



Worthington Memory

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Contributor: Worthington Historical Society

Oral History Interview with Harold Benson Jones

66 Years Old

May 15, 1986

154 Franklin Ave.

Interviewed by: Elizabeth Oden

[Information in brackets throughout interview added by Worthington Historical Society transcriptionists.]

Elizabeth O.: Good Morning. Today is Thursday May 15th, 1986. My name is Elizabeth Oden and I am visiting with Mr. Harold Jones in his very pleasant home in Worthington, Ohio so to learn more about the older Worthington he remembers as he was growing up. Good morning Mr. Jones. It is good to be able to visit with you. I appreciate your willingness to take time from a very busy schedule. Please give us your full name for an accurate record, and a check on me, and a little background on your family and your activity these days, before we start discussing the old days.

Harold J.: My name is Harold Benson Jones. I have been here in Worthington since my sixth grade. I lived in Columbus for a while with my aunt and uncle. My father died when I was 2 ½ years old. Mother lived here in Worthington. I was born just north of Worthington, up on North High Street.

My mother's maiden name was Fields and so, we're related to some of the Fields who are old timers around Worthington, Ohio. I came back to live in Worthington when I started into the sixth grade.

Elizabeth O.: Well that's quite a record. I knew your mother and enjoyed her very much. She was one of the oldest residents of Worthington and when I talked with her she had a lot of interesting things that we were able to get on tape. People will enjoy hearing I know. She was a very interesting person. And the fact that you've been here a long time – you already had mentioned that many of the people here in Worthington have connections with the very first beginnings of Worthington really, your family. So then it's nice that people have wanted to

stay here, you know. I think that adds a lot to the Worthington history. I think we need to talk and get more of that down, so it's good that your one of the ones that has been here and known a lot of those people and a part of it. So you lived in Worthington since approximately you say since you were about six years old...

Harold J.: No sixth grade. I came back here when I was in the sixth grade and continued from the sixth grade until I graduated from high school here.

Elizabeth O.: So you have definitely seen much change and much growing I'm sure, and sometimes we wish we wouldn't grow so fast.

Harold J.: It's been a pleasant place to live.

Elizabeth O.: Uh-huh. Well, I've been here since '59 and I agree with you. Very nice place to live. With the schools, I think one interesting thing with the schools is to note the changes. The present day schools. Your own family have all gone to school here, so their school has represented something different from your school here. Where were the buildings? Did you change buildings from elementary to high school like they do now?

Harold J.: Well, yes. I attended the sixth grade was where the Kilbourne School is located now. There was a sixth and seventh grade, let's see...wait a minute now - The fifth and sixth grades were there. The elementary building was just to the west of the building that I attended school in. The building I attended school in had the fifth and sixth grades and a music room. At the back of the building was a gymnasium in which we played some of our basketball games. When the basketball games were played, the high school boys came up there and played ball in that gymnasium. The elementary building, as I said, was to the west of the school I attended school.

Then, when I got to the seventh and eighth grade, was down the hill, that's what we called it, "down the hill" on 161 at the corner of Evening Street and 161. The Annex building which stands on there that corner was our high school, and that's where I attended high school. Just to the east of that building, there were two buildings which they called portables. Portable. Then your sixth and seventh grades - wait a minute - The seventh and eighth grades were in the portables, and then, ninth grade through the all rest of the high school were in the Annex, what is the Annex building now. [*Now the McConnell Arts Center*]

Elizabeth O.: And is that the big square building?

Harold J.: That's the square building. And on the other side of the building was another portable for Industrial Arts.

Elizabeth O.: Oh that had its own...

Harold J.: Right, when I attended school there, Mr. [Harold C.] McCord was the Industrial Arts teacher and a coach of basketball, football, and the basketball. And so he was my coach. During the time I was in school from the seventh grade on, I saw him move from the Industrial Arts and coach to him being the principal, and then before I graduated, he had moved to into superintendency of the school system. So, there was a big transition at the time.

Across from the high school, where Kilbourne Village is now, there was a large corn field. The Wilcox brothers used to put corn in that area. It was 100 acres down there which belonged to the St. John's Episcopal Church.

Elizabeth O.: That's interesting. Well then the building that you first attended sixth grade – it's still standing? That same building?

Harold J.: No. There were two buildings that were torn down, and while I was in high school, the present Kilbourne school was built on that site. They included in that building, what was to us a very fine gymnasium. We played our high school basketball games up there. On Friday and Saturday nights in Worthington, it was not uncommon for the whole village to shut down, when we had our basketball games and everybody was at the basketball game.

Elizabeth O.: That's a nice way to share things, you know, the school and the adults.

Harold J.: The whole town was basketball and football fans.

Elizabeth O.: I was going to say, you were ensured of an encouraging crowd weren't you?

Harold J.: Right, right.

Elizabeth O.: Now that gym is still in use, isn't it?

Harold J.: That gym is still in use, and that building was the building which housed the elementary school at that time.

Elizabeth O.: When I came it was there.

Harold J.: It was elementary school. And then down where Evening Street School is, down in that area, our football field occupied the area that Evening Street Elementary School occupies now. Our football field and our track was down there.

