

Marshall University

**Marshall Digital Scholar**

---

0064: Marshall University Oral History  
Collection

Digitized Manuscript Collections

---

5-26-1905

## Oral History Interview: Perry Emmett O'Brien and Winifred O'Brien

Perry Emmett O'Brien

Follow this and additional works at: [https://mds.marshall.edu/oral\\_history](https://mds.marshall.edu/oral_history)

---

### Recommended Citation

Marshall University Special Collections, OH64-20, Huntington, WV.

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Digitized Manuscript Collections at Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in 0064: Marshall University Oral History Collection by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact [zhangj@marshall.edu](mailto:zhangj@marshall.edu).



MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA 25701

JAMES E. MORROW LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATES

ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, Tom Carroll Brown, the undersigned, of  
Jackson Ripley, County of Jackson, State  
of W. Va., grant, convey, and transfer to the James E.  
Morrow Library Associates, a division of The Marshall University Foundation,  
Inc., an educational and eleemosynary institution, all my right, title,  
interest, and literary property rights in and to my testimony recorded on  
April 16, 1973 to be used for scholarly purposes, including  
study and rights to reproduction.

initial Open and usable after my review.

initial Closed for a period of \_\_\_\_\_ years.

initial Closed for my lifetime.

initial Closed for my lifetime unless special permission  
is gained from me or my assigns.

Date April 16 1973

Tom Carroll Brown  
(Signature - Interviewee)

305 North Street  
Address

Ripley, W. Va.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature - Witness)

## BIOGRAPHY

Mr. Perry E. O'Brien is 74 years old and was born in Buchannon, Upsher County, West Virginia. Mr. O'Brien has been an attorney in Ripley since 1938. Before entering law school he was a math teacher. Mr. O'Brien is President of the Jackson County Historical Society and has a keen interest in the past.

Mrs. Winifred O'Brien is 69 years old and was born in Wheeling, West Virginia. She is a retired school teacher and also has an avid interest in the local Historical Society.

Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien were selected for this interview for three reasons: (1) They are both over 65 (2) They have both lived in West Virginia all of their life (3) They both have strong interest in the historical society and appeared to have had experiences which I felt would be interesting to probe. However, as the interview progressed I found they either had no knowledge of Appalachia as most people over 65 have or else we too in tune with the present and urban areas to relate information which I had first sought.

Interviewer: This is Joan Henthorne in Ripley, Jackson County, West Virginia, interviewing Mr. and Mrs. Perry Emmett O'Brien. Mrs. O'Brien where did you live in your early years?

Mrs. O'Brien: I lived in Wheeling, West Virginia.

Interviewer: How long did you live in Wheeling?

Mrs. O'Brien: I lived there until I was married and I wasn't married until I was 28 years old.

Interviewer: Mr. O'Brien where did you live?

Mr. O'Brien: I lived in Buckhannon, center part of W. Va., in Upshur County. I lived and attended grade school, high school, college and lived there until I graduated from college and started teaching.

Interviewer: Mrs. O'Brien, do you recall the school you first attended or any early experiences in elementary school?

Mrs. O'Brien: Yes, I went to the Edgenton Lane School in Wheeling and then on to Woodsdale School and then Tridelfia High School and then West Liberty College. Then after I was married I went to West Virginia University for a year and then finished after my son was 12 years old at Morris Harvey College and I got a B. S. Degree in Elementary Education.

Interviewer: So actually you never went to a rural school, your education was always in town.

Mrs. O'Brien: Mine was always in town and at that time in the elementary school, Ohio County had the highest rating in W. Va. Even from my first grade there were supervisors for writing, art, music, and physical education and they came around to our school once every two weeks. When they did come into the room they would assign a lesson to the teacher to teach and have prepared for them on the next visit, then they would listen to the one that had already been prepared for her. And I can remember one experience in the second grade I had a man for a teacher in music and he couldn't sing very well and even down to the first grade we had our scales and he brought his coronet and he played his scales on the coronet while we sang.



Interviewer: That is rather unusual. Do you mind my asking how old are you?

Mrs. O'Brien: No, I retired from teaching school about 3 years ago.

Interviewer: Even today in a lot of counties we don't have supervisors.

Mrs. O'Brien: I often thought that my son didn't have the classes, or he had some but they weren't supervised, regular outlined work when I was in the grades. When you asked me how old I was I just told you I retired from teaching school, I am 69.

Interviewer: Mr. O'Brien, what type of school did you go to?

