

MOORE SCHMIDT
9
CJH.FCP
CLEM: This is February 20th and we are talking with Mrs.
Harold Geiger, Thelma Geiger, who was for thirty years an
employee of the Alliance Review and retired as editor of the
Society page. And Thelma we'd like to go back 30 years to
the time when you started with the Alliance Review. Do you
remember what year that was?

A 155

588/6

GEIGER: Yes, I do.

CLEM: Okay.

REMINISCENCES

GEIGER: 1942. And that was in August of that year.

CLEM: Fine, now was Thelma Geiger the Review you didn't
start as Society Editor.....

GEIGER: No.

CLEM: What was your *Geiger, Thelma*

GEIGER: Well I went in as General Assignments reporter,
because at that time, as you recall, that was right in the
middle of the war and that probably was the reason that I
got my job because the men were away in service. So I was
sent to the City Hall beat though I didn't stay with it
too long, that was my first assignment at the Alliance
Review.

CLEM: So the City Hall beat would have generally been given
to a man would it not?

GEIGER: Almost always and has since then. And they refrained
from giving the Police Court because they thought that was a
little bit rough for me. So they still sent a man over to

Police. Prepared by the Rodman Public Library
for the Oral History Project, Alliance, Ohio

1980

RODMAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

CLEM: This is February 20th and we are talking with Mrs. Harold Geiger, Thelma Geiger, who was for thirty years an employee of the Alliance Review and retired as editor of the Society page. And Thelma we'd like to go back 30 years to the time when you started with the Alliance Review. Do you remember what year that was?

GEIGER: Yes, I do.

CLEM: Okay.

GEIGER: 1942. And that was in August of that year.

CLEM: Fine, now when you began at the Review you didn't start as Society Editor.....

GEIGER: No.

CLEM: What was your position then?

GEIGER: Well I went in as General Assignments reporter, because at that time, as you recall, that was right in the middle of the war and that probably was the reason that I got my job because the men were away in service. So I was sent to the City Hall beat. Although I didn't stay with it too long, that was my first assignment at the Alliance Review.

CLEM: So the City Hall beat would have generally been given to a man would it not?

GEIGER: Almost always and has since then. And they refrained from giving me Police Court because they thought that was a little bit rough for me. So they still sent a man over to Police Court but I covered everything else.

spoken to others in the office?

CLEM: And of course this was in World War II.

GEIGER: That's right.

CLEM: And there were many women doing men's jobs in World War II.

GEIGER: That was our first chance to get our foot in the door, and we've kept it in ever since.

CLEM: Now, let's talk about the City Hall beat. Now City Hall in 1942 would have been in the building it currently occupies right?

GEIGER: That's right.

CLEM: In what we call our City Hall. You would have gone there how often? When would you go to get your news?

GEIGER: Actually that was a daily beat. You would go in every morning. And it would have to be fairly early in the morning because you still had to meet your daily deadline. Now I covered the public offices such as the Safety Service Director, the Mayor, the Clerk of the Municipal Court. I'm trying to recall going up and down the steps. I think the office of the Civilian Defense was still there, I believe. And I got the routine news of the day, the arrests or anything else of course was picked up by whatever reporter we sent over.

CLEM: To the Police Court.

GEIGER: Yes, to the Police Court.

CLEM: Would you when you made your rounds at City Hall have talked directly to the City Officials or would you have spoken to others in the office?

GEIGER: No, we spoke directly, or rather I should say I spoke directly with the City Official, because it, you were there was too much chance of error, if you got the news from the secretary or if you got your news from any intermediary. So you went directly to the Mayor or to the Safety Service Director and if he wasn't available then it meant a return trip.

CLEM: You went back?

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: Did you ever have any problems getting past the secretaries?

GEIGER: No, once they knew who it was, no, everything was fine.

CLEM: The City Hall was very cooperative with the news agency.

GEIGER: Very cooperative.

CLEM: That would make sense. I think it would be mutual benefit.

GEIGER: Well if we ever got into any sensitive areas in which it might be premature to publish anything we respected it, and they realized that we did. So that way we earned their respect and they got ours too. Our cooperation.

CLEM: That's commendable. I don't think that's always true in your.....

GEIGER: In the larger papers, no it isn't. Because your competition is a little....Of course today you have

to its early days and I know it goes prior to....

competition with TV. We didn't have that then.

CLEM: That's true.

GEIGER: We had the sole control of the local news.

CLEM: That you had competition now from television but in 1942 would there have been any competition from television in Alliance?

GEIGER: No, not television but radio.

CLEM: Radio. Alright, we have radio station WFAH. Was it in existence in 1942?

GEIGER: Yes. I think it came in shortly thereafter and it was initially located in the old brick building that was once the home of Mrs. F. A. Hoiles. Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Hoiles on South Union Avenue. It is now an apartment complex and doctor's offices. But that's where station WFAH originally started.

CLEM: Now the Hoiles connection is not only with radio station WFAH but it has a connection with the Alliance Review does it not?

GEIGER: Yes. Of course the Hoiles family was initially owned by F. A. Hoiles. And at the time that I went to the Review he was deceased, but his children were running it. And prior to the time that the Hoiles family took over of course other interests owned the paper. Because it goes back a good many years. See, I think it's about 125 or 130 years old.

CLEM: Yes, we have the Alliance Review on microfilm back to its early days and I know it goes prior to....

GEIGER: It was known by various names; the Leader, the News.

CLEM: In the early days it was, un huh. Well at that time then you did have some competition from radio but the radio station was not as strong then as it is today.

GEIGER: No, it wasn't although we did operate competitively. Our staff worked solely on their own and their staff worked independently of us and very seldom did we exchange news.

CLEM: Yes, as a matter of fact I think the competition also was just that you worked as separate staffs though owned by the same corporation, but it was also that you actually competed to see who got it first.

GEIGER: We did. We did.

CLEM: How often, do you remember how much of a broadcast time they had? Were they on the air for very long?

GEIGER: Oh I think they were on the usual amount of time probably signing off around 11:00 and maybe signing on in the morning around 6:30 or 7:00.

CLEM: Well they covered a full broadcast day then.

GEIGER: Yes, they did.

CLEM: There would have been quite a bit of news that they would have had to have gathered and I imagine that you crossed paths with their news gathering team.

GEIGER: Oh we did.

CLEM: Did you speak to one another? Was it cooperative?

GEIGER: Oh yes it was cooperative but it's rather amusing to recall that whenever we had any celebrations such as

dinners and that sort of thing we had our separate dinners.

We didn't indulge in fellowship too much.

CLEM: I see and that kept the competition keen too.

GEIGER: Yes, it kept it alive.

CLEM: Well let's go back to City Hall beat. We were talking about the cooperative aspect that a reporter had with the political heads in town. And how you respected their wishes to not release a story right away. And that was quite an admirable characteristic. Do you think that that has changed over the years?

GEIGER: Oh yes I do. I think it has changed quite a bit. And I'm not speaking specifically about the Review because you do have your TV competition today which is news on the spot. And you do have in some instances competitive papers; although in Ohio that's now reduced to just the major cities; Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati, in which you have a morning and an afternoon. But by and large most of the other cities have, it's a monopoly. But it is competitive with that. And I think sometimes in the competition you're inclined to be a little more rash and dig a little bit. Maybe I've been seeing Lou Grant too much on TV. But it's that sort of thing. And the reporters are eager to get back with the news before anybody else. And we didn't have that problem.