Elizabeth O.: Oh, really? So, all the present facilities then are new and they're certainly much further west.

Harold J.: Yes.

Elizabeth O.: Oh that's interesting. I'm sure the numbers of pupils have doubled and tripled and maybe even more.



- Harold J.: Yes. Our graduating class was so large that we had to occupy, we just occupied the stage at Kilbourne School. There were about 25 or 30 of us who graduated from high school at that time. We all sat on the stage with the speakers, for baccalaureate and all that. We sat right up there.
- Elizabeth O.: That would not be possible in this day in age, would it?
- Harold J.: No.
- Elizabeth O.: There are many, many. Do you think the curriculum has changed much? Have they added a lot of...I guess they really have, haven't they?
- Harold J.: Oh yes. Curriculum has. It has increased for the better. One of the things I have always been impressed with since I came back up to Worthington to attend school, even back at the time, was the effort toward excellence. It's always, it's always been that way. They've been very proud of the fact that they had good students. We were called a country school, and when we would go to other schools, some of our neighbor schools, which we have this terrific rivalry right now which has developed into one of those things where they have fisticuffs now. But, they used to call us the "hillbillies" and "hicks" when we'd go to play against them, and so this rivalry has gone on for a number of years, and it's too bad it has developed into what it has.
- Elizabeth O.: Yes, I think that that sort of detracts from the benefit from the sports to the youngsters, don't you think?
- Harold J.: It does.
- Elizabeth O.: To have that kind of competition....but I was interested in your remarking about the Manual Arts. It must have been a large program and I think even when you were first into high school or maybe it was there before?
- Harold J.: It was a requirement at that time. Everyone was required to take Industrial Arts. When you became a senior, you were no longer eligible to get credits for it, and so ordinarily, you didn't bother with it when you were a senior. However, there were several of the seniors that did receive credit, because one of the teachers had to leave, and they didn't feel able, for some reason or another, to hire a replacement. So, those of us who were seniors and had done well in Industrial Arts, why Mr. McCord had us to come back in to fill the place, the vacancy, under his supervision.
- So, there was a Joe Bogner, I think his wife is, I don't whether she's secretary or what at the Methodist Church. But Joe Bogner was with photography. They taught photography at that time. And then there was a Jack Holman who was with woodworking, and I taught Metal Shop.

Elizabeth O.: Well, and those things are very indicative of what the schools presented as the regular things....

Harold J.: They had some other groups that filled in too. Which we were just, during certain periods, we would have time out and some other seniors would go in.

Elizabeth O.: Well that way they could continue to offer it, especially since they were requiring it. Which says a lot when a school does set up those kinds of requirements, it signifies, you know, how they wanted to have quality education. And I guess that's part of Worthington's heritage, too, don't you think? I think from the very beginning James Kilbourn was, I guess as a youngster he had no education. I was reading about him not very long ago. It said that they, it was so important to him, that was one thing he saw that they established here, a strong school system.

Harold J.: I thought it was really quite...quite an insight when they set aside 100 acres for the school system, and they set the other aside as the farm for the church farm.

Elizabeth O.: And certainly the whole community benefitted from what they could grow here. So, I think probably, that's one of the things that has helped Worthington maintain some of their standards, you know. So best of luck. So, moving on, I guess we could spend all kinds of time....

Oh, well you've already mentioned the sports...I was going to ask you if you thought there were differences in the program, and the big difference...they've expanded.

Harold J.: Oh yes, the progress as far as youngsters are concerned. They are so much more agile both physically and mentally.

Elizabeth O.: Well, and I think the school because it's located along the water and everything has been able to give the children like canoeing, archery and a lot of the things that aren't presented at some schools.

Harold J.: So much of it over the years has just been added, almost like building blocks, you know. They had certain things they presented to us, when we were in school, and then, as society has grown and they felt the need to add on different bits to the curriculum and to the intramurals and all this. It's been good and very healthy for the students.

When I was in school, why we swam down in the river there. There was, they had a water hole that we had down on the Olentangy River at the end of Riverlea Blvd. There were no houses down in there. The streets were there. The streets had been laid out. But the Depression came, and no one had any money to build. So, the streets were there. We used to go down at the end of the street and swim. And we used to roller skate all down through there.

Elizabeth O.: I was going to say that presented an advantage really for you children. Well I think, your program even though, you know, it has grown as the community and the schools have grown, and so what the schools offered in the way of sports and extra activities like that was beyond what a lot of the schools were offering, you know, were able to offer. So, it's sort of comparable to what it is now, but it's grown, it's large now. But I think that's one thing that you have shown how Worthington deserves the fame it has for a good education. That's interesting.

Then I was going to ask you – you've already mentioned how there were a lot of streets, but not houses for a long time, and all of what is now known as part of Worthington and developed was just open ground, huh? So what was Worthington when, where were the boundaries pretty much when you were growing up?

Harold J.: Well, when I first came up here, Worthington proper was North Street, South Street, Evening Street, and Morning Street. Just this side of Morning Street, and on this side I say to the east side of Morning Street, you were outside of the Village, although if you had a fire, why since we had the Township Fire Department, which was volunteer at that time, and they would come out to your place. So, you did have protection that way. And then we had a marshal, Jim Taladay. Yeah, that was the police department. I suppose then, when he felt it necessary, why then he would deputize some people. But he was the marshal, and then also he took care of the water works down, which was down on school property, which provided the water that we had here in Worthington. There was about four or five wells down there, very clear water. We had our own system, and the water was a lot better than the water we have today.