Mr. O'Brien: The first school I can remember was in the center of Buchannon a two story 4 room school toilets outside, a big pot bellied stove in the center of the room, burned coal, soon after, that was my second grade. The first grade was taught by a Miss Barnes, whose brother was very high in education in W. Va. I don't, Miss Clark, I believe, was my second grade teacher. And soon after that the building was torn down and a brick building built and I can remember it was a 4 to 6 room building and I can remember the college had a new president and the boys met him at the railroad station and took the horses out of the carriage and took him to the college in his big hat and he was I forget his name but he became college president and was there several years at Wesleyan from there I went to the upper end of town which once about 1 mile from home to a brick high school and adjoining a old United Brethren Academy Building that had started there when the college failed (started) the U. B. School went out of existence and while I was in high school we torn out the upper floor and used it as a basketball court and had some good teams at that time. Supervision of the schools was just the teachers jobs as far as I remember. I don't recall supervisors, even in high school. The Superintendent had a office in the high school building and supervised and looked after the building. That was about 1906, I think, my first re-

collection of school was hanging on the fence watching the children go to school and wishing I could go.

Interviewer: I would like to ask you a few things about your early family life. Did you live with your grandparents or near your grandparents

Mrs. O'Brien: My father's parents lived up in Pa. so we just visited them and they visited us. My mother's father died when she was very small girl and I never knew my grandfather Fletcher. My grandmother lived with us.

Interviewer: What role did she play? Did she help with the discipline and children or was she just an respected elder you looked up to?

Mrs. O'Brien: My grandmother was a very outstanding person. She was a strict person in her beliefs and in her religion and she had great influence over my mother's beliefs. There were three daughters in the family and no sons and father left it to mother to do most of the discipline. (Indirectly mother was influenced by grandmother). Grandmother's beliefs influenced mother quite a bit. But grandmother was a very lovable person and she would help I guess she did a lot of babysitting but she was very careful she did not interfere with mother and father affairs and she did not discipline us.

Interviewer: Mr. O'Brien, how about you. Did you live near your grandparents?

Mr. O'Brien: My grandmother lived with us until she died about 1912. She was the one, I was the oldest of four children, and she was the one that really taught me the bible stories and recite Bible verses and even sections of the Bible she, I think when I was small I slept in the same room she did. But my grandfather was had died quite a number of years before. He and an uncle were stone masons and built the abutments of the Phillipi bridge and also most of the asylum at Weston and were quite versed in stone masonry but he had died. My mother's father lived about 24 miles away which was in those days quite a ways off. Grandmother had died and he had remarried and had a large family. Very strict man. A Baptist, a first cousin of Stonewall Jackson. Lived in the old Jackson farm, the farm which is now Jackson's Mill was sold and divided and grandfather got

the upper part about 800 acres. I wasn't associated with him very much, but grandmother my father's mother was quite influential and I don't remember too much about discipline, father did some, mother did some, but mostly we behaved pretty well without too much stern discipline. They were all religiously inclined I was brought up in the church and as far as being stern discipline there was none but there was kind discipline.

Interviewer: Were your parents Methodists?

Mr. O'Brien: Mother, my grandfather was a Baptist, Mother was a Baptist, and then she married. My father was a Methodist so mother became a Methodist so I was raised in the Methodist church.

Interviewer: Mrs. O'Brien, were you Methodists also?

Mrs. O'Brien: No. Both mother and father were Baptist and I had a Baptist minister who said if Perry would not become a Baptist he advised me to become a Methodist. He said it would be better for the family to go together there was not that much difference. So he advised me to go with Perry if he felt as though he didn't want to be a Baptist. I would like to mention after Perry spoke it wasn't a strict discipline in our family either father left it to mother still father was always there and a look from father, he had stealy blue eyes, a look from father would settle his three daughters.

Interviewer: I would like for you to be thinking about some of the activities or recreation that you did in your leisure time with your family or with your friends. Any childhood games and activities. Things you did and particularly enjoyed.

Mrs. O'Brien: We sang a lot at out house. Mother and father were both in the choir and we all liked to sing. Often when we were in high school, dating, there would be quite a few couples come to the house and older sister could play the piano and we would sing and groups would gather at the house. In fact, I can remember, in the teens, there would be boys and girls coming, and instead of having separate dates we would play games. Go out in the street and play hopscotch, run sheepie run and it is lots of fun when you are older to

to play those simple childish games. Even in college in the summer time a gang of us would get together and play some of those. We lived in more of a suburban section of Wheeling it wasn't in the city in the residential section and in those days we did have some hills close by that we just had lots of fun.

Interviewer: You had a early interest in music and I know you still do. Did you take piano lessons or were you taught at home?

Mrs. O'Brien: My mother played and my older sister played and I took piano lessons but I never got along as well as my sister did. I took it from another piano teacher.

