veteran's and said that this should be anonymous. And Mr. Speece in his infinite wisdom published it in the paper. Ralph immediately called and Mr. Speece said, "I thought it would be

nice." Ralph was the kind of person whose word you respected. And he would not put that in contract or anything. He simply said this is to be done this way and that was the way you would do it. The other time was when Josephine Kyle told the ladies of the Western Reserve Magazine that Grandfather Barnes had been buried vertically because he was an atheist. I read this article in the Western Reserve Magazine as it came to my post box. By the way, I recognized paragraphs out of my little "Notes of Marion Fowler" which were copyrighted and I said to Chuck, "There is going to be trouble." I just laid the magazine down. Pretty soon the phone rang and Ralph said, "Did you read the article and I said, "Yes I did." He said, "Well, I have written to the ladies of the Western Reserve Magazine and I had the family Bible and I assure you that Grandfather Barnes was not buried vertically and he was a Christian. So they did apologize and they did publish a letter of regret.

A: The other people in the community that have been significant to you in the community, who might they be?

S: Well, I think about Muriel Hampton who has been at the preschool at the Methodist Church for many years. My son is 42 years old and he was not the first youngster who ever went there, so I cannot tell you how many years.

A: Were Fowler's and Kyle's related?

S: No. There was no love lost there.

A: Is that a personality clash?

S: Yes. Josephine was very overt, some would say odd. I can remember asking Ralph about something that she had told was in reverse of some fact that I had. I said, "Ralph, would Josephine's or Marion's slant on this be correct?" And he said, "I am sure Marion's would be." In other words, he would not say anything unkind about Josephine but he just would not say anything positive either. And that is a whole thing I do not know anything about. That is a shame that house has fallen apart. It makes you lose your faith in these societies because she left a half a million dollars for the maintenance.

A: Which they claim is non-existent now.

S: Is that right? I do not know anything about business matters. I just know that house has historical significance. And that is too bad.

A: Other significant people that you have known?

S: I mentioned Muriel Hampton because she is really somebody who I think has just quietly done her particular professional thing and she has made an impact, especially on children. One of my daughters said she met somebody in Indianapolis who was sort of a Mrs. Hampton type. So she characterized her from preschool days, which is incredible. I think of Claire Cavanaugh who was one of the first ladies on Council. She had been a nurse in World War I. When we went to go over with the Belles and Beaus she said, "Will you be going by ship?" And I thought of course, that is how she perceives a trip across the ocean. She would call me after the musical productions and she would say, "Oh, that reminded me of a German band I heard." But she was always on the phone to say, "Thank you for that beautiful show." I can remember the last time she phoned she said, "Are you busy?" And I said, "No. I am not too busy to talk to my friends." But I remarked to Chuck after I got off the phone, "One of these days, we will not have our old friends." And it is true, Marion is gone, Ralph is gone and Claire is gone, and we know how the cycle goes. When you are much younger, you do not think along those lines. But what a loss to the community these people who were here when we all came. Truly when we came in 1953, we were indeed outsiders.

A: You felt that in other ways?

S: It was the Neff's and the Manchester's that you heard and knew that this was Canfield.

A: Everybody else is a nameless mass?

S: Yes. There were two ladies who lived across from the elementary school. It was the Village Elementary School. They were Ms. Charlotte and Ms. Emma Hake. Ms. Charlotte was the secretary of Manchester's Hardware. And Ms. Emma would bake you a cake if you called her up. And if you called her on a certain day and said, "Could I have a Boston Creme Cake?" She would say, "Oh, perfect. Wednesday will be just fine because I am making Angel Food on Tuesday." And see, she would have the yolks on Wednesday. Her cakes were just heavenly and she would charge you two dollars or something. And Manchester's Hardware Store. Do you know about that?

A: A little bit. I would like to know what you have to say about it.

S: My husband should tell you about that. He used to stop there every day because he is a builder and he always needed something. And the Manchester's always had a stock of things that went back to who knows what date. If they did not have it on the shelves they had it up the stairs. It was a

marvelous place.

A: So they used their upstairs as a storage?

S: Yes.

A: There were two hardware stores and they were side by side. What was different about them?

S: Well, you would try to get it at Manchester's and then if you could not get it there, then you would go as Leonard Baker if he had it. Manchester's was just the center of everything. And you could buy one screw in those days or one tack. Now, you cannot buy anything unless it is in the package of two dozen and that kind of thing.