CLEM: Un huh. It was different then in the earlier days.

CLEM: Well that's an interesting story about Sam Kirkland.

GEIGER: Yes.

GEIGER: It still is different today with your small town dailies...It still is different.

CLEM: Yes. Now, City Hall beat that you had covered. Do you remember the Mayor that you would have had then?

GEIGER: I think the first Mayor that I, shall we say worked under, would be Floyd Senn. And I can't tell you too much about him because I was not on the City Hall beat for too long and I think his term ended shortly after I started. And then Mayor Kirkland, Sam Kirkland, came in. And Sam served for two years and refused to run another time. And Sam was the Co-owner of the K & W Motors at that time. And I don't think that he had ever been involved too much in politics but he was very well liked and his friends convinced him to let his name be put on the ticket and he won very easily. And liked political life, but Mrs. Kirkland didn't.

CLEM: I see.

GEIGER: And it absorbed too much of his time. And so when they came around and asked him to run a second time he said, "no, I think its made too many in-roads on my family life and you better let someone else come on." Well, in the meantime I was taken off of City Hall and I was put on General Assignments. So I didn't come into too much direct contact with the Municipal Officials and I don't think I can go much further than that when it comes to remembering a great deal about it.

CLEM: Well that's an interesting story about Sam Kirkland.

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: Sam is still in Alliance today, and he is considered the presiding official at a "round table" down at our local candy shop called Heggys. And that is where a number of the City Officials and some of the heads of businesses congregate over coffee and Sam kind of presides at that table.

GEIGER: Well I think Sam has the common touch. I mean he has a wonderful sense of humor, makes friends very easily and he was still alert to the needs of the city and made a good Mayor. At the time he was extremely well liked.

CLEM: Now when you left City Hall beat now what do you mean you went on General Assignments? What would those consist of?

GEIGER: Well, even though it was called General Assignments we had a specific beat so to speak: the schools, anything that involved the schools whether it was in elementary or the high school, the Red Cross and the old Community Fund which was the forerunner of United Way as we know it today. And then just features and general assignments but that was a regular beat in which when I say regular you had to make contact with any of these specific organizations every morning to make sure that nothing had happened over night or nothing was going to happen that day. So that you wouldn't be caught napping.

CLEM: Now you mentioned contact with the City Hall beat meaning you went there every day.

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: Now when you had a broader coverage here.

GEIGER: Telephone car that I used. Now if we were

CLEM: By telephone. You made your contact by telephone.

GEIGER: Yes. Photographer went along. And we used a company

CLEM: But every day?

GEIGER: Every morning. Yes. So that you couldn't be caught napping and something happen....that in those days, possibly we have slipped a little bit today in not being so inflexible about having the news within 24 hours after it happened. But our editor was determined that today's news would be today's news not yesterday's. So your contacts had to be made every day to keep yourself up to date and to keep your news up to date. for the editorial department. They're

CLEM: Now when you had covered City Hall beat and then you moved to other assignments you would have had to have walked to City Hall right? Did you have a car and did you drive then too? would represent in general the change in automobiles

GEIGER: No, but then walking to City Hall was just around the corner. the Review and not been expected to have a car

CLEM: But that's interesting. Then you would have been totally dependent practically upon a telephone. wasn't

GEIGER: To some extent. With the schools yes, the telephone. And with Red Cross and with United, or with the old Community Fund. However if there were specific things to attend, to cover that also involved covering Board meetings and anything else that would come up. Then of course those were generally in the evening and you had to do that by car. Well I had a

car but it was a family car that I used. Now if we were sent out during the day on assignments in which a car was involved the photographer went along. And we used a company car, so we went in pairs.

CLEM: Oh, I see.

GEIGER: Now that is where there has been a tremendous change because as a reporter then you were not required to know how to use a camera. Today almost every reporter must know how to use and must take his or her pictures on the spot.

CLEM: And also use his or her car. Because does the Review still maintain a company car?

GEIGER: I don't think for the editorial department. They're given mileage but they don't have a company car. Now the business office and the photographer, they do. But we were expected to rely on our own.

CLEM: This would represent in general the change in automobiles in society too because in those days you could have obtained your job at the Review and not been expected to have a car at your disposal.

GEIGER: We were not initially expected that, it wasn't necessary.

CLEM: Whereas today those reporters are very much dependent upon their cars.

GEIGER: It's almost a must today that you do have some means of transportation. And I know that in the larger papers they do have staff cars which you can use on schedule.

But in your small town newspapers I think they're still operating that you provide your own.

CLEM: Now when you covered, let's say the schools can you think of any of the major happenings that occurred during your time of General Assignment with the schools?

GEIGER: Well of course we went through a growing period in which there were new schools being built, particularly Stanton Junior High. And additions to some of the other buildings, State Street specifically. And I remember their tearing down the old Park and Broadway School, which was an elementary building.

CLEM: And that would be where the Fire Station is currently located, right.

GEIGER: That's right, yes. And I think one of the reasons why they decided on building Stanton was because the community, State Street was no longer able to take care of the entire influx of the junior high students coming in. And so they decided that they really needed one in the middle of the City as well as in the south end to take care of both.

CLEM: And so they selected Stanton which is standing now at the corner of Broadway and Union.

GEIGER: Right.

CLEM: Right. And it was built as a Junior High as was State Street though now the educational concepts have changed and it's called a middle school.

GEIGER: That's right. High was included and then an addition to State Street and an addition to Franklin and a new Morgan

CLEM: Covering a different section of grades. Did they have any problems as to where to locate the school? Do you recall?

GEIGER: I don't recall that they had any problems although it had to be thoroughly investigated by architects and contractors to make certain that it was a good place to build, and I think they ran into a little trouble after the building was erected. After about a year in which they had some cracking of the corridors, that is the floors. Now that was because of the settling because part of that is on a fill. *Yes but I know it was at*

CLEM: Oh I see.

GEIGER: You see a good deal of South Union to the west is on a fill. But they rectified it and I don't think they have had any trouble in recent years.

CLEM: This is an area along Broadway and as well as South Union that we have many buildings such as the one that we are in right now, the public library is located on a fill. *for the Junior*

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: With pilings that go down quite far. So basically they located the school after study but no one complained as to the location, it was felt to be a..... *people who have been in the*

GEIGER: Oh no, I don't think there was ever any dissension on choosing the location for a Junior High. *1942. So actually I*

CLEM: Now, how did they get the money to build. *sure he was a*

GEIGER: Well of course through a bond issue, and it passed the first time but it was a five point bond issue in which the new Stanton Junior High was included and then an addition to State Street and an addition to Franklin and a new Morgan

School and then multi-purpose rooms for North and South Lincoln. However the funds ran out after they completed the first three projects which were Stanton of course and State Street and Franklin. So they had to go back to the public for funds for the other three projects. Well as so often happens if you don't carry out your word with the general public, they lose faith, whether they're right or wrong. And it took repeated placement on the ballot before it finally passed, and I can't tell you now whether it was two or three times but I know it was at least two. Franklin, and Liberty and North Lincoln and South

CLEM: That's not news as far as history of bond issues today is concerned. Alliance educator.