Elizabeth O.: Well there are underground springs that run...?

Harold J.: Yes. There is still one well down there, that they can still operate from if they want to. And I don't know if they use it for irrigation or a sprinkler system at the high school or not. But there was until a year or two ago, a well that was capable of being used. Now whether they capped that off, I don't know.

Elizabeth O.: But that's interesting that it's still probably they could get back into it....

Harold J.: It's very interesting in that bottom land, there are those wells. And I've been told that there's a geologist that had looked at that and had examined that land, and said that there is as much gravel under there as there was over to the Antrim Park where the Millers had a quarried over there for the gravel. But this belonging to the school, they could not use the gravel. And so I'm a firm believer that there is a lot of gravel under there, because Mr. McCord, at one time, attempted to make an ice rink down at the bottom there. And that's where you had to plow that up to level that out. And he had it kinda dammed up like. Then he had gotten bentonite sand. Oh we put bentonite, bentonite on there. You know the bentonite is very fine. It's supposed to lock in and to make it so it wouldn't be so porous, but still it would not hold the water enough to have an

ice rink. It would just sink right down in, because of the porosity of the soil. So of great interest, to know some of those things.

Elizabeth O.: It sure is. What would you say, speaking of the boundaries of Worthington – could you kind of think back, and think when it started expanding as far as, you know, being more built up? I think it must have been more built up to the east, don't you think?

Harold J.: Right. Really, the growth of Worthington, I would think, came, the population explosion came right at the end of the Second World War.

Elizabeth O.: Oh, really. Huh!

Harold J.: And then it just... '45.. It exploded. Because, the man that had been my basketball coach, he and another man named [John] Meyer, [Ray] Heischman and Meyer got together. And Heischman was a principal of the high school. And so he resigned and went into developing real estate. Heischman and Meyer, they came back up behind where I live here in Worthington Park and they put in all those buildings back there. And then, they went up along Crandall and that area, which, all that had been agrarian. Everything has exploded and come after the Second World War, basically. There were a few buildings that had been built, but basically all of your...the building and the building boom came right then.

Elizabeth O.: Well, in Downtown Worthington do you remember in those older times before it grew, do you remember? Are the stores pretty much the same? The buildings are a lot the same, aren't they?

Harold J.: Buildings are pretty much the same. There are some buildings have long since gone because there at the corner of Stafford and High, there was Powell's old garage, that they sold gasoline and repaired cars. Right to the south of him, there had been a big old building that was a grocery store.

Elizabeth O.: Oh really?

Harold J.: Yeah, Tuller's. That would have been to the west side of High St. And to the north of Stafford and High there was a complex in there of apartments. There was an apartment building on that corner. [Brundage/Brundige Tavern] I remember people lived there.

And then down on into Worthington, why the hardware store was just a little tiny thing. And on the other side of the hardware, which the hardware occupies, the south side of the hardware was a Kroger Store.

On the other side of the street, why there was an IGA Market there where the bank is. The bank, at one time, was in the building that the Bonnells, right there by the Bonnells, there was a little bank situated there.

Where the big bank is now, there was a feed and grain and storage. A Todd, Squire Todd, was his name. The Todds still live in Worthington.

Elizabeth O.: Yes, I have to talk to Mrs. Todd sometime...

Harold J.: His son [Harry] is associated with Freedom Federal Bank.

Elizabeth O.: Yes, I think that's another indication of how so much of it goes together, and that helps to strengthen Worthington....

Harold J.: Up on the corner of the Green there was the Leasure's Drug Store, and...

Elizabeth O.: Were there two drug stores? Seem to me there were when I first...

Harold J.: There were, at one time there were two drug stores. Let's see. There was Leasure's, let's see. Now Leasure's moved and then became Long's Drug Store.

Elizabeth O.: Yes, that's what it was when I came.

Harold J.: And then Birnie's came, Birnie's in the mid-portion of the block, and then Adams came in there. Adams is gone and Denig's Jewelers are there now.

Elizabeth O.: And that's an old business isn't it?

Harold J.: Home Market was up there when I was a little kid. And it's still there. Thank goodness for something that doesn't go away. We need an anchor, you know, to hold on to as we grow older. We like to see *something* still remain we can recognize.

Elizabeth O.: Well I agree with you, yes. Now Dr. Bonnell's house, that structure's been there for a long time, hasn't it?

Harold J.: Yes, well I can remember Dr. Bonnell when he was still in medical school. They lived there, and his father was a doctor. I remember him hollering out the upstairs window and speaking to us as we'd go by.

Elizabeth O.: Now there was another building that must, it was not where the Methodist Church is but was to the south of where the present the Methodist Church is?

Harold J.: Oh the Seminary Apartments. Seminary Apartments. But the Seminary, from what I understand, it had been an Academy there, of Learning.