A: What was it like walking into one and then the other?

S: Manchester's was like walking back in time because of the way things were in the bins and so on. Leonard Baker had long counters that were more like you would find the in the haberdashery store in the 1930's and 1940's but it just did not have that old flavor. It was almost in retrospect, a place that was passing through, because that was really what happened. It was there and then it was gone. We have early slides of a sale out in front of Manchester's. There was a little chap in a cap and kind of an English cut coat with a belt in the back. He must have been about nine. Ralph Fowler said, "You see that little boy, that is me."

A: Who took the slides?

S: I do not remember?

A: Is this part of that school preservation or are they your own?

S: They are mine. I cannot think of where I got some of those. Bill Speece had quite an interesting history as you can imagine having bought that old Courthouse building.

A: Lou does not talk that much about him so I do not know that much.

S: I do not really know why he bought the building but at the time that he moved the bell from the school to the old courthouse building, he was very, very interested in the historical aspect of it. Made a big bicentennial type of celebration. It was

a very community type of thing.

A: So you knew him personally?

S: Well, not very well. I knew the Kimmel's because they lived down the street, and his wife was a Kimmel. In Canfield in the early days, everybody was related.

A: I have noticed that. When you moved here, what was on the green?

S: The Schmick Building on the corner had the A and P Store. Next of course was Manchester's and then there was a drug store, the Fountain. The Fountain was a very important story. I am sure you have heard about the fountain.

A: Tell me yours.

S: You could buy cream from Beardsky's Farm for \$.80 a quart and make homemade ice cream. Everybody went there after choir practice for example or volunteer fire night and that is where you went. And of course they had wonderful ice cream and things like that. But it was more like a home town soda fountain type place, and was the only type of place like that in Canfield that every existed as far as I know.

A: I gather Youngstown too, because you went there to visit people I am sure.

S: Right. And of course downtown Youngstown, there were places down by the Palace Theater and Petrakas and places where we all went. But those were the days we all went downtown as opposed to Canfield. It is a small enough place that you would speak about going over town. That was like a block, a little bit different.

A: When did the Fountain stop?

S: You could ask Ed Nass. He worked at the Fountain as a youth. He was a math teacher at Canfield High School, now retired, he lives on Hilltop. It must have been in the 1960's I suppose.

A: What did it look like when you walked inside?

S: My daughter is an artist and she drew the Fountain and her reproduction of the Fountain is pretty accurate. Art deco and stools. And there was a case that you would see directly in the back of the store and you would go back there to get your bottles of cream.

- A: Did they have little tables?
- S: Yes, along the one side, there were like booths and the other side was the Fountain side with stools.
- A: It sounds small.
- S: Yes, it was not huge.
- A: If you went there, like after the volunteer fire department night, how did they all fit in?
- S: I do not remember it every being real crowded except that there was a steady flow of people in and out.
- A: So they came in and bought, and then more than likely ate it out on the green?
- S: That too. Or you would be there for just a little while and then you would leave. Just one of those places.
- A: What was above the A&P?
- S: That used to be a dance hall. There used to be a dance hall up there. There used to be great parties and dances and things like that. Is there any reason that there cannot be another voice, because my husband knows all those buildings because he was on the fire department. If you will let me, I will have him come in and talk about it.
- A: I will tell you what I will do. How about I schedule an appointment with him and I will come back another day. That is great.
- S: He has told me about different times that they went to Manchester's on fire inspections and what they found upstairs.
- A: Thank you. What made you come to Canfield verses any other community around?
- S: I think we were just as any young couple, house hunting. We were expecting a baby eminently and we were living in a duplex in Youngstown. We had the second floor and during almost the whole nine months I was saying to myself if the baby cries at night it is just too bad. But as it got closer we got more concerned because we thought that it was not going to work out. I had a friend

in Youngstown I admired so much. Her name was Margaret Smith and her father, Mr. Kennedy, was president of the Commercial National Bank. And the reason that I bring this up is when I told Margaret Smith that I was moving to Canfield she said, "Oh, my father used to say, Why do all those people move to Poland, it is low over there. Canfield is the highest geographic point in the county, people should move to Canfield." She was a generation ahead of me and of course it was her father. So he was saying that from way, way back and I never thought about that but I guess we do go down to Poland in a sense. I was thinking about Mr. Kennedy saying that. I think that we knew that the life in a small community, we were just starting a family, so I think we probably, even though we did not know the depths of it at the time, we knew that it would be a good place.