GEIGER: No. quite a tribute then to Mr. Stanton. Was it in

CLEM: But one can understand the reluctance of the voters but they did achieve it then because we do have a Morgan School building. Why was the name Stanton selected for the Junior High? And she had been associated with the Red Cross for over

GEIGER: Well B. F. Stanton was probably in our school system longer than any other educator and by that I don't mean as a teacher. Because I'm sure we have people who have been in the system more years but as an educator and superintendent he was in at least 30 years. And he retired in 1942. So actually I never got to know the man too intimately but because he was a well respected educator for so many years they decided that this was an excellent chance to honor him. They named it after him. ahead of time we would have to start promoting

through the newspaper because we had a quota of so many donors

CLEM: So it was named after an educator. Would it have been the only school that had a name for a person, do you know? That's just out of curiosity.

GEIGER: I believe, I'm thinking of Morgan School but I believe that was named because of its location rather than after the Morgan family. Because there is a Morgan Avenue.

CLEM: Named, yes, and it's very near the Morgan industry as well.

GEIGER: And you see if you just run through some of the other names like Franklin, and Liberty and North Lincoln and South Lincoln; as far as I can recall that is the only one that bears a name of an Alliance educator.

CLEM: It's quite a tribute then to Mr. Stanton. Was it in this period then when you were doing General Assignments that you worked so closely with the Red Cross?

GEIGER: Yes. And of course that brings to mind the late Mildred Eales. And she had been associated with the Red Cross for over thirty years. And my daily contact was with her, I would call every morning and she would tell me or refer me to someone on her staff that could give me any news of the day. Of course the Red Cross is a many faceted organization and they branch out into family service, which at that time was service to families of men overseas. And the Blood Program. And we became quite involved in the Blood Program with the daily visitation of the Blood mobile unit. And that meant that two, at least two, to three weeks ahead of time we would have to start promoting through the newspaper because we had a quota of so many donors

to reach. And so that was interesting too.

CLEM: You mentioned a daily visit of the blood.....

GEIGER: No, no, no. Not a daily visit.

CLEM: Oh I see.

GEIGER: No, it came once a month.

CLEM: I see.

GEIGER: But two to three weeks ahead of time we'd start informing the public and trying to get human interest stories that would stimulate people into signing up because there had to be registration you see for it. So they would know exactly how many are expected to show up.

CLEM: Right. The blood program is still running in the same way.

GEIGER: Oh yes. Yes.

CLEM: Also the tremendous need to start, in advance, to encourage people to give blood. You mentioned the types of articles that you may have written in order to enlist sympathy. Do you recall?

GEIGER: Well I think of the first retarded class in Alliance which was started in the basement of the Union Avenue Methodist Church. And that was at the time when they were bringing the retarded out of the closet so to speak. We had more or less ignored the problem. But through the generosity of the Methodist Church which opened up its facilities, there were two classes. And I remember of course Mrs. Alvada Wagner who has since retired but she worked almost, most of her life with the program. And it was a remarkable progress that was achieved

through the classes. We did the first story as the classes were conducted the first week and then we went back possibly six months later and the progress was really amazing to see what she and her staff were able to accomplish with those youngsters.

CLEM: She was very well known for her service to these children.

GEIGER: It takes a very dedicated, special person and Alvada Wagner was just that.

CLEM: Very definitely. Now these began in the Union Avenue Methodist Church, were they linked, was she employed by the school or by the church?

GEIGER: I think she was employed, I think her salary came partially from the parents who were required when able to pay a portion and the rest of it came from the county and then indirectly from the state.

CLEM: But eventually then these classes were.....

GEIGER: Eventually it was turned over then to the county under the state.

CLEM: And taken into the school system?

GEIGER: Yes. That's right.

CLEM: And out of the church.

GEIGER: That's right.

CLEM: What year would it have been roughly when these retarded classes began?

GEIGER: Well I'm, I would say possibly twenty-five years ago. Now that's strictly a guess.

CLEM: Un huh. In the 1950's.

GEIGER: Yes, yes. *can imagine how much that meant to the family.*

CLEM: Sometime around then. Because now the retarded classes and services to the handicapped children of all ages is very much a part of the school system. *too that is providing the*

GEIGER: Well public awareness has increased so much as well as sympathy. And we realize that there is much to be done for them. At that time a retarded child was simply looked upon as a lost child and he was tolerated at home and kept out of sight. But these classes brought them out. And the one thing that I recall so vividly is the love and affection that they have to give. *True.*

CLEM: Yes, very loving children and of course there is and can be tremendous improvement in their capabilities. *To see*

GEIGER: Yes. *id accomplish.*

CLEM: Perhaps this was never shown before because they were never given an opportunity. *se children?*

GEIGER: Well I believe it was that, I don't recall the exact percentage but a retarded child was not permitted in a public classroom unless he was 50 per cent educable. And if the norm was below that he would not be accepted. So many of these children were then in the homes with the parents trying very hard to accommodate the family life around the youngster. But there was much that could be done. And I recall this one child, who, a young girl who was never able to stand still, she was constantly in motion. So much so that she could never eat with her parents at the table. Within a matter of two months Alvada had her sitting at the table and quietly working at different

things. And you can imagine how much that meant to the family.

CLEM: Not to mention the child too, who must have felt very deeply the rejection of not being able to eat with the parents. That's amazing. I would imagine too that in providing the coverage in the newspaper it would have in some way helped the acceptance of this program.

GEIGER: Well that was our reason for doing the stories in the first place was to educate the public as to what was going on. I think so much of the rejection is through ignorance. And I think too many people didn't understand.

CLEM: True.

GEIGER: And then they had open houses in which they did invite the public to come in. And that was a revelation too. To see what they could accomplish.

CLEM: Now, since it was such a sensitive area at that time did you take photographs of these children?

GEIGER: Yes, yes. There was never any objection. And of course we were selective because there are so many grades of retardation. So we were selective in that there would be nothing that would offend the parents and nothing that would offend the reader and it worked out very well.

CLEM: In regard to taking photographs, what was the procedure for taking a photograph. Did you make special arrangements in advance to take them?

GEIGER: Well generally there were arrangements in advance. If it happened to be a personal interview you almost had to let the person know that he or she was going to be photographed. There

were many things that they might want to do to prepare for it.

CLEM: Women always want to get their hair done.

GEIGER: That is true, true. And many a time we had to arrange our interview after she had been to the beauty shop. Plus the fact that it was self protection because there's nothing more difficult than walking into an interview with your photographer and having the interviewee saying, "oh I didn't know my picture was going to be taken and I don't want it."

CLEM: Yes.

GEIGER: So we made sure that we crossed all the bridges before we got there.

CLEM: Now did you have to have any written evidence that you had permission?

GEIGER: No, not unless it was an extremely sensitive area in which you felt that there might be repercussion but very, very seldom. We didn't have any problem there.

CLEM: Usually it's just the opposite. I think many people enjoy having their picture in the paper and would co-operate. Matter of fact there would be more who would want it taken that you didn't possible have room for.

GEIGER: I think you're right.

CLEM: Do you, well we're moving closer and closer now to the time of your role of Society Editor. Were you on General Assignments for very long?

GEIGER: Yes, I would say, well out of the thirty years I think about twelve to fifteen of those were spent as the Society Editor.

CLEM: I see.

GEIGER: Which was pretty evenly divided the first half on General Assignments and then moved into that when Althea Yarnell retired. She had been with the paper twenty-five years.