There is a legend that it was, at one time, a medical school, and that so many of the students were stealing or catching peoples' cats and dogs and things and dissecting [*Worthington Academy, to which he refers, was located on the northeast quadrant of the Village Green where the Deshler/Kilbourne building is*

today]. To work on them, so that they were finally discouraged and run out of town. And I think that eventually, from what the legend says when I was a youngster, whether it's true or not, but anyway, they said they went on down and that was part of the beginning of the medical school at the University of Cincinnati.

Elizabeth O.: Oh really? I knew that there had been a school here for a time, but I thought maybe it had just been absorbed by the University.

Harold J.: They stopped somewhere between here and Cincinnati, and I'm not certain what small town it was, and then finally eventually gravitated down there. That's what I've been told years and years ago.

Elizabeth O.: Well, I remember them talking about a doctor had an office near, in one of the buildings, near the hardware store building. [Dr. Thomas Morrow] Maybe near the bakery is now? And that he left town because, I don't know whether he was involved with teaching some students or there was something...you know, part of the history I'd read and part of the walking tour talks about that building and the fact that he'd practiced there for a while and then left Worthington for some reason or another. So maybe they were all connected...

Harold J.: There's a number of businesses that had been, and some moved away, and some people got older and didn't no longer decide to keep their business going, and stopped. There was Snouffer's Dry Cleaning which is no longer in operation. There was one of the Snouffer's was an upholsterer and had a business here. Then there was a Steve Snouffer who works at the, still [unintelligible] around at the hardware up there. He's kinda semi-retired. He had a business, remember that Scandinavian type of furniture that's being made? They used to repair automobiles in there.

Elizabeth O.: Oh yes, and then there was a car agency there too wasn't there?

Harold J.: Yes, well no, prior to the car agency, he repaired cars there, and then on the other side where the [unintelligible] is just on the other side of where they do the body shop repair there was Heil's Ford place. He sold Fords there. Since it moved on down below Worthington and finally ended up as what is it, Bryant [?] I think it is.

Elizabeth O.: One of the larger agencies. I'd forgotten about them.

Harold J.: There's been a lot of change I've seen.

Elizabeth O.: Do you remember the little house next to the Seminary? That same house?

Harold J.: Yes, that had been, from what I understand, it had been the president of the Seminary, had been his, that had been their home. It had very interesting...

- Elizabeth O.: Because, I remember, it was very close there.
- Harold J.: Very interesting architecture. Too bad...
- Elizabeth O.: They moved that. Were you around when they moved that?
- Harold J.: House? I was around here, um-hmm
- Elizabeth O.: That must have been interesting to watch, because it's a small house and also it has a lot of decoration on it. You'd think that they would have had trouble keeping it together.
- Harold J.: Well, you know the most amazing home that was moved around here, I thought, when I was a youngster...that was moved - and I don't even think my wife remembers it - but there was a house on North Street right where what the, I've forgotten now...It used to be a Texaco Station across on the west side of High Street and North, on the southwest corner. There was this huge old house there, all brick. Years and years ago, North Street was basically gravel, and when they moved that house, it was that big old brick house and they moved down to - Hartford dead-ends into North Street, and that big brick house is on the north side of North Street [*72 E. North Street; Ladd-Mattoon-Woodrow house*]. I think the Poseys had that house at one time, I think. But that big house and the brick has been painted white.
- Elizabeth O.: Oh, it's on the east of High!
- Harold J.: Yes, east of High.
- Elizabeth O.: Oh, did they move that? Is that right?
- Harold J.: They brought it down, they brought that house. And it was a big brick house, and they moved that, and so that was the most amazing thing to me.
- Elizabeth O.: I would think! I remember that house when I came but it was on North Street on the east side. I never knew that it had been...
- Harold J.: I think it's in the Historical Register.
- Elizabeth O.: Yes, I was going to say. Because it's very old, I'm sure. I remember they were talking about it when it was restored. There were several people that just added things on that didn't go with the architecture. And so now they've redone it so that its considered part of the registry or something?
- Harold J.: Yes, uh-huh.
- Elizabeth O.: I can't believe – that house is long. I mean, that has a lot of square feet in it. They must have an extra big platform.

- Harold J.: Yes, there was a... I remember the Bryant Moving Company was the one moved that. They're not in existence now.
- Elizabeth O.: They were one of the few moving businesses in Columbus weren't they, as I remember...Well speaking of moving, the church, in the church history, the A.M.E. Church history that I was reading, says that they moved, when they first started up and got their own land and own building, they moved house onto their property that they purchased. Do you remember that? Was that before?
- Harold J.: Well that part, that is something I don't remember. It still could have been during my time, but I lived in Columbus for quite a while with an aunt and uncle. So I was just generally up here on weekends, maybe sometime it would be every weekend. Other times, it would be several weekends before I would come up here to be with mother. But so much was done, that I don't remember all of what was done. But, I do remember some of the areas around the church. The little old street, Plymouth Street, was a street that was made up of - well they used ashes from you know, not ashes – clinkers from, you know. So that was a little old street that was kinda part mud and part clinkers going down through there. Because you see, that was just at one time, would have been outside of Worthington, the boundaries of Worthington.
- Elizabeth O.: And some of that was probably still farm land. Or maybe open, wooded.
- Harold J.: It was still, a lot of it was still open. I can remember when I'd go there to Sunday school and to church. Back to the west of the building, why it was open, open field, and then to the north, there were no buildings, and there was just some open lots. Then, the old Wright place came almost all the way down to the church.
- Elizabeth O.: Oh yes, that's right, that was close there, wasn't it? That was another old building, that...
- Harold J.: The old Wright's house.
- Elizabeth O.: That was a frame house, wasn't it?
- Harold J.: Yes, it was.
- Elizabeth O.: So it probably couldn't have been saved.
- Harold J.: It had a lot of gingerbread. It could have been, had they chosen to, because it wasn't in that bad of shape. But, they chose to use that area for something else. Now, it would have been, you know, a...
- Elizabeth O.: A landmark.