Mr. O'Brien: Most of ours was roaming the fields and one end of town, the northern end of town, toward what is now Evinrude Acres, territory in there was quite historic, the old Indian fort was just below there at 1790 was built and the old Indian battles were just above there, so we gathered up Indian arrowheads and things of that kind. The roads and streets, of course, were dirt and to get across the street we had stepping stones so the horses and buggies could go between and they stuck up enough so you could get across. I've seen funerals come with            deep in the mud, but as far, we had a horse for a little while, in fact, I've got a scar on my head from horses running away with me and turning the buggy over on top of me. But father used to take us hiking. He liked to get out in the hills too and he would take us on hikes. As we got older mother played the piano and it was common for the children and mother to get around the piano and sing and father would sometimes join in but usually he would sit in the library. We had a large collection of books and we did a lot of reading and then when we got in grade school, not too far away about what we call the island, the grade school was on main street. When I went to high school, I would walk to school in the morning sometimes run if it was a little late, back at noon, back up in the afternoon about a mile a way, sometimes back at night. We'd have our plays and then with the college in town there was quite a lot of activity there, going to the ball games, the lyceum courses at the college some of the entertainment they put on.

Mr. O'Brien: I had the job of looking after the chickens and the cow. The calf was given to me and I sold it and took my first music lessons (vocal lessons). Then I think most of the groups were round together in the fields moving about I don't remember games too much, I remember learning to ride a bicycle in the yard on the island. We learned in circles and then when we got out on the street we had to learn all over again because we went in a straight line. Of course, there was fishing, Buchannon River, surrounded the island came down past the college and there was a mill race built in 1800 by John Jackson and the place where I grew up was on the river bank so we did fishing and things of that kind, wading around in the river. I've watched I never did any of the gigging of suckers but in Feb. they would get out with torches in evening right by the house in the ripples and large suckers and carp and then built a fire and dry out and start back up above gigging as they came.

Mrs. O'Brien: I did want to mention that I went to school on street cars both to grade school well, no that isn't right, I took my lunch and walked about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles to grade school now in 8th grade they had a cafeteria and we had a hot lunch and then I had to go on street car to high school and they had cafeteria there so I didn't have to take my lunch. And I did forget to mention that glee clubs, always liked the glee clubs and plays you would have in school and we did used to have quite a few entertainments in our schools more so than we do now. Down in the grades and all, in fact, we had to have 3 or 4 when I was teaching up in Wheeling afterwards, it was a rule of the schools that we had to have these entertainments. For holidays and a big parents day at the end of school.

END OF SIDE L



Interviewer: Since both of you have had some experience in education and in teaching, when you first started to teach did either one of you teach in a one room school, or in a rural area?

Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien: No

Interviewer: Have you always taught in a town or more suburban area?

Mrs. O'Brien: Yes.

Interviewer: Have you ever taught more than one grade? land 2. 4-5?

Mr. O'Brien: I taught high school. Taught mathematics at Logan High School in 1921 and then went from there to Tridelfia High School and taught 3 years there before I went to law school. Ran out of money before I got finished law and went to Victory High School in Clarksburg and taught there 3 years during the last year we were there then to University and finished my law school, so I, the schools, all of them were high school in Logan was up on a hill above Logan then they built a high school which is now the Jr. High and Victory High School Clarksburg now Jr. High and they have consolidated in with another high school beside Clarksburg. But Tridelfia, Wheeling is still in existence.

Interviewer: And you only taught Math?

Mr. O'Brien: Only taught mathematics.

Interviewer: What was your early teaching assignments in high school: How many classes a day did you have?

Mr. O'Brien: My, as I remember it I had five all math, algebra, well I had all the math except one geometry class at Logan High School. Started with Algebra up to Solid Geometry. And at Victory I had most of the math that was taught in the high school. At Wheeling I taught geometry except one class of algebra. Mr. Rollins had the other classes of higher solid geometry.

Interviewer: Mrs. O'Brien, could you tell us a little about your first teaching experiences and where you taught. You mentioned to me the other day that during the war you also taught in high school.

Mrs. O'Brien: It was when I first started to teach. It was in a school that had all grades in the one building and I taught first grade and the music for all 8 grades. Then I changed to another school and just taught a 5th grade until I was married and then after a lapse of about 10 years I started to teach in Ripley and during the war there was quite a shortage of teachers and I did not have the right kind of certificate to teach in high school but I did have the study halls from early morning until late in the afternoon and homeroom, a Sr. homeroom I can remember that. Then I changed to elementary school and taught well I taught departmental work in a 5,6, 7. I know I had spelling, arithmetic, I forget the other subject. No, I didn't have the reading. I can't think of it right now. Then later on I went to just 5th grade and most of my teaching has been in the 5th grade and that is the grade I find that I do like very much.

Interviewer: Can you make any comparisons or comments about the similarities or differences in the educational system or among the students themselves from the time you first started teaching until you retired?

Mrs. O'Brien: I don't know that I notice too much. The children are more talkative now than they used to be. I think there is more confusion and generally more noise and all now than there used to be, but children all sweet and you grow to love them and you love everyone of them by the time spring comes that there are lots of good traits in everyone of them. But, I think that perhaps it a little bit harder to teach now than it was then because there weren't so many outside activities and children just didn't have so many things to do as they do now. On the whole they were quieter.