CLEM: And she was the Society Editor.

GEIGER: Yes, and that is the only assignment that she ever did.

CLEM: Well before we move into this Society Editor is there anything else from the General Assignments that you recall?

GEIGER: Well not particularly. There would be the schools and the Community Chest which eventually evolved into the United Way as we know it.

CLEM: Would this have been the period of time when you mentioned that you did the "tear jerker" type of stories?

GEIGER: Well that was almost from the very beginning and we would get leads on that and then we'd contact the people. And we worked that in with our regular assignments. I did features on General as well as when I went into the Women's Page.

CLEM: I see.

GEIGER: So I've really done that throughout the thirty years.

CLEM: Do you find that there is less use of "tear jerker" stories these days?

GEIGER: Well I wouldn't say there's less use but I think they are being treated more matter of factly, less emotionally than they used to be and maybe that's merely a reflection of the changes of time. It just seems to me that there's a little bit more callous approach to what might have been a "tear jerker". But that too can be attributed to the fact that our values have changed too.

CLEM: It also might have something to do with the fact that in the earlier years we were, for charity, you were more dependant upon the individual giver. In other words you wanted help from individuals. Whereas today I think many of the charity cases are more dependent upon the bureaucracies, the welfare structure. That may have had something to do with it too.

GEIGER: I think that's had a lot to do with that type of story and the way it's handled today. Plus the fact that you have a whole new generation of young people coming on in the journalistic field and I think they have come into it with an entirely different angle too.

CLEM: True, it would reflect not only their own outlook but also the journalism schools today.

GEIGER: Well they're far more mobile than we were. Because in the original years at the Alliance Review we stayed. Althea twenty-five years, John Hanlon twenty-five years of course Clarence well over forty years, Clarence Steffy, and myself thirty years, Cy Butler twenty-five to thirty years. And now if you stay two years it's a long time. They move on.

CLEM: That's true. And you know they would be more mobile as far as their day in the office because I would imagine that when you used the telephone in the earlier days to gather your stories you were together more in that office, in the newspaper office. But now with their day and their automobile they get out of that office more I would think.

GEIGER: It's not being sentimental to say that we actually did regard ourselves as a family. We were the Review family. And

I speak of the Editorial Department. But today I think, and right or wrong, who's to say, but I think it has changed.

CLEM: Yes, with that..... had in Clarence Steffy.

GEIGER: It is a job today. And possibly the greatest.....

CLEM: We were talking with the tape ended about the Review family and about the feelings that were there during your years of service and possibly the changes you saw as the newspaper reporters became more mobile and this now lack of a family feeling. You mentioned in naming some names people that you were associated with and who were associated with the Review for many years. Let's take Clarence Steffy and spell out his office there because that, he was the Editor wasn't he?

GEIGER: Yes. Well Clarence started as a General Assignment reporter and then came World War II and Paul Reed who was Editor at that time because he was in the Army Reserves was called into service and Clarence stepped in as Editor. A position which he did hold until his retirement. When Paul Reed came back from service, he then was put in as General Manager of Station WFAH. And Clarence stayed with that for the rest of the time and continued to work at the Alliance Review two years after his retirement doing columns and that sort of thing. And as I recall things about Clarence, he was born in Hartville. Was not a native of Alliance, but from the day that he moved here he adopted this as his hometown. But from that time on I don't think we've ever had a more dedicated or devoted citizen than Clarence Steffy. Jim was born and raised in Marlboro and

CLEM: I would second that from what I knew of Clarence Steffy too. Definitely a promoter of Alliance. Alliance never had a much better friend than it had in Clarence Steffy.

GEIGER: Well I often heard him say that he felt that Alliance people were something special. That they were unlike people anywhere else in the United States. And of course that brought forth a good many arguments from the office staff. But he genuinely believed it. And that was his philosophy throughout his years at the Review.

CLEM: And I think it was reflected in general in the type of editorials that he had and in the type of paper that he ran and produced as Editor.

GEIGER: Well sometimes I feel that his editorial columns were never controversial. But I think that was because he felt Alliance could do no wrong. And he found it very difficult to enter into areas that were detrimental to Alliance.

CLEM: That's true, but he did it more as a positive approach rather than as an effort to whitewash.

GEIGER: Oh no there was never that. No, no, he thought Alliance was too good a town to need whitewashing.

CLEM: What about some of the younger reporters who may have come along during his time? Did they give him battle over things like this?

GEIGER: Well the only one that I think of is the current Editor, and that would be Jim Hastings who came to us directly from Kent State University. But Jim was born and raised in Marlboro and

men sitting around swapping stories. Whereas your Little League

he had the hometown feeling. And we had a succession of reporters come and go but not particularly for any reason. And it would be, they would come in and fill just one spot. We never had any other vacancies. It was generally one area in which we would have them come in and maybe they would last a year, maybe two years but on they would move.

CLEM: Well this was also I think beginning to reflect that greater mobility in the young reporters too. Do you remember when Clarence Steffy retired? It would have been in the 19...

GEIGER: Well he was about 67 when he died and I think he has been gone about four years.

CLEM: That would take it back to 1976 that he had passed away.

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: And he would have retired about two years before that.

GEIGER: Two years before that.

CLEM: In the middle 1970's that he retired and was replaced then by Jim Hastings, who is the current Editor of the newspaper. What about some of the other names that you mentioned? Cy Butler?

GEIGER: Cy Butler, yes. Cy Butler was with the paper for a long, long time. And I think Cy can be best remembered for his work with young people. Because it was Cy who originated the Hot Stove League, which eventually became nationalized but never gained the same momentum as the Little League. And we often discussed this in the office and felt that possibly the reason for that was the selection of the name. Because the Hot Stove League brings out an image of a pot bellied stove and elderly men sitting around swapping stories. Whereas your Little League

brings out the image of youngsters in baseball uniforms. But Cy's work with these youngsters was really remarkable. And as I understand that is the reason for the park on the West Main Street being named in his honor.

CLEM: Butler Rodman Park.

GEIGER: Butler Rodman Park.

CLEM: I had wondered where the Butler came from? What was his capacity at the.....

GEIGER: General Assignments.

CLEM: General Assignments. Did he also incorporate sports into that or was there a separate.....

GEIGER: Yes, yes. Whenever the sports editor was on vacation, why he would take over. And the sports editor was John Hanlon who worked there for many years.

CLEM: Oh, okay. That was another name that you had mentioned too. What do you remember about John Hanlon?

GEIGER: John was an eccentric: he was a bachelor. I can't remember too much about John except that he was a lantern-jawed, big man but a very good sports editor. Not biased in anything that he did. And that's easy to do when you're handling sports. I don't know if you remember Bert Dunbar.

CLEM: Oh yes.

GEIGER: Well Bert Dunbar was John's constant companion. Because Bert had a photogenic memory for scores. And while it didn't extend to much of anything else whatever John didn't get that evening at a game, Bert could remember.

CLEM: And he remembered it strictly from his memory too.

GEIGER: Yes, and he could remember addresses, telephone numbers and sports scores. And could tell you even if you asked for a score two and three years before. But other than that Bert was lacking.

CLEM: Yes, those were his strong points and he did not have that capability in other areas.

GEIGER: He attached himself to John principally because he admired him and John allowed it principally because Bert was so helpful. If he didn't manage to get down the scores or whatever inning or whatever. Whatever, because I'm not that familiar with sports.

