

DORIS SHAWLER TRANSCRIPT

Date: FEBRUARY 2015

Interviewer:

Transcribed by Donna Duzan, November 2016

Interviewer: I am speaking with Doris Shawler and first I would like to ask you when and where you were born?

D: I was born in Marshall, IL on August 10, 1928.

I: And who were your parents?

D: My father was Louie Lawrence and my mother was Ella Lawrence.

I: Did you have brothers or sisters?

D: I had a sister that didn't live, and that is all I had. So, I was raised as an only child. I was delivered by Dr. Al A. Mitchell and of course it was a home delivery. And then years later, 30 years later, Dr. George Mitchel, his son, delivered my children.

I: Okay, then how long did you live in Marshall?

D: I left Marshall after sixth grade. And went to West Union.

I: And have you been in West Union since then?

D: Yes .

I: Where did you live in Marshall?

D: South 8th St, that is in town, south end of town.

I: What was the neighborhood like?

D: Oh, small houses, nothing elaborate.

I: Why did you move to West Union?

D: We didn't move to West Union right then, we moved east of Marshall on old old route 40. When you drive to Terre Haute, on the south side of 40, the current 40, you can see the old bricks of route 40, I don't know when we moved out there. I would say I was about three or four. It was just about a mile from town so you were just beginning to get out into the country. It was called the Stringtown area, there was the Stringtown School there. We lived there until about 6th grade. Our house was on the south side of the road and across the street was a Shell filling station owned by Mr. Stout . There was also a place called Seven Acres on the north side and it was a private home. But they had tourist

cabins there, it was owned by Luella and Dick Morton. Luella and her sister often catered there for parties in this home. They did this for women in Marshall who didn't want to host parties in their own homes. And my mother often helped at these parties. Today these places are gone and a small subdivision is there. There was also an old Brick Motel which is no longer in business. And also there is the new Pentecostal Church there.

I: Let's talk about growing up, did you have playmates? Did you have neighbors?

D: Yes, we had neighbors but very few children. I didn't have a two wheeled bicycle until I moved to West Union. Of course, being in the country, you learned to entertain yourself. I spent a lot of time outdoors with my dad.

I: What types of things did you do?

D: Well, we had a garden, and we went mushroom hunting, we had a lot of animals that we had to take care of. A pig, cow and chickens. Of course we made a garden, it was during the Depression. My mother made my clothes, she was a beautiful seamstress. Even though it was during the Depression, I never felt poor because I always had food and clothing.

I: Did you have playmates?

D: One or two. I started to school in Stringtown when I was five. The teacher let me start with first grade. Violet Baker was my fourth grade teacher and I later taught with her at North School which was by the post office on 7th St. And after starting to school, then I had playmates.

I: Tell me some of your school memories, what did you like to do?

D: Well, there was a low place on the property that made a nice skating rink in the winter. We played the usual games. Two of my aunts who were close to me in age, lived with my grandmother, and we would at least once a week go to the movies at the Strand Theater. After the movie we girls would go to the bakery and get donuts and then we would take it home and made coffee to go with our bakery items. And Everett Dean (?) Lawrence bought the first popcorn wagon in Marshall. And I would go to the band concerts and sit by the wagon and open the sacks of popcorn so that he could make the popcorn. And he had a peanut roaster and I would taste them. I should check to see if the popcorn wagon that Marshall has had a peanut roaster.

I: And then you came to West Union when you were in 7th grade?

D: Yes, we lived in town and the West Union school had four classrooms, there were two grades in each room. My freshman and sophomore years I came back to Marshall and attended Marshall High School. Transportation was really rough because there was no school buses. Maxine Strohm Stepp, a good friend of mine, and I rode a bus that went from Robinson to Terre Haute and back in the same day, so we would ride it in the morning and the evening. One semester we decided we would try to stay in Marshall. We stayed in the home of Don McClaine's but it kind of became too much for me so I decided to go to Hutsonville schools so I took my junior and senior years at Hutsonville High School.

Transportation there was easy because there was a man in town called Don Collier who had a bus and he took kids to Hutsonville High School. A Hutsonville High School teacher, Elizabeth Landers, encouraged me to enroll in Blackburn College. It had a program in (?) and I did that. If everyone worked fifteen hours a week they would pay your expenses. I got homesick but I didn't want to quit and waste by dad's hard earned money. But eventually I adjusted to college life. I was lucky in that I got to work at a (inaudible).