Interviewer: Mr. O'Brien: You started out as a teacher and you taught math and then to law school and for many years you have been a practicing attorney in Ripley. What brought about the change? Did you always want to be an attorney and this, you taught for a while and then back to law school. What brought about the change in occupation?

Mr. O'Brien: Well my father, of course, was an attorney for years. He started in before back in, I was born in 1898, and I was married about four years before that and he had started practicing in Buchannon. At that time he had several good lawyers. You had to read law in the law office for 1 year before you could practice and he had some good lawyers. He read law in Judge Brannon's office, father of Henry Brannon, Supreme Court Justice for 34 years and I'd say I had a background at law and after father went to Congress for 2 years and then became Sec. of State we, I got to finish my law school and we moved to Ripley after I graduated in 34. I did have a background at law. Back in the beginning of the teaching, the teachers were assigned a lot of other activities. We had the first football team at Logan in 1921. And I was the treasurer of the Athletic Department carried \$1,000 in my pocket in town walking the railroad tracks. You walked then everywhere even in my college. And in teaching I walked and in fact 75 miles from Huntington and the only way to get there was by train. It was as I went in, we met a troop train coming out they had had a war miners war and a picked up bullets around Logan. I had one bullet shot through my room when I was teaching. We put out the first yearbook and in Logan High School and the bank was a town band and we didn't even have a band at Logan High School. The town band played slow marches when they made a touchdown and they came out and played for the team. The streets were paved in Logan it was dirt roads into Logan almost impossible to get to Huntington 75 miles away as far as roads. Trains had hauling of passengers between Logan and Huntington. And in my boyhood it was travel by walking. My cousin and I got a buggy when I was young and went over to get my grandfather. That was 24 miles and that was quite a trip. But, in those earlier days and even in my teaching days it was transportation was pretty slow. First automobile I remember at Buchannon was long high carriage wheel with a steering in front to guide it and then John Post built one similar to that. First airplane I remember in 1906 came in there as one of those looked like the Wright plane. They guaranteed to fly over a day, wind permitting, but the wind permitted about 1 flight the week of the fair and those are early recollections of days gone by.



Mrs. O'Brien: May I say something right here I'm thinking about it. Perry's father was in Washington a Congressman at the time that Lindberg flew the Atlantic and when he came back and was taking some of the Congressmen the families for little rides over Washington and so Perry got to ride with Lindberg and he sat in the seat right up there close to the pilot.

Interviewer: I'm glad you mentioned this, I didn't know your father was involved that much in politics. Mrs. O'Brien told me the other day that he had served as Sec. of State. Do you, did you ever help with any of the political campaigns or do you recall anything of particular interest concerning politics in his career?

Mr. O'Brien: Father was Judge before and of course he had to run for Judge and he'd send us to put up signs or placards with his picture on it and we'd walk dirt roads and I got over in the adjoining country without knowing it but I'd go to campaigns, I can remember when the women first started voting, father was defeated that year as Judge and they took a very active part in the campaign and in fact they were enthusiastic workers at the campaign at that time. Then when he became Congressman he got Al Smith became a candidate and he got tangled up in that and was defeated and then later became Sec. of State.

Mrs. O'Brien: Perry, do you think it was because of the women voting he lost?

Mr. O'Brien: Father was a democrat in a very strong republican county. It was 3000 majority and Webster County was the other county in the circuit and when the women got the vote that just doubled the Republican vote. And, of course, they voted straight line vote. Then later they got to going off, but when they started - straight line.

Mrs. O'Brien: Tell about the preacher that had voted against your father and then he found out the things he had heard were wrong.

Mr. O'Brien: Up in Pickens and in upper end of county - they changed the county from Webster and put Randolph County on it and one of the republican workers in the county near Pickens told that father was a very disreputable person, he beat his family, and he mistreated the family and they got then so against him he lost quite a few votes up there and then when mother was mad about it, but they did finally find out but it was too late. Father in fact was Sunday School teacher, taught one class for 35 years, the O'Brien class in church at Buchannon, but they didn't think much of telling false stories on a person if they thought they could get away with it.

Mrs. O'Brien: Well, that preacher, anyway that had voted against him and then on election day later found out that the things were not true and so he spent the rest of the day trying to get people to vote for Perry's father.

Interviewer: Mr. O'Brien could you tell us a little bit about the time when you father met Charles Lindberg?