CLEM: Whatever piece of information that he needed.

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: Then would you have found Bert frequently sitting at the Review?

GEIGER: He would come in to see John frequently and whenever John went anywhere he would ride with him. Now he never came in and made himself a nuisance in the office. He never came in and took up space. But he was always with John when John went out in the evening.

CLEM: Obviously they both cared very much for sports.

GEIGER: Yes. He understood Bert and Bert adored John and the two made a pretty good pair.

CLEM? And between the two we probably always had the scores right.

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: On any of the games. Any other names that you recall?

GEIGER: Are you speaking of the Review or.....

CLEM: Well in general, those were the names that you had mentioned that were directly with the Review. What about Mr. Siddall?

GEIGER: Well there is another man and I would say there was a great similarity between Mr. Siddall and Mr. Steffy because in both instances they were thoroughly sold on Alliance. They both tackled their support in different avenues because Clarence could support whatever the community did on the editorial pages. But Mr. Siddall started out, he came from Findlay and he started out at the Review in the advertising department as Advertising Director. And then following the death of F. A. Hoiles he moved in as General Manager with Mrs. F. A. Hoiles still as President of the firm. But he was a promoter and he promoted Alliance whenever he could. And at the time that they were holding the drive for the new City Hospital he gave page after page of support in ads to that and worked very closely with Edgar Turkle in bringing us a new hospital. He was the first one to start the community Halloween parade. And I recall that after he went out to Copeland Oaks Retirement Community, that was one of the things that he felt so badly about, that was several years ago, they decided to abandon the Halloween parade. He, and he had felt very deeply that that was a community endeavor. And he hated to see it go, along with other things.

CLEM: I had not realized who he was and what he had done.

GEIGER: And another thing that he did, he brought the merchants together in so many co-operative efforts in promotions. But of course there again we see a change in our mode of living. The Super Centers have come into the picture and individual ownership of many stores has disappeared. And at that time I would say almost every store on Main Street was individually owned with possibly the exception of Sears and Pennys. But that picture too has changed.

CLEM: That's true, and at that time too there would have been more stores on Main Street. I find it hard to believe how many clothing stores we had at one time. And of course this gets into an area that you know a little bit more about through your husband too.

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: But it has changed so much over the years, you just do not have that many clothing stores.

GEIGER: Well, and there are very few locally owned stores any more.

CLEM: That is true, that is true.

GEIGER: And that in its turn has taken away from I think the personal element that held the community together as far as Main Street was concerned. And it's pretty hard to get someone who's sitting at his desk in Chicago or St. Louis or someone else, to feel the urge to support Alliance which is far away.

CLEM: This is very true and of course it's a little hard to stimulate let's say a community spirit among these stores.

Let's get together and promote thus and so. There are the General Managers now who must request permission as you say from someone sitting in Chicago and it just, they're not interested in perhaps in competing with the store down the street on Main Street in Alliance.

GEIGER: That's where Mr. Steffy and Mr. Siddall shone. I think they both worked in their own way to support community as a hometown endeavor.

CLEM: And of course it would be reflected in the types of advertising now as well as the type of articles that you have in the newspaper.

GEIGER: Well so often your ads were prepared locally, and now, too often they come from the offices of chain firms and are sent in through the mail.

CLEM? It truly has taken away the personal touch.

GEIGER: It has.

CLEM: Anyone else that you recall?

GEIGER: Well of course I recall Mr. Rodman who did his philanthropic work I think in a little different way. He lent his name and he lent his money to various projects throughout the city. And he was an extremely well respected man.

CLEM: This is true. Now this would be C. J. Rodman.

GEIGER: That's right. Of course Jim Rodman is still here and he's on the faculty as you know at Mount Union College. I'm talking about his father.

CLEM: Yes, he was, well the Rodman name is well known in the community because of his philanthropic gifts.

GEIGER: And then, when I say he worked in a different way, I think of Edgar Turkle who also worked very hard for the city. And particularly in the new hospital. But Edgar had to give his mostly in time and effort. And there are very few testimonies today that you can see what he did. But he and Mr. Siddall worked very closely together on the hospital project.

CLEM: That's true. Now Edgar Turkle was a mortician.

GEIGER: That's right, Cassady and Turkle.

CLEM: And funeral director. Yes, for Cassady and Turkle. Yes those are two names that one still recognizes. Of course their families are still here.

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: This too as far as fund raising in the community has changed over the years. Again with the same patterns developing. Rather than your locally owned companies where one man owned a company and could say well now Morgan's is going to give so much to the hospital construction and American Steel Foundries will give so much these also have passed by the way and changed into Chicago based corporations.

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: There are very few family owned corporations left. So that too, that's changed.

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: And not necessarily for the better as far as the support.

GEIGER: Now always for the good but you have to move with it.

CKENL But you have to recognize that it is a different situation now too. Well let's go into the time then when you became

Society Editor. Now this would have been at what period.

GEIGER: Well I was, around 19....about 1957, somewhere in there.

CLEM: And before you became the Society Editor you mentioned Mrs. Yarnell who had held that position for some years. Did you get trained by her in advance or were you just handed the job?

GEIGER: I was handed the job but I had previously been the Society Editor of the Canton Repository. And that's where I got my initial training. The only time that I worked, shall we say for Althea was when she was on vacation. And of course her retirement was a surprise, none of us knew that she had planned it. So the job was a surprise to me too because I didn't know they had decided to ask me to take it, and I didn't want it. Because it took me out of the field of reporting. It was a desk job. But I learned to adjust and I learned to like it and stayed with that until I retired.

CLEM: That's amazing. Did you find that you had a different style in your editorial handling of the society news than she?

GEIGER: Well I didn't try to make any changes for a year. But at the end of that time society news was still reporting of meetings, very extensive reporting in meetings with little time or little space left for features, or for family living. And so we tried to change over the format of the society page to include features on women, features on families. And we had two publicity teas to inform our contributors as to what we had in mind, to ask

their indulgence because it's hard to break a habit, and to pass out some publicity handbooks which we had printed. And little by little, we met some opposition, habits are hard to break. But little by little they came over to our way of thinking and we cut down on the length of the stories, and we cut out the unnecessary, what we felt was unnecessary in reporting meetings, thereby allowing us more time and more space to develop the stories and features about people throughout the community. And at that time, we started a series of First Ladies, and we did interviews with Mrs. Hamrick, that would be Jane Hamrick the wife of our current superintendent of schools. We did it on the late Mary Evelyn Weber who was the wife of Dr. Weber of Mount Union College and Nancy Puckett, the wife of the current Mayor. And also on Alyce Ann Hall who is the wife of Harold Hall who at that time was Marlinton District superintendent. He now is the assistant superintendent of the Stark County Schools. Then we went into a series on women in business and professions. Because at just about that time, women were emerging out of their unknown status into professions of their own. And we would do, if I recall correctly, we did a woman doctor, a woman attorney, a realtor, a banker who was a trust officer and moved into those areas and did that. And of course we introduced many other things but those I particularly recall.

CLEM: It would have been following also the social trends that occurred in this time too.

GEIGER: Yes.

GEIGER: Some good and some bad.

CLEM: Where a woman was given more a place in the community of her own rather than simply because she was the wife of so and so.

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: Yes. And your articles that you had changed I would imagine that in the, at the time before you took over it was reported exactly who was there with lists of names I suppose.