A: Better than Youngstown?

S: Yes.

A: So the changes were already occurring before they put the freeway in?

S: True. This duplex we were in was on Broadway, exactly across from Cafaro Hospital, and that was still a very respectable neighborhood and you can see how it has changed in these years.

A: What has the Canfield Fair meant to you as a resident?

S: You cannot live in Canfield and not get involved. When I had the children at home, my husband was the one involved. He will tell you about the wonderful escapades of staying all night with the fire department and being in charge. In those days, Canfield Fire Co. was the only department that did the Fair. They did not have Green and all these other ones. If you were a fireman in Canfield, you had to go over a week before and stay a few days after and then every night during the fair and they would be up during the night. The calves would be born and things would happen and they would have to tend to that. I really never started to get interested in the fair until my children were old enough to want to go. On the first day and we would go. Then at some point one of my daughters was in charge of setting up the hostesses for Western Reserve Village, it was then Pioneer Village. When she left for college, they just said, "Why do you not do it?" So I did that for a lot of years. Then last year, probably about a week before the fair Bob Rose said, "Oh, the herb ladies are going to do it." So that was okay, I had done it for a long time.

A: That was last year?

S: Yes, that was the first year that I had not done it. But meanwhile, Chuck just told me the other night how many years we had been taking the instruments over, I think he said sixteen. Anyway, they had said to him, "Would you take the player piano over?" And he has a barrel organ and a band organ and all these automated musical instruments. So we started together then. I would be doing the Village and he would be doing the music. They said, "How would you like to go to the porch of the Carriage House instead of the railroad station platform. Then we realized how foolish we had been to stand in the sun all those years. Then we did make a considered decision that if they did not want us back at the porch of the Carriage House, we would not continue to do it. We thought that we had done it for a long time and it was great fun. But, when we could see what a difference it had made not only in our bodies, but the instruments being out and being heard. That has involved us in a lot of years in a very confining way in a sense. In that we would sometimes never get out of the Village area because we would start at eight in the morning and end at nine at night.

A: Just you and your husband?

S: Yes. There is a body of people who come through there year after year after year. And it is almost that we know them and they know us, because they look for us. There are certain ones whose names we do not know. But we have a man who always comes and always wants to hear marches. We have a couple who comes, he has a white beard and he is "Santa Claus". It is just a real interesting thing. Last year my husband had a lung operation and could not do it, so I did it. It ended up, "Where is the piano man?" every two minutes so we had to put up a sign, "Piano man is alright. He is at home recovering from surgery."

A: The people become extremely disappointed when the things they are looking for each year are not there.

S: That is right.

A: Aside from that, you are doing the Belles and Beaus too? Are you always doing that? How long have you performed at the fair?

S: Yes. Now for example, I will have the choir at the fair, at ecumenical service, I was counting up, I said to the Vindicator, "This is the 26th time." But I was wrong it was the 27th time, but that is neither here nor there. I have done that just though the years because I enjoy doing it and it is too funny. Putting a church service together for me is just second nature and I often chuckle to myself and thought, "If you had somebody that did not know how to do this, you would really

have some problems." As it turns out, I had asked Tom and Kelly Scurich for the last maybe eight years, if they would like to do some duets. They had done some over the years and they sing together beautifully. Our thought was if these volunteer singers do not show up, the three of us can always make music. Interestingly enough, we always had about 55 people, they come they sing and it is great. I would always leave the Village and go down and do the church service. Then we would usually have the Belles and Beaus on Saturday with the students and then on Sunday with the adults. We finally got smart enough to put them both on the same day, because why set-up twice? So Sunday is a big day because I have to remember what is for church and for the Belles and Beaus.

A: What is the choir? Is it a church choir?

S: It is just a collection of people who come because they read in the paper that we were doing it and it is different every year. I have had these people sign in and I could name some people, Kim and Duane Rost, Margaret and Barbara Fieger, I can name maybe twelve people who have done it through the years. But all the other names change throughout the years. They just come from different church choirs or maybe they sang in high school, whatever.