Mr. O'Brien: The Lindberg came, they put his plane on a raft, put it beside the roadway that went around where the cherry blossoms are in Washington, drove around, took us an hour to go around that point and just as we got there Lindberg came up on the plane and to examine his plane see if it was alright Then that evening, I suppose the whole section around the Washington monument was crowded with people and they had a largest display of fireworks as I've ever seen there at that time



MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA 25701

JAMES E. MORROW LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATES

ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, Tom Carroll Brown, the undersigned, of  
Jackson-Ripley, County of Jackson, State  
of W. Va., grant, convey, and transfer to the James E.  
Morrow Library Associates, a division of The Marshall University Foundation,  
Inc., an educational and eleemosynary institution, all my right, title,  
interest, and literary property rights in and to my testimony recorded on  
April 16, 1973 to be used for scholarly purposes, including  
study and rights to reproduction.

initial Open and usable after my review.

initial Closed for a period of \_\_\_\_\_ years.

initial Closed for my lifetime.

initial Closed for my lifetime unless special permission  
is gained from me or my assigns.

Date April 16 1973

Tom Carroll Brown  
(Signature - Interviewee)

305 North Street  
Address

Ripley, W. Va.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature - Witness)

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



1170324970



# MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA 25701

JAMES E. MORROW LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATES

## ORAL HISTORY

### GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, Winifred E. Brien, the undersigned, of  
Ripley, County of Jackson, State  
of W. Va., grant, convey, and transfer to the James E.  
Morrow Library Associates, a division of The Marshall University Foundation,  
Inc., an educational and eleemosynary institution, all my right, title,  
interest, and literary property rights in and to my testimony recorded on  
April 16, 1973, to be used for scholarly purposes, including  
study and rights to reproduction.

✓  
initial Open and usable after my review.

initial Closed for a period of \_\_\_\_\_ years.

initial Closed for my lifetime.

initial Closed for my lifetime unless special permission  
is gained from me or my assigns.

Date April 16, 1973

Winifred E. Brien  
(Signature - Interviewee)

300 North Street  
Address

Ripley West Virginia 25271

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature - Witness)

## BIOGRAPHY

Mr. Perry E. O'Brien is 74 years old and was born in Buchannon, Upsher County, West Virginia. Mr. O'Brien has been an attorney in Ripley since 1938. Before entering law school he was a math teacher. Mr. O'Brien is President of the Jackson County Historical Society and has a keen interest in the past.

Mrs. Winifred O'Brien is 69 years old and was born in Wheeling, West Virginia. She is a retired school teacher and also has an avid interest in the local Historical Society.

Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien were selected for this interview for three reasons: (1) They are both over 65 (2) They have both lived in West Virginia all of their life (3) They both have strong interest in the historical society and appeared to have had experiences which I felt would be interesting to probe. However, as the interview progressed I found they either had no knowledge of Appalachia as most people over 65 have or else we<sup>re</sup> too in tune with the present and urban areas to relate information which I had first sought.

Interviewer: This is Joan Henthorne in Ripley, Jackson County, West Virginia, interviewing Mr. and Mrs. Perry Emmett O'Brien. Mrs. O'Brien where did you live in your early years?

Mrs. O'Brien: I lived in Wheeling, West Virginia.

Interviewer: How long did you live in Wheeling?

Mrs. O'Brien: I lived there until I was married and I wasn't married until I was 28 years old.

Interviewer: Mr. O'Brien where did you live?

Mr. O'Brien: I lived in Buckhannon, center part of W. Va., in Upshur County. I lived and attended grade school, high school, college and lived there until I graduated from college and started teaching.

Interviewer: Mrs. O'Brien, do you recall the school you first attended or any early experiences in elementary school?

Mrs. O'Brien: Yes, I went to the Edgenton Lane School in Wheeling and then on to Woodsdale School and then Tridelphia High School and then West Liberty College. Then after I was married I went to West Virginia University for a year and then finished after my son was 12 years old at Morris Harvey College and I got a B. S. Degree in Elementary Education.

Interviewer: So actually you never went to a rural school, your education was always in town.

Mrs. O'Brien: Mine was always in town and at that time in the elementary school, Ohio County had the highest rating in W. Va. Even from my first grade there were supervisors for writing, art, music, and physical education and they came around to our school once every two weeks. When they did come into the room they would assign a lesson to the teacher to teach and have prepared for them on the next visit, then they would listen to the one that had already been prepared for her. And I can remember one experience in the second grade I had a man for a teacher in music and he couldn't sing very well and even down to the first grade we had our scales and he brought his coronet and he played his scales on the coronet while we sang.

Interviewer: That is rather unusual. Do you find by asking how old are you?

Mrs. O'Brien: No, I retired from teaching school about 3 years ago.

Interviewer: Even today in a lot of counties we don't have supervisors.

Mrs. O'Brien: I often thought that my son didn't have the classes, or he had some but they weren't supervised, regular outlined work when I was in the grades. When you asked me how old I was I just told you I retired from teaching school, I am 69.

Interviewer: Mr. O'Brien, what type of school did you go to?