GEIGER: Committees after committees after committees, who presided and there was so much shall we say rhubarb that could have been cut out. Not because we didn't feel that it was important and I'm sure it would be to the organizations but it tied us up. Space wise and time wise, and we couldn't get to anything else. And I recall, I won't mention the organization but it's a well known one in Alliance in which five pages of double space typing would be sent in on one meeting in an evening alone.

CLEM: My word.

GEIGER: And it's that sort of thing we had to break down. Because we felt that while each meeting was of importance to the members, the respective members and possibly a few of their friends and a few of their neighbors, it was time to bring in news that was of interest to everyone. To let the community know what was going on. So you had to break with old traditions and it wasn't always easy.

CLEM: No I'm sure you had many comments that were made and perhaps.....

GEIGER: Some good and some bad.

CLEM: Yes I'm sure. Now as far as the amount of space that was given to the Society page, what was called the Society Page, now it would be referred to as the Woman's Page wouldn't it.

GEIGER: That's right.

CLEM: Have you always had roughly the same amount of space to deal with?

GEIGER: No. So much of the time that depended on the amount of advertising for that particular day. Now they tried to have a, to stay as closely as possible to a percentage. In other words they might decide that that year they were going to go to 60 per cent advertising and 40 per cent news. And sometimes I would have two full pages to work with. But then again if there were quite a few ads in there I would have to trim and cut down to a page and a half. But someone from the advertising department would always check in the morning and ask how much space do you need. You go quickly over your list and see how much news you were having for that day and say I could use a page and a half. And she would try as closely as possible to give us that. And if she couldn't well then you would have to hold some of it 'till the next day.

CLEM: I think this is what the layman often doesn't understand that you don't print all the news necessarily that you have. You don't always have space in order to do that but there is the factor that controls it very heavily is the amount of advertising.

CLEM: Oh, I'm sure.

GEIGER: That's right. And unfortunately it has to because that's paid for and must go on the designated day. Where our news is a voluntary contribution with no finances involved so we have to go along with whatever space we are given. I say we as if I were still there.

CLEM: Well, it's very much a part of your life.

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: And you are knowledgeable of the subject obviously. Any particular features that you remember in that time. For instance, I recall hearing about something called "Ear to the Ground."

GEIGER: Oh, we started that as sort of an entertainment feature and that would be amusing anecdotes that would be contributed or that we would hear. I could be at a meeting and unaware that I was there, I would hear different people reciting different things. But I followed this rule, if it involved names I never used them without permission. If it didn't involve names well then I felt free to use them. That ran on for about two years and then the pressure of other assignments came on and I didn't have the time. Because that requires a lot of digging. And we had to let that go in favor of the routine news that came. But it was interesting and frequently to this day I'll have someone say, I still have the little story in the "Ear to the Ground" about my son or my daughter and I have it filed in his book.

CLEM: Oh my, then it is definitely remembered.

GEIGER: And the most amusing ones were childrens.

CLEM: Oh, I'm sure.

GEIGER: Little sayings yes.

CLEM: And what about something called "Camera Capers?"

GEIGER: Well that started out with the late Ray Miller who was our official photographer and myself. And we decided to try for a series, well it was mostly a guessing game. And he would take pictures of various things around the city and we would give just enough of a clue to help you decide where it was but the main object was to see how observing you were. And incidentally it brought out a great deal of history of Alliance. Because as we went around we found that there were historical facts. We found the very first school house down in the north end of town. We found the site of the old noodle factory on West Vine Street. They used to make noodles and saved the whites to sell by the quart to the housewives in the area.

CLEM: Yes, I've heard of that, Leguillon I think was the name.

GEIGER: Yes, that's right.

CLEM: Yes.

GEIGER: And then we found an old stepping stone that was on the corner of, I believe, Columbia and Freedom, and discovered that was used in the very early days as a stepping stone for the ladies to get into their carriages.

CLEM: When we would have had the horse and carriage.

GEIGER: That's right. It has since been moved down to the Hartzell Museum and it's on the lawn of the Hartzell Museum. And we discovered the only Revolutionary Soldier that we had

these places? I'm amazed at the digging you did.

buried in the old River Cemetery, found his tombstone. We found and I believe if my memory serves me right, lions that were, they were ornamental that were at the entrance of a home in the north end of town that had once been lived in by the Walter Ride family and his parents. Because at one time the north end of town was the end of town.

CLEM: The fashionable section.

GEIGER: Yes. Then of course it started moving south.

CLEM: At one time too Union Avenue was quite a section of palatial homes.

GEIGER: Beautiful, beautiful palatial homes. Yes.

CLEM: Which many of them are gone now and some still remain.

GEIGER: And some are fraternity houses.

CLEM: Businesses too. I'm thinking of the Turkle Funeral Home.

GEIGER: Yes. And the Myers Funeral Home, too, as well.

CLEM: Myers and some of the others along there. The Reeves home was torn down for the YMCA.

GEIGER: Yes. And of course the Woman's Club is the old Walter Webb home.

CLEM: True.

GEIGER: I shouldn't say old Walter Webb. He's still with us.

CLEM: Well the home itself is much older. But yes, that is what is so difficult to realize that areas of town now that are not considered prime residential areas were at one time. And some of that fine architecture if you drive through there is still present. Yes. How did you get your ideas for finding these places? I'm amazed at the digging you did.

GEIGER: I think we actually started with the most familiar one of all and that is the Lincoln Memorial down near the Pennsylvania Rail Station.

CLEM: Right.

GEIGER: And we started with that and it would be hear-say, and I remember the old Lexington Hotel. There was a bronze plate with some numbers at the side of the building, near the sidewalk. We found out that was, of all things, a sea level mark. So we took a picture of that. There is a home that has a, I think it's still standing. It may not be, maybe it's been given away to the new Salvation Army building, but it had a widow's peak cone at the top of the roof. Quite sharply defined. We'd just go from one thing to another, now not all of our pictures yielded history. It was more observation. But we found out that we used this once a week, and we found out that when people would read it and start guessing, then we printed the answer the following week with a new picture.

CLEM: I see, they had to wait a whole week.

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: I see.

GEIGER: So we enjoyed it. We went from Alliance to Sebring and when we exhausted everything we could possibly think of there we went into Minerva and worked there. But after two years we finally exhausted everything. You couldn't get too far from home because people would not be seeing the things that we photographed. So it came to an end.

CLEM: Well it seems as though enough time has passed since then and certainly it would pique the curiosity about local history and your powers of observation. And it sounds like a good one to run again, doesn't it?

GEIGER: Well, and it was a lot of fun to do it. And Ray enjoyed it so much, of course, from the photographer's angle.

CLEM: Oh yes. And of course there's where his powers of observation would have come through. Plus I would think many of these things were not too easy to photograph.

GEIGER: No they weren't. And sometimes he had to use a wide angle lens because he had to get in an area. They were not easy. And sometimes he would have to go back when the light was just right. There have been improvements in photography over the days when he took it. But he enjoyed it. It was a challenge to him, and that's why he enjoyed it.

CLEM: And I think a challenge to the readers too. Now you mentioned this would have appeared once a week. In the thirty years that you were at the Review was it a daily paper all those years?

GEIGER: Yes. Yes.

CLEM: Okay. Because way, way, way, way back then it was at one time weekly.