A: Are there other choirs that you continue to participate in?

S: That is really the only singing choir that I do now.

A: Have you been active with a particular church or a number of churches?

S: We belong to Westminster Presbyterian which is our home church. We were married in that church in downtown Youngstown. We tried some Canfield churches and I have to say in all honesty that we were called to return to our home church.

A: So you were looking for something more spiritual?

S: I think one's home church has certain standards and you never cease looking for that, no matter where you go. And the church in Youngstown of course changed a great deal when it moved to Boardman, but still the essence of it was there.

A: That is unusual to retain. Even churches that never move go through substantial changes.

S: Of families we have known through the years, there is a drawing to them.

- A: Where does your youngest daughter live now?
- S: She is in New York City. She is going to a fashion design institute. She lives in New York City. And then the next oldest is Charlotte and she lives in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The third one next to the oldest, is Nancy, who in Indianapolis, Indiana. The only one we have in the area is Scott.
- A: What caused them to live in other areas? I take it your youngest is going to school. Is she planning to live there?
- S: She has lived in New York for over ten years now. She finished in art at Kent State and insisted on going to New York. I guess that is what artists do.
- A: Actors go to Hollywood and artists go to New York. Now you have been performing with the bells at the fair as long as you have been practicing there?
- S: Yes. It really dates back to 1988 now that you mention that, that is how I date it because I had no real reason to do it before. And truly you would not just select to do bells out at a fair. It is pleasant and now they invite us in to do it inside the Educational Building and that it a little easier, because you cannot hear the bells very well.
- A: Before you were performing outside?
- S: Yes, out on the porch.
- A: On the porch of the Educational Building?
- S: Yes, and the Springfield Band would always come by because we just seemed to have the perfect timing. They were so cute because they would stop and then we would stop. It is unusual and I guess it is the sound. When you try to perform outside, unless you have a shell, then the sound has a tendency to just go up.
- A: So you in terms of being a fair-goer have been basically a fair worker.
- S: Yes, now that you mention it.
- A: So you have not had a chance to circulate very much throughout the rest of the fair?
- S: No. We manage to go see the quilts and that kind of thing. And when I come

down from church on Sunday there is a group of friends that I go see and that kind of thing. It is interesting because of the instruments, the people find us. This year with the new calliope, you will hear it.

A: The calliope? What is that?

S: Chuck has a new air calliope and it is just darling. It is just like one on the Delta Queen, except it being run not by steam but air. He took it over the other day. In fact, he has made a nice little pad, a brick, outside of the porch of the Carriage Building. We knew it would be too loud under the roof. It is going to be right there. You could walk way down and out of the Village and still hear it. You will hear it and you will know if we are there or not.

A: And you are heard the way you love to be heard.

S: Yes. It is happy music. That is Chuck's thing. It has been fun too because it is so totally different. I am not mechanical at all. And last year even setting it up was a major miracle. In fact, Diana Lewis helped me and her father and other friends, all because of the things that fit into the other things that fit into other things, to make it work. That is his thing. Of course, I do not enjoy the player piano unless I am out sitting on the patio reading a book and he is playing it and that is fine. But I want to play. Our partnership has been interesting in that way because we balance each other.

A: Does your daughter ever have any exhibits at the fair?

S: No, not really. Some of the prints, the local prints that she had done, she did show at the Junior League Art Show. In fact, she felt badly that this year she did not meet the deadline or she would have done it. That is where it stands. I do not know why. It probably just did not occur to her. She has shown at Butler, yet she has not entered anything into the fair. There are certainly some real good things.

A: Do you see a lot of out-of-towners that come to the fair?

S: Yes. We notice at Western Reserve Village, the Canfield people come through when they have house guests, honestly. They would say to us, "This is my sister Jan from Dayton," or whatever. But other years, I think their mind set is, "We have seen that."

A: And they skip it.