- Harold J.: A landmark. Something you would have been very proud to have kept. It would have taken quite a bit of money to restore, but it wasn't in that bad of shape.
- Elizabeth O.: Well, the land around it is very valuable. I guess it has a lot of unusual plants growing back there. Isn't it kind of swampy back there?
- Harold J.: Well it's just a nature –
- Elizabeth O.: There's not water but it's just...
- Harold J.: It's pretty overgrown. It's pretty overgrown because they wanted to save it for wildlife sanctuary. [*East Granville Rd. Park/Moses Wright Nature Preserve*]
- Elizabeth O.: Yes, well I knew - I'd read or been told there, back in there, were rare plants back there that you don't find anywhere else, which is interesting, too.
- Well, the little church building, I think, has grown a lot you know, as time goes on, and certainly it has a very interesting history. And is closely knit because of the fact that so many of the people have stayed here, and their families, you know, have grown up and stayed here and had their own families. So it's a really nice part of Worthington history, I think. Do you remember any of the community activities maybe that used to take place? You know like parades. Course we still have a parade that's become a tradition in Worthington, don't we, at Memorial Day. I guess, was that one well established?
- Harold J.: Not that well established. The days I can remember the most that the whole town enjoyed together was Halloween. And they blocked off High, from New England up to 161, and they'd have square dance and round square dance out there on High Street on Halloween. Halloween was always a big time. Then, you could go into the confectionery, there at Henry's Confectionery, and get some goodies. Sometimes he would sell cider and stuff out on the street there. They would have a parade of those people and would choose the best costume, the funniest costume, the ugliest person's costume and all that. It was a great time.
- Elizabeth O.: Yeah, well I can see where it would be. Speaking of that little place where you could go in to get something to eat – that's one of the ones, that was on the east side of the street?
- Harold J.: No, the place where I'm speaking of, you're talking about the confectionery, Henry's, that would have been on the west side of the street. That's where the present – there's a barber shop in there now. But that was a little confectionery, and then, Henry got old and could no longer run it, then there were people who came called Wades.
- Elizabeth O.: Oh, so it was an established business for quite a while. Well, I heard an interview of an old resident who lived on West New England, and his name wasn't Billings, but he was – oh I shouldn't have even of mentioned this I guess.

But any way he was talking about – he lived until just about eight years or ten years ago and was 90 some when he died, and someone interviewed him and I heard that played back you know – he was talking about a big house on the northeast corner of West New England and High Street that belonged to a doctor? Was that there? It's now, it's been a like garage I heard.

Harold J.: When I remember first coming up here, there was a huge old house that they had, at the time I was here, they had changed over and made an eating place.

Elizabeth O.: Oh really? Probably the doctor's family had long since...

Harold J.: Probably, Frank Welling was the one that was talking about this place.

Elizabeth O.: Welling! That's who it was.

Harold J.: Yeah, Frank Welling. I think the Wellings might have lived up on that corner. It had been a residence, and then, they had place, an eating establishment similar, to the old Worthington Inn. They were just right across the street from one another. I remember helping to, when I was in high school, helping to, when they tore it down. It was a brick place, and we'd pick up a little pin money. We cleaned bricks for the contractor.

Elizabeth O.: Well he mentioned also a door or two north of that building, *[tape was flipped]* across on the corner of New England and High Street, was a small ice cream business? Do you remember that?

Harold J.: Yes, Isalys. Yeah, Isalys. And Isalys was there for a number of years. We used to come up from high school. And that was our - you know, everybody has to have a watering hole. So that was our ice cream hole there. We used to stop by...

Elizabeth O.: And that was kind of your hangout for the high school students?

Harold J.: Hm-hmm, yes.

Elizabeth O.: Oh that's interesting.

Harold J.: We'd come up there and get our ice cream cones.

Elizabeth O.: Do you remember how long was it there? I mean was it there all through your high school?

Harold J.: Pretty much, almost all the high school days. Then later on, why then there was a, years later I guess, after I'd gotten married and had some of our children, why there was a shoe store in that place, in that place there.

Elizabeth O.: Well, that's interesting. That's the first I'd ever heard that mentioned too.