Another person that influenced me was the Marshall Superintendent Charles Bush. He kind of looked after kids who had come from West Union. He encouraged me after I had been teaching for twelve years to get my master's degree in administration. He said we need women on the team and this was during the time of the civil rights movement and some people teased him and said that he (inaudible).

I: When you taught, what did you teach?

D: I taught in the primary grades.

I: And how long did you teach?

D: In total, 35 years. I was an elementary teacher from 1947 to 1967. Then I worked in administration as a director and did standardized testing for another eight years. Then I was transferred out to the junior high as principal and I was there from 1973 to 1985. The previous principal was not well liked and I told the teachers out there we will get through this together. After I retired, I worked for the Association of Schools preschool tester and screener who went around to different area schools. That was from 1986 to 1991. I also worked for an adult literacy program. I worked with the Rotary Club in Marshall. We had an office at 2nd St and Route 40 where we worked in the adult literacy program. There had once been a restaurant in that building so that is where we worked with our adult students. I only had to work Clark County.

I: Now were you married?

D: Yes, I was married.

I: When were you married?

D: I was married December 26, 1948 in my parents' home in West Union. I married Lyman Shawler. We had a few close friends and family, Lyman's brother Omar and my friend Maxine were part of the ceremony. Lyman was a major influence on me, he always supported and encouraged me and he was a great parent. He worked as a post master for 35 years and farmed on the side. He died November 17, 2011. We had two children, Steven who is married to Carolyn Beard, they live in West Union. My daughter Katherine Ann Badasch and her husband, Mark live in Collinsville. We have five grandchildren, Mike, Josh and Megan Badasch and Eric and Amy Shawler. And two great-grandchildren, Jerry and Grayson Badasch.

I: Now I want to ask you some general questions about things you remember in your life. As you think back over your life and you think about things that have happened, are events that you remember

particularly well that had a big influence on you?

D: I mentioned three people who had a big influence on me. Of course everybody remember when President John F Kennedy was killed. World War II did not touch me too much. My husband had terrible experience in the war but I really was not acquainted with him then. And my dad missed the cut-off and didn't have to go to the war.

I: Let's talk about Marshall rather than West Union. If somebody came to visit who was not from Marshall, and asked you about why you would live in this area, what would you say about Marshall?

D: Well, I think it's a pretty typical community. There is a lot going on with art and we have a lot of entertainment events coming in. They are trying to restore and take care of the historic places. The school district has always been a good one. And we have a lot of people who make Marshall a nice bedroom community, people who work in Terre Haute but chose to live in Marshall. There are good sports programs in the schools and outside of the school system.

I want to express some thoughts about some other points about Marshall. One of the questions was about church. I want to tell some things about the Congregational Church. I attended the Marshall Congregational Church and Carl Holler, the history teacher in my school, who had lost an arm due to an auto accident. Mr. Holler played the organ at that church. They had a woman that was the pastor, and that was very unusual that a woman would be a pastor. I belonged to the Baptist church in West Union. I belonged to a lot of organizations that I'm proud of. I am a life member of the National Association of (?) and I belonged to the Illinois Association of Principals, those pertaining to my work. And the Association of Curriculum. I got my both of my degrees, the BS degree and the master's degree from Indiana State. One on 1965 and the other in 1967.

I currently belong to the Beta Kappa Gamma, that is an honorary membership for teachers. The (inaudible) was a group that started in Marshall. It was originally a committee that started in 1965, to 1971, and they raised the funds for the mental health care of Clark County residents and bought a new furnace for the research center. (inaudible about this org). This group became the Clark County Mental Health Board. It was organized by a referendum in 1979. I became a member of that board in 1980 and served until 1993. They made their office in 1991 at the present site on south Route 1. I served as chairman of that board ten years. The superintendent of schools, Garold Eaglin, in 1992 asked me to become a member of the regional school board of trustees. He wanted me to be on the board (inaudible). Many people know that part of this county's children go to Crawford Co schools and he had hoped that we could get those kids back into the Marshall school district, but that didn't happen.

I: Well, this has been very informative.

D: Many of the things I have talked about have been work related. And after retirement I wanted to give back to the West Union community. In 1985 the West Union merchants (inaudible about library starting) The Robinson library brought in 50 books to help us get started. I served on that West Union library board since it started in 1986. I got our first state grant of \$5,000. I can't leave this until I tell about my first year of teaching. In 1937 a one room school, there were eight students in five

grade levels. I did all the teaching, the janitor duties, all that needed to be done for this school. I did this all for \$80 a month. In closing, I feel that teaching will always be a part of me. West Union means family, friends and the library.