Mr. O'Brien: The first school I can remember was in the center of Buchannon a two story 4 room school toilets outside, a big pot bellied stove in the center of the room, burned coal, soon after, that was my second grade. The first grade was taught by a Miss Barnes, whose brother was very high in education in W. Va. I don't, Miss Clark, I believe, was my second grade teacher. And soon after that the building was torn down and a brick building built and I can remember it was a 4 to 6 room building and I can remember the college had a new president and the boys met him at the railroad station and took the horses out of the carriage and took him to the college in his big hat and he was I forget his name but he became college president and was there several years at Wesleyan from there I went to the upper end of town which once about 1 mile from home to a brick high school and adjoining a old United Brethen Academy Building that had started there when the college failed (started) the U. B. School went out of existence and while I was in high school we torn out the upper floor and used it as a basketball court and had some good teams at that time. Supervision of the schools was just the teachers jobs as far as I remember. I don't recall supervisors, even in high school. The Superintendent had a office in the high school building and supervised and looked after the building. That was about 1906, I think, my first re-



collection of school was hanging on the fence watching the children go to school and wishing I could go.

Interviewer: I would like to ask you a few things about your early family life. Did you live with your grandparents or near your grandparents

Mrs. O'Brien: My father's parents lived up in Pa. so we just visited them and they visited us. My mother's father died when she was very small girl and I never knew my grandfather Fletcher. My grandmother lived with us.

Interviewer: What role did she play? Did she help with the discipline and children or was she just an respected elder you looked up to?

Mrs. O'Brien: My grandmother was a very outstanding person. She was a strict person in her beliefs and in her religion and she had great influence over my mother's beliefs. There were three daughters in the family and no sons and father left it to mother to do most of the discipline. (Indirectly mother was influenced by grandmother). Grandmother's beliefs influenced mother quite a bit. But grandmother was a very lovable person and she would help I guess she did a lot of babysitting but she was very careful she did not interfere with mother and father affairs and she did not discipline us.

Interviewer: Mr. O'Brien, how about you. Did you live near your grandparents?

Mr. O'Brien: My grandmother lived with us until she died about 1912. She was the one, I was the oldest of four children, and she was the one that really taught me the bible stories and recite Bible verses and even sections of the Bible she, I think when I was small I slept in the same room she did. But my grandfather was had died quite a number of years before. He and an uncle were stone masons and built the abutments of the Phillipi bridge and also most of the asylum at Weston and were quite versed in stone masonry but he had died. My mother's father lived about 24 miles away which was in those days quite a ways off. Grandmother had died and he had remarried and had a large family. Very strict man. A Baptist, a first cousin of Stonewall Jackson. Lived in the old Jackson farm, the farm which is now Jackson's Mill was sold and divided and grandfather got



the upper part about 800 acres. I wasn't associated with him very much, but grandmother my father's mother was quite influential and I don't remember too much about discipline, father did some, mother did some, but mostly we behaved pretty well without too much stern discipline. They were all religiously inclined I was brought up in the church and as far as being stern discipline there was none but there was kind discipline.

Interviewer: Were your parents Methodists?

Mr. O'Brien: Mother, my grandfather was a Baptist, Mother was a Baptist, and then she married. My father was a Methodist so mother became a Methodist so I was raised in the Methodist church.

Interviewer: Mrs. O'Brien, were you Methodists also?

Mrs. O'Brien: No. Both mother and father were Baptist and I had a Baptist minister who said if Perry would not become a Baptist he advised me to become a Methodist. He said it would be better for the family to go together there was not that much difference. So he advised me to go with Perry if he felt as though he didn't want to be a Baptist. I would like to mention after Perry spoke it wasn't a strict discipline in our family either father left it to mother still father was always there and a look from father, he had stealy blue eyes, a look from father would settle his three daughters.

Interviewer: I would like for you to be thinking about some of the activities or recreation that you did in your leisure time with your family or with your friends. Any childhood games and activities. Things you did and particularly enjoyed.

Mrs. O'Brien: We sang a lot at out house. Mother and father were both in the choir and we all liked to sing. Often when we were in high school, dating, there would be quite a few couples come to the house and older sister could play the piano and we would sing and groups would gather at the house. In fact, I can remember, in the teens, there would be boys and girls coming, and instead of having separate dates we would play games. Go out in the street and play hopscotch, run sheepie run and it is lots of fun when you are older to

to play those simple childish games. Even in college in the summer time a gang of us would get together and play some of those. We lived in more of a suburban section of Wheeling it wasn't in the city in the residential section and in those days we did have some hills close by that we just had lots of fun.

Interviewer: You had a early interest in music and I know you still do. Did you take piano lessons or were you taught at home?

Mrs. O'Brien: My mother played and my older sister played and I took piano lessons but I never got along as well as my sister did. I took it from another piano teacher.