- S: Yes. That just seems to be a pattern. It has been said to us many times, that we began to have that opinion. I am sure that there are exceptions. People who always go through the Village and come and look. Just your average person, only if you have somebody from out of town.
- A: It is said that the changes in Canfield are driving the kids out because they cannot afford to start families here, for example. Have your children run into any of that?
- S: The career-marriage just took them other places. They love to come back, especially at fair time, but schools have now started so early. Of our grandchildren, all but the little ones are already in school wherever they live. They like to come for the Fourth of July, it is a big deal. I have to tell you that when we first started I thought, "Well everybody has things they do on the Fourth. Why are we doing this?"
- A: What were you doing on the Fourth?
- S: Going out to Friends Diehl Lake, for example, we had this tradition of always going out there and having a picnic and watching the fireworks. Now it has gotten so classes have reunions and families all get together. Our connection has been that Chuck puts mechanical music in and so you know, "Grandpa is in the parade," so we watch him fixing up the tractor and pull this instrument and all that stuff. We notice how many cars are in one driveway. On Fourth of July afternoon, everybody is having a barbeque. There is just a lot of people home and it is just amazing.
- A: So it is more than just Canfield residents, it is their families coming back and they use the Fourth or the fair to do that.
- S: I think so. Christmas, for example, the people in Florida got stranded at New York Airport once and said, "We were never doing that again. Holiday traveling is treacherous at times because of the weather and the crowds. Fourth and the fair are great times to come.
- A: And after the turnpike interchange, that would certainly make it easier. You said your son lives in the area, where does he live?
- S: He lives in Century Home on Detwiler Road and he married a Canfield girl and I predicted that they would always stay and I am very thankful for that. He did not marry until quite late, he was 38 years old. Many of his friends had maybe one or maybe two disasters. He was real gun shy and did not know if he was ever

going to get married. I know I sound like somebody being recorded but I have to tell you he married Julie Dunn and she is one precious gem. I am a lucky lady because I always thought I could be the best mother-in-law in the world if he picked somebody. She was one of those gals. He asked if she would stay home when Scotty was born and she was happy to do it. She cooks and calls me up about recipes. She takes care of her little fellow and she is going to have another one in December. Some hometown stories are nice. He has a construction company and calls it Sittig Construction. I said, "Well I hope it helps."

A: What location and careers are your daughters in?

S: Nancy graduated in Music at Westminster College and is a full time homemaker. She does pottery and stained glass and plays baroque trumpet. She keeps herself in a lot of things. She does a lot of gardening. Her husband is a chemist with Dow Elanko headquartered in Indianapolis and they have three children. Charlotte graduated in Art. At the moment she is taking graphic art computer.

A: How many children does she have?

S: Two little girls.

A: And she is the one in Florida?

S: Right.

A: So how many grandchildren?

S: It will be seven when Julie has the new baby.

A: Keeps you busy then.

S: It is wonderful to have them. My friend in Wales said it is your second chance to grab the brass ring. I thought that was real beautiful and so true. When you are a young woman you think, "Oh, I always have to have a baby on my shoulder." You get to a place that you realize that you cannot do that. Then there are those years that just fly by and then suddenly it is just so amazing. It was not the fact that I minded being a grandmother. It was the concept of this little human being that was somehow my eternity. It is so incredible.

A: Has the fair board ever been a problem with you in terms of the activities that you are doing?

- S: No. I guess I have just separated myself in that they have a social structure that does not interest me. They visit each other in Florida and they golf and they have a social structure that is the fair board which is more less unknown to us that are just the peasants. Because that just does not interest me, then I have never given it any kind of thought. I know there is a lot of politics to it and those that are interested in that kind of thing have to pursue it. Particularly, since they were gracious enough to allow me to have this rehearsal hall I am now indeed grateful to them.
- A: I am looking for the truth.
- S: I guess if you are truthful it is your perception and that is all you can give. It is certainly not the word of the law or whatever. As you grow older you get less sure of what really is.
- A: It is interesting the issue about alcohol on the fairgrounds. In the early 1800's it was mainly whiskey.
- S: They have kicked people out I know and I have heard stories.
- A: When the fair started in 1847, it was still acceptable to drink and it was a part of everyday life. It is interesting that they prohibited it since the very beginning.
- S: I think realistically it could get real out of hand and it is probably a good thing.
- A: It is amazing the image verses the reality. And there is very much of that in Canfield at work.
- S: Yes.
- A: Since you grew up in Youngstown, do you feel any kind of tie to it at all?
- S: Only that you can never go back. Periodically I would go up and down my street and my husband would dispute my freedom to do that because he thinks somebody is going to get me. And the high school that was a very hallowed academic place is really not a place that you would visit. It is totally changed. I think possibly, our move to Canfield was one that was more less by accident. We looked out at Liberty Township which was the stomping grounds of my parents. That area has had so many problems. They have got the Jewish, and Italian and all kinds of mixes of people who moved out of the city beyond Gypsy Lane to escape this movement. They have had lots of trouble and it is very true as reflected in the society as well. One of the things that two of my children have