- Harold J.: I remember because we used to take one of our boys up there to get his shoes, and everyone up in Worthington knew Pee Wee. He was a precocious little guy, and he was *well* liked up there. He liked to tease, yes. And he was, he liked people, liked to meet people. So, everyone knew Pee Wee.
- Elizabeth O.: That's a nice characteristic to have, to be outgoing I think. It's good to be like that.
- Harold J.: Incidentally, his name is *not* PeeWee. I just gave him that nickname because he was so tiny. His name is Paul. And, he would not like it if I didn't straighten that out. Yes. Paul.
- Elizabeth O.: Where does Paul live now?
- Harold J.: He lives in Stanford, Connecticut, and he's associated with CBS in New York.
- Elizabeth O.: Oh, well that's interesting. That - his characteristic of liking people certainly is fitting for that profession. That's good. Well, does he get home very often?
- Harold J.: Oh, well, he came for...Not too often, he's quite, he is quite busy. But he did, he took time out to come to his grandmother's funeral which was several weeks ago.
- Elizabeth O.: Yes, that was nice to have him home even though it was a sad occasion. But, he went to school here too. But he probably sees lots of change also. How long has he been gone?
- Harold J.: [*Aside*] See I told you he should be here so he can help me! [*another man laughs*]
- Elizabeth O.: Oh, it doesn't matter! I meant just more or less.
- Harold J.: Paul left in about '65 or '66 to go away to school. He went east to school. So, basically, when your youngsters, when they go away to school, when they graduate, why, that's it. They kind of go their way and go to different areas in which, wherever they can make their way.
- Elizabeth O.: And we hate to have that happen and yet that's what we want for them too, you know. So, it's the way things go, I guess. But, do you have any particular – you mentioned the marshal and the volunteer fire department, that stayed that way up into the '60s, I believe, because when we moved here my husband joined the volunteer fire department. And I think it was all volunteer then.
- Harold J.: They used to have a big water tower up there right behind the bank area. And up on the water tower was the fire siren. And we lived way up on North Street, not quite to Proprietors, but when that thing, when that went off, you could hear it up there, you know. And a lot of guys who were volunteers, lived that far

away, you know. And such a scrambling! And you could see them come down. Well, North Street was, still was kind of gravelly at that time, and you'd see this big cloud of dust, and guys would flyin' to get there—

- Elizabeth O.: Creating their own hazards!
- Harold J.: So they could get down to the fire house. The firehouse, at one time, was right up here where the Odd Fellows Hall is. The Odd Fellows Hall has been since bought by the St. John's Episcopal Church. There was a fire...
- Elizabeth O.: Right on that corner of – is that Hartford?
- Harold J.: Hartford and 161, mm-hmm, a fire station there.
- Elizabeth O.: Yes, I think it had moved by the time we came. But I remember someone else mentioned that. That's good that you mentioned it because I had since forgotten that. But, anyway, the marshal was only police for a long time. You really didn't have that much problem, did you? You probably didn't have to lock your doors or things were pretty quiet?
- Harold J.: No, until just a few years ago. First time we started locking our doors, because our neighbors said, [*stern voice*] "You better start locking your doors!" Said, "This isn't like it used to be." And so now, we lock our doors. But it was just so that - all over Worthington, it was just that way. You could go up to door, you could walk right to in a person's house if you wanted to, because a person didn't, you know, they just didn't lock up. Unless I suppose they were going on some prolonged vacation. And then, they would probably lock up their place if they were going to be gone for several weeks or so, but otherwise no one locked their doors.
- Elizabeth O.: Which was indicative of the good atmosphere that, you know, makes Worthington sort of a special history site, I guess too, you know. And it's indicative of the fact that there are many families who have stayed here and you know, have become a part of the tradition, which all adds to it and it's good. Are there any special people in the community that you remember? Like you mentioned though the police man, the marshal, who he probably was one...
- Harold J.: Yeah, Jim Taladay, yes.
- Elizabeth O.: ...that was here. In fact, I think he still was living when we came to Worthington.
- Harold J.: I think so, yes. Well, I was trying to think of some of the people that have made such an impact. Now that was McCord, Harold McCord. He was a very good educator. Helped me to, to point me along the way. And not only that he was a good friend. He was a good friend to me and to the other people that were here in Worthington. And what I remember about him was - he *tried* to be fair. He would never have made a good diplomat, because he was - it was either yes or

no. And you either liked Mac or you hated him, because there was not much middle ground. You knew where he stood. Whether he was right or wrong, you sure knew where he stood.

Elizabeth O.: Well and as an educator, that's probably one of the things that children need, is a definite, whether it's your own view, but if it's definite and you don't change, children learn a lot from that. You know, if you're fair, why I think a certain amount of discipline helps children because it gives you certain guidelines to go by. You aren't always changing around.

Speaking of that - do you remember – it seems to me there was a part of West New England that was not built up for a long time and people had gardens there. Do you remember that? Behind the hardware store. [*where the Rectory and parking lots are located now*]

Harold J.: Yes. Because I used to plow through there, right next to the Silcott's house, [46 *East New England*] which still stands there. All that parking lot, that's down there, that was there; that was garden area and I used to plow it.

Elizabeth O.: And on that corner too, so that was unique.

Harold J.: That whole corner, that whole corner, that whole area in there - that was the garden area.

Elizabeth O.: And the rest of it was all built up. There were houses there, which is a unique...