GEIGER: Well that would be way back in the beginning.

CLEM: About the turn of the century I'm thinking.

GEIGER: Yes, because it had been a daily for a long, long time.

CLEM: Okay, they would have waited, it would have been published once a week and then they would have had to gone by all those.....

GEIGER: To the next Saturday.

CLEM: To the next Saturday to wait for the answer. Did you ever have anyone call and try to get the answer out of you?

GEIGER: I remember having people call to say I think I know the answer. But we didn't give it to them, not until it was printed. And then I understand that on Main Street there would be a number of people, as soon as the paper came out, they would look at it and then they'd make bets on who had the right answer.

CLEM. Oh, bets can be made on most anything, that's true. When you mentioned then the change in the Society Page and an opportunity by short, well let's say by cleaning up some articles or reword, I don't want to say rewording, let's just say highlighting the events rather than spelling out in detail.

GEIGER: In their line of importance. Because a news item is generally written according to formula whereby if an editor wants to cut he should be able to cut from the bottom up without taking out the meat of the story. You put everything that is absolutely necessary in the beginning and then the rest that you add is extraneous. So that if you're pressed for space and even the man out in the composing room has to cut, he can cut the bottom or the next to the bottom paragraph and he hasn't destroyed the meaning of the story.

CLEM: Very interesting.

GEIGER: So you have to write it that way.
So it's a far more flexible schedule than it used to be.

CLEM: Yes. Well when you found then that you had more space for your feature stories were you then as Society Editor able to go out and do these feature stories?

GEIGER: Yes, yes.

CLEM: I think you would have enjoyed that too.

GEIGER: And of course I always had someone working with me. Now my predecessor, Althea worked alone. And of course it was a killer because she put out the entire page by herself. But she had a late deadline which was twelve noon. And when I went in they lowered it to 11:00. Several years later they lowered it to 10:00 and when I retired it was 9:30 in the morning. So from 7:00 to 9:30 everything had to be taken over the phone or rewritten.....

END OF SIDE B
TAPE #1

CLEM: We were mentioning the deadlines that originally began at noon for you and got moved back to 11:00 and further and further into the morning. Then you also mentioned that you had only from 7:00 until this time. What time of day did you go to work in the morning?

GEIGER: We all reported at 7:00 a.m. in the morning.

CLEM: Is this still true?

GEIGER: Yes. The only difference now is that where we worked six days a week, getting off around Saturday noon, they are now working five days a week and there is no overtime. And when they have reached their limit they are expected to take time off. So it's a far more flexible schedule than it used to be.

CLEM: Indeed. How did you handle the problem where you would have to attend so many meetings at night?

GEIGER: We just attended them.

CLEM: Over and above the time you had put in during the day?

GEIGER: Yes, that's right. That's one area that has changed. Drastically.

CLEM: And really for the better because.....

GEIGER: It's on a thirty-seven and a half hour week now.

CLEM: And before it must have.....

GEIGER: And we worked as long as we had to work.

CLEM: Easily could have been a sixty hour week or more at times. That would be remarkable because many of the meetings that you would attend in the evenings would go perhaps to a rather late hour and then you were expected.....

GEIGER: Frequently, especially the Board of Education or the Citizens Hospital Association Board Meetings, or Red Cross. Many of those things would go on until ten or eleven and then you showed up in the morning at 7:00 to write your story.

CLEM: Reporters must have all been early birds. In the time then that you were Society Editor we talked about people that you remembered from the Review staff, how about people in the community? Any names come to mind?

GEIGER: Well I'm thinking of the Daskalovs, both of them doctors. I remember the interview that I had with them when they first came to Alliance from Europe. I'm sorry I don't recall the country that they came from. But they came in as

really knew the reason why, it was discontinued but the school

resident physicians of the Alliance City Hospital and temporarily lived at what used to be the nurses residence at the corner of Arch and College. And has since been torn down. I remember that Dr. Daskalov, that would be Stoyan who now is with the Eye and Ear Clinic, took the day trick because he was able to speak English fairly well and could be understood. Chrisana was unable to make herself understood so she went on as resident physician, but asked that she be taken in the evening where she wouldn't meet so much traffic and wouldn't be required to converse too often with them. Well now they had two small children with them, a boy and a girl. And they stayed there for a while but eventually they moved out and into other areas. But I do recall that they were one of our first resident physicians at the City Hospital. And both were extremely well liked.

CLEM: And amazing to find a husband and wife team, both physicians.

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: Now you mentioned that they lived in the nurses residence. This is something that we no longer have connected with the hospital.

GEIGER: That has been gone for a good many years, I can't pin point the exact time but at one time we had a school of nursing at the Alliance Hospital, in which the nurses lived there, it was a dormitory type of residence. It was an older home and it was turned into a nurses residence. But eventually, I don't really know the reason why, it was discontinued but the school

was discontinued and thereby the need for the home was no longer there and it was torn down.

CLEM: My word. It could have been competition from larger schools in nearby cities.

GEIGER: It could be because we have a very well known one in Salem and of course we had several in Canton.

CLEM: Yes. And Akron as well. That's interesting. Any other names?

GEIGER: Well I think of Dick Balduzzi who was a native of Alliance. And as far as I know I think his mother still resides here. And Dick had stage ambitions so he left early to go to New York. And he tried without too much success and then moved eventually to California. Now he was cast in a film which was a war film and the one name, at one time I knew all the names of the leading actors. But the only one that I can remember now is Telly Savalas. And he was, Dick came back on a trip back home and always came in to see me because I had done a story on him in the early years. And he said it's just a bit part and the film will be coming to Alliance, and I don't know but I have hopes that maybe it will be the beginning for me. Well the film did come to Alliance, they did change the name of the film, and it was just a very small part but I think unfortunately while Dick has had some success it has been minor. Now I have seen him in character parts in the Mary Tyler Moore show and I have seen

him in the Jackie Gleason show. But other than that I don't know of anything that he has done specifically and he is now living in California with his wife and daughter.

CLEM: Does he use his name Dick Balduzzi.....properly?

GEIGER: Yes, he never.....I'm not as familiar with Mrs. King

CLEM: As his stage name? very much to herself and it was very

GEIGER: The credit lines always list him as Dick Balduzzi. A very nice young man. I love them that they are going to leave

CLEM: Speaking of people who have been in parts in the movies we also have Perry King. Dick Balduzzi and Perry King thus far.

GEIGER: Yes, he has done extremely well far better unfortunately than Dick has been able to do. But in addition to Perry's acting ability he also happens to be a very handsome young man. And Dick is of the type you immediately associate with the character part. And too frequently he has played the part of a drunk, that sort of thing, and because it just lends itself to that. know him and I don't think too many, not too many

CLEM: Un huh. And that of course, that type casts him I'm afraid....don't think many people would be aware of that either.

GEIGER: It does limit him. what other names do you recall?

CLEM: Yes, it would limit his parts. Now what is Perry King's relationship? Now at the time that I interviewed Louise

GEIGER: He is the son of Dr. Robert King who recently retired as a physician here. of muscular dystrophy was comparatively

CLEM: Yes, and there is another connection in that family too is there not? sister were afflicted with it at an early age,

when they were still in their teens. But Louise was the

secretary at St. Paul's Lutheran Church at the time that I

went up to see her. And the story was mostly about how

GEIGER: Well there are other Kings but I don't believe that they are related.