said, regardless of careers taking them away, they have made remarks about how provincial it was growing up in Canfield, and that they would not like to be like that. The girl that went to New York had to mature until she got out of that period of when she talked about coming back to Ohio. I think part of the reason is a maturing process of mind set too. They felt some of this because our schools of course are so pristine.

A: What do you mean by that?

S: No mixed families of any kind, racially. Of course, in our way of thinking as a family this is a refreshing thing that has happened. I have enjoyed having these bright, Oriental Americans on my bell team. But I realize that not everybody has that same point of view. However, I can remember Marion Fowler telling me that her mother could point to houses and say, "A Catholic lives there." Now that was back two generations and what a change. Just imagine!

A: So your children feel like the attitude of the town is restricted?

S: I think perhaps in the years that they were in school; 1971, 1973, 1975, and 1978 were their graduation years. So their school years there was no diversity at all. I would question if there was even an Oriental family at that time. It was a very white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant community, truly. Then of course St. Michael's Church came along which I thought was a wonderful thing. I am not a Catholic person, but what a lovely church.

A: You as a teacher in the school system, what view of Canfield did you get from that vantage point?

S: I think there is no doubt about it that this provincialism has existed for a long, long time. I have a little Vietnamese friend and she came over to America, married to a soldier. She worked very, very hard. She did catering. I had her one time to cater a dinner for the choir and we were to announce the audition and the theme, that was a big deal. At that time she was very smitten with bringing over all of her family. So the kids in the choir were hipped up on giving her a donation. It did not matter to me. I thought, "How nice of them." I can remember one girl said, "I am not contributing to that. Those people come over here and they take jobs away from Americans." I thought, "What a family," because she did not think about that all by herself in the eleventh grade.

A: No, jobs are not important at that point.

S: I think some of this in our community is a drawback.

- A: Did you find school administration to be that way?
- S: I know it took a long time before we had a person like Zambrini, who is now the principal of the middle school. We did not have many like Zambrini for many, many, many years. We used to have Norma Ball who was a principal of an elementary school. We had C.M. Johnson. You could read down the names, very Anglo names.
- A: Who hired them?
- S: Well, that would be the School Board.
- A: The Canfield School Board?
- S: Yes. This went on for a long, long time. There was a time under C.M. Johnson that teachers were not encouraged to get Master's degrees. Even way back to when people had certificates as Cadet Teacher's were not encouraged to pick up their real certificates. His theory was, they would know too much then. He could satisfy them kind of with lollipops at that point. There was no unionizing to it.
- A: Did he tell them what to teach?
- S: No.
- A: In terms of broad direction?
- S: I think in those days you had these teachers who, for example, if you taught first grade, you did not define whether you were using the whole method or the phonics. You just decided how your class was going to read and they were going to learn to read. So you had a combination of collective information that you poured out to this child, and he read. Then the school system kind of topsy grew, and suddenly it was a big school system. The thing I find fault with to a point is, if I did not have other things that I was more interested in, I would run for school board. I think what happens is the people that run for the school board go there with an open mind, and then they are courted. Then after the courtship they become rubber stamps. I keep seeing this no matter who goes on. I think, "Oh, here is a hopeful." And then this person gets to go to conventions and stay in hotels. If you look at that as a fine life, and you have never had perks, then you think, "Wow, this is great. And see, that does not impress me. We are talking about our kids and our education system, not politics.
- A: I get the impression that for other teachers you have found it easy to get along

as long as you did not talk about other issues, or the fine points of being a teacher.

S: Right. What I learned real quickly was . . . I was a part-time teacher and I was getting more than full time on the clock. I do not mean for this to sound unhumble, but I was very soon a object of jealousy. What I did was very visual. For example, once I was out of town and I came back and the Belles and Beaus were on the front cover of the Sunday Vindicator. They Had posed for the picture while I was gone and I knew nothing about it. Somebody knew somebody who knew somebody who could get them together and they took the picture. Everybody has a football team. But nobody had the Belles and Beaus. What I did then, I had to kind of do just because I wanted to do it, and not look for camaraderie.