Harold J.: And then at the far end down there, at the, just west of Evening St, when it was still farm area, I remember Del [Dr. Delbert] Oberteuffer [129 W. *New England Ave.*], who was a professor at Ohio State, he and a number of the people had gardens at the east end of that farm area, that big open area. And I used to plow that for them. So I had a tractor and a little plow, and I'd plow that up for them. All along that...

Elizabeth O.: And that's an interesting combination of farm and community. You know, the community was built up and yet it still had this atmosphere to it...

Harold J.: It took them a while to get out of the agrarian way of doing things. Because, I can well remember going over to just the west of the river, and I used to plant corn over there in some of the bottom lands. And then there was Ed Werner, who had Werner Construction. He had a place on Olentangy River Road, and I used to farm some of his land up there.

Elizabeth O.: Didn't they live in a house that was on the north...

Harold J.: Well, they lived next to Elmers. Elmers was the man that had a lot to do with "All." The detergent "All"? When the detergent "All" first came out? Elmers, was the one. And now...

- Elizabeth O.: Oh, he lived in Worthington?
- Harold J.: Yes, uh-huh. Right next to Werners. Now his son is not in this type of business, but those big coaches, the special made coaches, that are the Greyhound coaches? Cost three, four hundred thousand dollars. Custom built coach company. That is his son, Elmers, that has that custom built coach. I remember him that he used to have a little old tractor similar to mine. He used to do a little, we did a little plowing around Worthington.
- Elizabeth O.: Well now, didn't the Werners live on the corner? What would it be? Like the northeast corner of 315 and 161? Wasn't there a big frame house there for a long time?
- Harold J.: Uhh....
- Elizabeth O.: And you could turn off of 315 at an angle?
- Harold J.: Oh, that was the Werner who put in the corn in there. Well, when he first got started, he used to borrow my equipment to get started doing, in what he was doing. But, that's a different Werner.
- But there's an Ed Werner. Well, you - It's called general maintenance now, the company that goes around and does different jobs and repair for different industries, factories, or what not. Schools and all. General Maintenance and that was the Ed Werner that I
- Elizabeth O.: That was also from Worthington. And were they related to the people that had the corn?
- Harold J.: No. No.
- Elizabeth O.: That family's corn had a reputation that spread out all over...
- Harold J.: Well there was two Werners, no, that had corn, and they were not related either. So there were two Werners that grew corn, and three Werners that lived in that area. And none related that we know of.
- Elizabeth O.: Well no wonder their corn became so well known, if there were people. It seemed to me it was known all around this area.
- Harold J.: Well that one Werner that you're speaking of on the corner up there, well he had been out of the School of Agriculture down at Ohio State, and that started out as an experimental type of thing, in irrigation of corn. And it became so profitable that he quit teaching down there and went into just raising the corn.
- Elizabeth O.: Well because his corn was all along the west bank of the river.

- Harold J.: They drew water from the river and irrigated their corn. That's why their corn grew so fast. And he could irrigate it and put more fertilizer on it than some other people could, because he could keep it watered.
- Elizabeth O.: Well that's interesting. That's an interesting thing about Worthington, isn't it? Some of the people who lived here. Well, one thing I wanted to ask you was about transportation a long time ago. How did Worthington, before there were so many cars, did you use...Was there an Interurban line that came into Worthington? Or I know there was a railroad back up 161 at the station.
- Harold J.: Well there was the old Summit and Steelton they'd call it [*Summit-Steelton streetcar line bypassed Worthington and took the Interurban off North High Street in 1922 per columbusrailroads.com*]; a car that used to come up. Then it came up Summit across Hudson, up Indianola to Arcadia, down Arcadia to High Street. Then straight up High Street to Worthington. And, that was the route they used to take, originally. And then they got the other route that they discontinued that and just had a route that came up High Street, from way south High Street straight up to – well the place where it stopped was where Dairy Queen is now.
- Elizabeth O.: Oh really, and then what'd it do? Just turn around and go back?
- Harold J.: Yes, they had a switch and they'd switch it and turn around go back.
- Elizabeth O.: So, it ran on rails.
- Harold J.: Yes, yes, it was an old street car. Then that took you 45 minutes to go down to the court house. 45 minutes. But, you could go up to Town Street to where the Greyhound Bus Station is now, and there was a place there you could get the Interurban, they called it the CD&M, Columbus, Delaware & Marion.
- Elizabeth O.: So that was different than the street car.
- Harold J.: That was different from the streetcar, and that was a limited. And you would take that and it would come up from Town Street on 4th Street, up to where the old Smith Hardware Building is along the railroad, and then it would switch off and come across the bridge and down and around, and then come along the railroad, and had its own tracks, railroad tracks. And where you see this museum out there, the museum - that trestle. That was CD&M trestle. That was original trestle there, and it took you fifteen minutes to get here.
- Elizabeth O.: Oh, so that was...Now did it continue north then?
- Harold J.: It continued on north to the reason they called it "CD&M," was Columbus to Delaware and Marion. Didn't take you very long to get there either because it really moved. It came right on down where you used to see the little rails come across Proprietors Road, do you remember that? Okay, then came down to High

Street, and then straight up High Street, along the side of High Street. It had rails.