Mr. O'Brien: Most of ours was roaming the fields and one end of town, the northern end of town, toward what is now Evinrude Acres, territory in there was quite historic, the old Indian fort was just below there at 1790 was built and the old Indian battles were just above there, so we gathered up Indian arrowheads and things of that kind. The roads and streets, of course, were dirt and to get across the street we had stepping stones so the horses and buggies could go between and they stuck up enough so you could get across. I've seen funerals come with \_\_\_\_\_ deep in the mud, but as far, we had a horse for a little while, in fact, I've got a scar on my head from horses running away with me and turning the buggy over on top of me. But father used to take us hiking. He liked to get out in the hills too and he would take us on hikes. As we got older mother played the piano and it was common for the children and mother to get around the piano and sing and father would sometimes join in but usually he would sit in the library. We had a large collection of books and we did a lot of reading and then when we got in grade school, not too far away about what we call the island, the grade school was on main street. When I went to high school, I would walk to school in the morning sometimes run if it was a little late, back at noon, back up in the afternoon about a mile a way, sometimes back at night. We'd have our plays and then with the college in town there was quite a lot of activity there, going to the ball games, the lyceum courses at the college some of the entertainment they put on.

Mr. O'Brien: I had the job of looking after the chickens and the cow. The calf was given to me and I sold it and took my first music lessons (vocal lessons). Then I think most of the groups were round together in the fields moving about I don't remember games too much, I remember learning to ride a bicycle in the yard on the island. We learned in circles and then when we got out on the street we had to learn all over again because we went in a straight line. Of course, there was fishing, Buchanan River, surrounded the island came down past the college and there was a mill race built in 1800 by John Jackson and we the place where I grew up was on the river bank so we did fishing and things of that kind, wading around in the river. I've watched I never did any of the gigging of suckers but in Feb. they would get out with torches in evening right by the house in the ripples and large suckers and carp and then built a fire and dry out and start back up above gigging as they came.

Mrs. O'Brien: I did want to mention that I went to school on street cars both to grade school well, no that isn't right, I took my lunch and walked about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles to grade school now in 8th grade they had and cafeteria and we had a hot lunch and then I had to go on street car to high school and they had cafeteria there so I didn't have to take my lunch. And I did forget to mention that glee clubs, always liked the glee clubs and plays you would have in school and we did used to have quite a few entertainments in our schools more so than we do now. Down in the grades and all, in fact, we had to have 3 or 4 when I was teaching up in Wheeling afterwards, it was a rule of the schools that we had to have these entertainments. For holidays and a big parents day at the end of school.

END OF SIDE L

Interviewer: Since both of you have had some experience in education and in teaching, when you first started to teach did either one of you teach in a one room school, or in a rural area?

Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien: No

Interviewer: Have you always taught in a town or more suburban area?

Mrs. O'Brien: Yes.

Interviewer: Have you ever taught more than one grade? and 2. 4-5?

Mr. O'Brien: I taught high school. Taught mathematics at Logan High School in 1921 and then went from there to Tridelfia High School and taught 3 years there before I went to law school. Ran out of money before I got finished law and went to Victory High School in Clarksburg and taught there 3 years during the last year we were there then to University and finished my law school, so I, the schools, all of them were high school in Logan was up on a hill above Logan then they built a high school which is now the Jr. High and Victory High School Clarksburg now Jr. High and they have consolidated in with another high school beside Clarksburg. But Tridelfia, Wheeling is still in existence.

Interviewer: And you only taught Math?

Mr. O'Brien: Only taught mathematics.

Interviewer: What was your early teaching assignments in high school: How many classes a day did you have?

Mr. O'Brien: My, as I remember it I had five all math, algebra, well I had all the math except one geometry class at Logan High School. Started with Algebra up to Solid Geometry. And at Victory I had most of the math that was taught in the high school. At Wheeling I taught geometry except one class of algebra. Mr. Rollins had the other classes of higher solid geometry.

Interviewer: Mrs. O'Brien, could you tell us a little about your first teaching experiences and where you taught. You mentioned to me the other day that during the war you also taught in high school.

Mrs. O'Brien: It was when I first started to teach. It was in a school that had all grades in the one building and I taught first grade and the music for all 8 grades. Then I changed to another school and just taught a 5th grade until I was married and then after a lapse of about 10 years I started to teach in Ripley and during the war there was quite a shortage of teachers and I did not have the right kind of certificate to teach in high school but I did have the study halls from early morning until late in the afternoon and homeroom, a Sr. homeroom I can remember that. Then I changed to elementary school and taught well I taught departmental work in a 5, 6, 7. I know I had spelling, arithmetic, I forget the other subject. No, I didn't have the reading. I can't think of it right now. Then later on I went to just 5th grade and most of my teaching has been in the 5th grade and that is the grade I find that I do like very much.

Interviewer: Can you make any comparisons or comments about the similarities or differences in the educational system or among the students themselves from the time you first started teaching until you retired?

Mrs. O'Brien: I don't know that I notice too much. The children are more talkative now than they used to be. I think there is more confusion and generally more noise and all now than there used to be, but children all sweet and you grow to love them and you love everyone of them by the time spring comes that there are lots of good traits in everyone of them. But, I think that perhaps it a little bit harder to teach now than it was then because there weren't so many outside activities and children just didn't have so many things to do as they do now. On the whole they were quieter.

