

Oral Histories: a Fun and Interesting Look at the Past!

By Susan Abernethy Frank

Do you have a curiosity about who lived in your house years ago? Would you like to know what TP kids did for fun in the 40's or 50's or even farther back? What about the log cabin or the "dump"? Who has ever seen Tillie? And what were the circus winter headquarters like? How was the village with no Wrenwood Lane, Circus Place, or Princeton Drive? What was there? How many trains came through? Could you really see the Redlegs through the passenger train windows?

The TP Historical Society is increasing its effort to get more and more oral histories which are being done by interviews, then transcribed and then filed in the Archives for all to enjoy or use for research.

Historical societies by nature are concerned with the collection and preservation of historical information/items. Oral histories are an important segment of this preservation. Without people and their memories/recollections, history becomes bland and incomplete. Recording oral histories in a timely manner is absolutely important because people are getting older. This collected information would always be available for anyone's use. Hopefully as more oral histories are transcribed, they will be available so villagers and/or historians easily access them in a variety of ways.

Approximately 40 oral histories have been completed and more are in the works. Several volunteers have been working on them over the years: Leslie Jones, Polly Bassett, Sally Lyons, Jeannette Pruiss, Helen Barnett, Pat Henley and Ann Gilchrist to name a few. Recently I too have enjoyed doing them... hearing the stories of Mike Grace and how grew up here in the 40's-mid 50', lived at 415 Elm, and of Mary Chapman (born 1912) as she talked about her times of raising 3 children who went to TP High School and of running a restaurant just this side of the Milford Bridge. Milford was the ultimate for her family shopping...for all needs. Mary Annett with her husband Ted (arriving in the 50's) said "I remember taking my little boys to the donkey basketball game (in the TP gym). When we first heard of it, we couldn't understand how the donkeys could play basketball. We learned!"

Ruth Clayton (born 1922 talks about going to TP Elementary in the late 20's/early 30's and Ralph (RJ) Vilardo talked about his family's restaurant where the UDF currently stands. Ralph moved to TP in the early 40's. Carol and Lou Fahrnbach loved running the Terrace Market so much that in the 1970s they moved to TP with their 2 children. Carol has such heartwarming stories...great people stories!

Marcia McCalla (born 1944) loved living at 722 Miami and at 219 Oxford. She has great stories about both homes and her times in the St. Thomas Choir. Eleanor Gallagher, 714 Myrtle, moved to that very home in 1941 and still lives there. She has seen many changes in the village and her stories are remarkable...as she has always been involved in the schools, church and community.

Within the next few months a list of all who have been interviewed will be posted...with their date of birth, home(s) in the village, activities, interests, etc. Also many highlights from the transcribed interviews will be published.

We are still recruiting people to do the interviews as a list of those to be done is quite large. If interested, please e-mail me, Susan Frank at safrank@fuse.net or call 513-607-3066. The work, if you can call it that, is FUN and oh so interesting!

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