Elizabeth O.: Oh, and did that run very often?

Harold J.: About every 45 minutes.

Elizabeth O.: Oh, it did?

Harold J.: Uh-huh, yeah. It was quite rapid.

Elizabeth O.: Well, how long did it take?

Harold J.: I don't know what it took to go to Delaware or Marion, but it could not have taken very long because they would travel 60, 70 miles an hour. They were fast.

Elizabeth O.: Now, what kind of power did it have? Was that...

Harold J.: Electric.

Elizabeth O.: Electric too, huh.

Harold J.: Then they had one that used to go from there on Town Street to Dayton and Cincinnati. Then [*unintelligible*], there was one up around Lake Erie, they called the Lake Erie Limited. Oh, they would really go, because we were travelling toward Springfield once, and we were going about 65 miles an hour, which was fast. We were speeding in the car, and one of those cars passed us like we were standing still.

Elizabeth O.: Oh, for heaven's sakes.

Harold J.: It was rocking...

Elizabeth O.: I was going to say, it must have been rocky. Was it a single car?

Harold J.: It was a single car, yeah.

Elizabeth O.: Was it connected with the railroad at all? Or was it a separate business.

Harold J.: No, it was separate.

Elizabeth O.: Well then, when did the Greyhound bus – did that supplement that Interurban when the bus started in place?

Harold J.: It was supposed to be an improvement. All this is supposed to be an improvement. But actually, that was one time that it was not all that much an

improvement, because it was swifter and a lot more economical. It proved to be. There was the Depression, so, they discontinued.

Elizabeth O.: That's too bad, because...

Harold J.: Because they've talked a number of times wanting to do this. And they talk about this north corridor, you know, putting all this transportation, swift transportation. But, they had it at one time and did away with it.

Elizabeth O.: I wonder, could they use the same tracks? If so, it would come through here probably.

Harold J.: Well they probably could use the same right-away, that they had. Because the track area, I think you still have much of the same track area.

Elizabeth O.: I would think they could.

Harold J.: Instead of going to into Town Street, they could go to where the Convention Center is now and come out of there...Because it's basically the same idea.

Elizabeth O.: Well, it would be nice if they could use some of those things over again, wouldn't it? Well, what about inside Worthington, everybody just walked then, right? That was the transportation? Which is good.

Harold J.: Pretty much. Yup, a lot...a lot of walking.

Elizabeth O.: But that's good. What's the biggest change that you think maybe - would you say it's in the area of the growth, or with the schools or - ?

Harold J.: Well to me, the biggest change for me, is the fact that I don't know. I used to know everyone in Worthington, and everyone knew me. You know, everyone knew one another. And it has grown so now that...I think it's remarkable that Worthington people still are very proud to be Worthington people, but because of the numbers of people, the people just don't know one another like they used to. And that is one of the things I think is too bad that as we grow, why we don't know one another.

Elizabeth O.: I agree with you there, but I think there's that underlying framework of the families who are really long established here.

Harold J.: People still maintain the proudness of being Worthington, and that part is good. The buildings, the school has grown so rapidly. There will come a day that you're gonna have to have two high schools. You can't stop progress. It brings divisiveness, you know. You might be divided a lot, you know. Where you get into a newer high school, there comes that feeling of, whether you want it or not, I'm in the new building, and you're in the old clunker. *[laughs]*

- Elizabeth O.: Well, I think with any growth there is some disadvantage as well as some – and like you say, progress you can't stop. So I guess you have to accept with good with the bad. Well I have really enjoyed talking with you, and I've probably taken up a lot of that time that you should be spending...
- Harold J.: It's been interesting. There's a lot of these things, I haven't thought about for years. It brought back a lot of memories.
- Elizabeth O.: It's probably kind of nice for you for that reason, I hope. I'm glad that you said that you enjoyed it too. I certainly have. It's been very nice, and I...
- Harold J.: It's still a very good place, I say, to raise children, and it still has a great degree of togetherness. More so than a lot of other areas. I'm glad of this, and I hope we are able to perpetuate it.
- Elizabeth O.: Yes, well I agree with you there. I'm certainly - I moved here in '59 but I feel that very strongly, even though I can see a lot of change too. But I think it's definitely an attribute. So we thank you very much, the Old Worthington Society. Certainly appreciate your help. I think it's good we're getting these things down, you know, so people can continue to learn.
- Harold J.: I'm very glad you got mother when you did, because I had no idea. You think people are going to keep on going on and on and on.
- Elizabeth O.: Well, I do that think that's a hard thing to grasp, even though in the back of your mind you know that.
- Harold J.: Well, you know there's going to come a day, but...
- Elizabeth O.: She was a very remarkable, interesting person. I enjoyed - I went back to visit with her often and I enjoyed every bit of time I spent with her.
- Harold J.: Good.
- Elizabeth O.: Well I think we better stop for now.

[End of tape.]

The following was copied from Obituary

Harold Benson Jones

Died March 11, 1999 (79 Years)

Wife: Juanita

Sons: Dennis & Paul

Daughters: Barbara, Susan, Karen

Sister: Helen Hall

Graduated from high school: 1940



Retired from Worthington Public School System
He was a member & Associate Pastor of St John's AME Church