Interviewer: Mr. O'Brien: You started out as a teacher and you taught math and then to law school and for many years you have been a practicing attorney in Ripley. What brought about the change? Did you always want to be an attorney and this, you taught for a while and then back to law school. What brought about the change in occupation?

Mr. O'Brien: Well my father, of course, was an attorney for years. He started in before back in, I was born in 1898, and I was married about four years before that and he had started practicing in Buchannon. At that time he had several good lawyers. You had to read law in the law office for 1 year before you could practice and he had some good lawyers. He read law in Judge Brannon's office, father of Henry Brannon, Supreme Court Justice for 34 years and I'd say I had a background at law and after father went to Congress for 2 years and then became Sec. of State we, I got to finish my law school and we moved to Ripley after I graduated in 34. I did have a background at law. Back in the beginning of the teaching, the teachers were assigned a lot of other activities. We had the first football team at Logan in 1921. And I was the treasurer of the Athletic Department carried \$1,000 in my pocket in town walking the railroad tracks. You walked then everywhere even in my college. And in teaching I walked and in fact 75 miles from Huntington and the only way to get there was by train. It was as I went in, we met a troop train coming out they had had a war miners war and a picked up bullets around Logan. I had one bullet shot through my room when I was teaching. We put out the first yearbook and in Logan High School and the bank was a town band and we didn't even have a band at Logan High School. The town band played slow marches when they made a touchdown and they came out and played for the team. The streets were paved in Logan it was dirt roads into Logan almost impossible to get to Huntington 75 miles away as far as roads. Trains had hauling of passengers between Logan and Huntington. And in my boyhood it was travel by walking. My cousin and I got a buggy when I was young and went over to get my grandfather. That was 24 miles and that was quite a trip. But, in those earlier days and even in my teaching days it was transportation was pretty slow. First automobile I remember at Buchannon was long high carriage wheel with a steering in front to guide it and then John Post built one similar to that. First airplane I remember in 1906 came in there as one of those looked like the Wright plane. They guaranteed to fly over a day, wind permitting, but the wind permitted about 1 flight the week of the fair and those are early recollections of days gone by.



Mrs. O'Brien: May I say something right here I'm thinking about it. Perry's father was in Washington a Congressman at the time that Lindberg flew the Atlantic and when he came back and was taking some of the Congressmen the families for little rides over Washington and so Perry got to ride with Lindberg and he sat in the seat right up there close to the pilot.

Interviewer: I'm glad you mentioned this, I didn't know your father was involved that much in politics. Mrs. O'Brien told me the other day that he had served as Sec. of State. Do you, did you ever help with any of the political campaigns or do you recall anything of particular interest concerning politics in his career?

Mr. O'Brien: Father was Judge before and of course he had to run for Judge and he'd send us to put up signs or placards with his picture on it and we'd walk dirt roads and I got over in the adjoining country without knowing it but I'd go to campaigns, I can remember when the women first started voting, father was defeated that year as Judge and they took a very active part in the campaign and in fact they were enthusiastic workers at the campaign at that time. Then when he became Congressman he got Al Smith became a candidate and he got tangled up in that and was defeated and then later became Sec. of State.

Mrs. O'Brien: Perry, do you think it was because of the women voting he lost?

Mr. O'Brien: Father was a democrat in a very strong republican county. It was 3000 majority and Webster County was the other county in the circuit and when the women got the vote that just doubled the Republican vote. And, of course, they voted straight line vote. Then later they got to going off, but when they started - straight line.

Mrs. O'Brien: Tell about the preacher that had voted against your father and then he found out the things he had heard were wrong.

Mr. O'Brien: Up in Pickens and in upper end of county - they changed the county from Webster and put Randolph County on it and one of the republican workers in the county near Pickens told that father was a very disreputable person, he beat his family, and he mistreated the family and they got then so against him he lost quite a few votes up there and then when mother was mad about it, but they did finally find out but it was too late. Father in fact was Sunday School teacher, taught one class for 35 years, the O'Brien class in church at Buchannon, but they didn't think much of telling false stories on a person if they thought they could get away with it.

Mrs. O'Brien: Well, that preacher, anyway that had voted against him and then on election day later found out that the things were not true and so he spent the rest of the day trying to get people to vote for Perry's father.

Interviewer: Mr. O'Brien could you tell us a little bit about the time when you father met Charles Lindberg?

Mr. O'Brien: The Lindberg came, they put his plane on a raft, put it beside the roadway that went around where the cherry blossoms are in Washington, drove around, took us an hour to go around that point and just as we got there Lindberg came up on the plane and to examine his plane see if it was alright Then that evening, I suppose the whole section around the Washington monument was crowded with people and they had a largest display of fireworks as I've ever seen there at that time