A: It isolated you?

S: Yes, it did. It really did. And see my overtness in that I did not have to have a job. My husband had a fine job and I was doing it because I loved doing it. Really I would not temper what I had to say. I will give you an example.

A: I do not imagine you ever did.

S: I went out one day with the Madrigal Singers and the kids in the chorus class were left back at school and they said, "Can we have a pizza party?" I said, "Yeah, but would not walk by the office with your pizza, please." So I come back and Mr. Kay writes me a note and says, "Did we hire a substitute to have a pizza party?" To which I replied, "In all the years I have taught here, you have never hired a music substitute, which is school law requirement. Therefore, if we are going to have a babysitter, we might as well have a pizza party." And I signed my name. You see, you get no reply when you send something like that because you have now confronted something. I had no problem with doing that because it did not matter if he asked me to quit.

A: So Mr. Kay did not take it?

S: No, I was an entity. That is the way I was.

A: I cannot believe that it isolated. What were they jealous of? The fact that they could not do the same?

S: No, I think it was popularity for the music department which had never happened before.

- A: But it does not take distract from their program.
- S: No, it added. But you see, you have a rapport when you have that many kids and you are doing an art form. Every relationship that you had, you could establish automatically out of warmth and love. There was no problem. But if you are like an administrator, they are going to run when they see you coming. And secondly, they did not have the opportunity or the desire. The first year that I was there, I asked the art teacher if she would put together some colors to be put on the screen to make it look like a stained glass window. And after the musical was over I walked by and I heard her saying, "I was so tired." All she had done is this one little thing. I thought, "Oh, I see." So I learned real quickly not to involve anybody. I realize I was being very overt. They had teacher day at the Canfield Fair time, so I just did not go. I went in and Mr. Kay said, "Oh, you still work here?" I said, "I do not know, my name is still on the mailbox." There was no more of a confrontation, it was dropped right there. It was because I put all these hours in, they knew . . . "Hey guys I am here at 9:30 at night. What time did you go home?" Understand, I did that because I wanted to. I was not trying to prove anything.
- A: Right, and there is something else here at work. You had another priority and that was the students.
- S: Yes. I was not trying to get ahead of anybody. It is just the program or the choir that you do the things when the kids are available.
- A: The point is everybody can do their job. How they do it is their own choice. If somebody else does better than them, they have a choice to change. That means today, you do not feel a part of that alumni then?
- S: No. I have never darkened the door of a teacher's party. I am not looking for my friends at my work place. If it had happened . . . I have a couple of secretaries that I see and we go to dinner. They are darling ladies and I love them to death. First of all, there is a tremendous amount of change because the first year teachers are a lot more in demand than the ones way up high on the salary schedule. I used to kid and say, "If you are here five years, I will learn your name." This is just a fact of life.
- A: It is a fact of today's life but it does not have to be.
- S: That is right.
- A: Have you kept a record of the Belles and Beaus?

S: Bless you, you hit on a tender spot. That was so stupid of me. I have said a million times, "If I had only started a spiral notebook and have everybody write their name down.

A: You were too busy doing.

S: That is exactly my response, I have said it so many times. I have a vivid memory of most everybody. Then there are always people who maybe their parents moved away. And by now, hundreds of people have rung. Barbara Fieger has tried to send cards to about 100 people because she went through yearbooks. We are having our 20th reunion at the fair. She is trying to round people up.

A: Could I hear the Marion Fowler tape.

S: Where is it. It is on file at the Library.

A: Which library?

S: Canfield Library. It is on a reel to reel, but I made a cassette. Somebody said to me at one point, from the Historical Society, "Did you know there is a tape of Marion Fowler?" I do remember offering Ralph . . . I can remember saying, "Would you like to hear Marion?" And he said, "No, I do not think I could handle that." And he never heard it. Do you have any of my Canfield postcards?

A: No.

S: I went over one day and they had a picture of the post office and I thought, "Right." So you know me, I got my little camera and I have 18 postcards over at Buckeye Pharmacy. I have sold hundreds of them. The only reason I did is because we have this adorable town, and we should be proud of it.

A: Thank you for the interview