CLEM: Well Robert King's wife was the daughter of Maxwell Perkins, do I have this family relationship properly?

GEIGER: Now you could. I'm not as familiar with Mrs. King who at that time stayed very much to herself and it was very difficult to get to know her.

CLEM: Yes. I do believe then that they are going to leave Alliance now that he is retired too. Well Alliance's claim to fame then rests with Dick Balduzzi and Perry King thus far.

GEIGER: And Charleton Heston too, who at one time attended school, lived with his aunt in Alliance and attended school when he was eleven years old, and he attended the Liberty School.

CLEM: My word.

GEIGER: He was here for several years. But then of course I didn't know him and I don't think too many, not too many people did. He would have no claim to fame at that age.

CLEM: I don't think many people would be aware of that either. That's interesting too. What other names do you recall?

GEIGER: Oh, I recall the name of Louise Yount and her sister Gretchen Carli. Now at the time that I interviewed Louise the disease, I don't know whether to call it a disease or ailment or handicap, of muscular dystrophy was comparatively unknown as far as the general public is concerned. But both Louise and her sister were afflicted with it at an early age, when they were still in their teens. But Louise was the secretary at St. Paul's Lutheran Church at the time that I went up to see her. And the story was mostly about how

it came about, how she discovered what it was and her battle with it. But not too long after that she moved to New York City where she became an officer of the Muscular Dystrophy Association of America. And she stayed with that for about six or seven years, then came back into Alliance and in the meantime the MDA had developed a splinter group. And she was no longer with the New York group so she associated herself with the work of the splinter group which was generally in the area of Cleveland and Alliance, and around here in Ohio. I think she has since given up her active association with that group but she is now I believe at the head of an organic beauty salon on South Arch.

CLEM: That is true. That's why the name sounds familiar.

GEIGER: Now her sister was more seriously afflicted with MD and has never been in the public eye. She has mostly confined her activities to home. And with, I learned from talking to her that muscular dystrophy of course afflicts both sexes. But in the case of males it's generally fatal within the teens, whereas with females you can live a comparatively normal life. And I would say both girls must now be at least in their fifties.

CLEM: Are either one confined to a wheel chair?

GEIGER: Yes, Gretchen is. And I don't know about Louise because I haven't seen her of late years. Now she was able to get around, with difficulty but whether she can now or not I don't know. Of course it's a progressive disease.

CLEM: And you would have done articles on them, their lives?

It would have been the men and women.

GEIGER: Oh, yes, there have been quite a few and one of the articles on Louise made the Associated Press wire.

CLEM: Now that's quite a fine honor for you, Thelma.

GEIGER: Well it was very interesting to talk to her. She's a very easy person to talk to. And I think she's been remarkable in the way she's overcome her handicap. There was no evidence of it anywhere else in the family. And of course it was quite a concern to Gretchen, her sister, when their daughter married, as it frequently skips a generation. But they have had children and everything seems to be all right.

CLEM: Well that's good news. Any other names?

GEIGER: Oh, not off hand.

CLEM: Pretty much covers. You mentioned then that one of your feature stories that you had written was picked up by the Associated Press. Which I think is quite an honor. Have you been active in your professional organizations and have you had other experiences....

GEIGER: Yes, I think I'm proudest of my association with the Ohio Newspapers Women's Association. And served as President and an officer and on the Advisory Board. But more than that we have annual contests in which you submit your stories. And if you were lucky enough to get an award, which is judged by newsmen outside of Ohio.

CLEM: Newsmen, being a generic term.

GEIGER: And women, newsperson.

CLEM: Well now, I don't mean from that standpoint but I'm sure it would have been the men and women.

GEIGER: Or someone affiliated with the writing field. It could be a magazine editor, it could be a newspaper editor, that sort of thing. Because I think they feel that those are the people to better judge whether your stories qualify.

CLEM: Yes indeed, you'd be judged by your peers and that's a pretty hard critic, then that's quite an honor.

GEIGER: Well "Ear to the Ground" made it several times as a column. And I think my story on Louise Yount made a prize and several others but I've always and still do belong to the Ohio Newspaper Womens Association. They represent every newspaper, some four hundred newspapers I think in the state and that would include both dailies and weeklies.

CLEM: So it's quite a large organization.

GEIGER: It is.

CLEM: Any other organizations professionally that you belonged to?

GEIGER: Oh, I did belong to Theta Sigma Phi but I gave that up because there are no chapters near here and it was more or less just in name only.

CLEM: Yes. That's a newspaper honorary.

GEIGER: Yes. Now I think the name has been changed and it now includes both men and women. Sigma Delta Chi used to be the mens organization. Then they have combined it.

CLEM: We should probably bring this tape up to date, because we've talked so much about your years at the Alliance Review and alluded to a very fine retirement community by the name of Copeland Oaks. After you retired you didn't leave the profession

necessarily did you?

GEIGER: I had planned to. But six weeks later I found myself at Copeland Oaks as Public Relations Director, on a part-time basis, which was ideal for me because it erased all those daily deadlines. But I've thoroughly enjoyed it, it's a whole new area. It's on the other end of the spectrum because now it's mostly promotional where the other was news. But we send out what we would like to be used and sometimes it is and sometimes it isn't. And of course PR is a dirty word in the news field.

CLEM: Yes.

GEIGER: And it changed my active status in ONWA to associate.

CLEM: Oh. You can't be in newspaper.....

GEIGER: No, not unless you're in the newspaper field. Yes.

CLEM: So you obtained now an associate membership.

GEIGER: Yes, I am still a member but it's under a different heading.

CLEM: And do you not write a weekly, is that a weekly column?

GEIGER: Yes. I write a weekly column for the Alliance Review and the Sebring Times and the Salem News. And at one time for the Lisbon Journal. But the powers that be at the Alliance Review felt that that was too competitive and asked me if I would withdraw the one from the Lisbon Journal. And so, because the Review of course was the one who first sponsored the column we withdrew it. So it's just in the three papers now. And it can't go too far because it has, it still has

to be of local interest. And when you get beyond certain boundaries the names don't mean anything.

CLEM: That's true. Generally what do we consider the boundaries of our local district?

GEIGER: Oh, I think you would take in Alliance, Minerva, Sebring and the little communities surrounding Sebring, Damascus, Salem. I don't think you go much farther than that.

CLEM: So in general that's what we would consider the service district of the Alliance Review.

GEIGER: Well, I think there are many more Alliance Reviews read in Sebring and in Minerva than the weeklies and that's only natural, because they carry a daily account of everything.

CLEM: That's true, there would be no competition between papers that were published weekly and those that were published daily. We should include, Alliance also meaning the Marlinton Township too.

GEIGER: Oh yes.

CLEM: The rural areas surrounding.....

GEIGER: Marlboro.

CLEM: The community and so on. We'll mention the fact that you were very active not only in your profession but in several civic organizations. Do you just want to list those and then I think we're going to save those for a later tape.

GEIGER: Okay. Well one of them would be the Woman's Division with the Chamber of Commerce, which incidentally was the second such organization to, I'm repeating, but to be organized.

We had the second one, the first was in Findlay.

CLEM: I see.

GEIGER: And it was a group of seven women, seven Alliance women who were in business and professions and we organized in the office of the late Homer Grimes who was the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce at that time.

CLEM: I see. So you were a charter member and one of the organizing powers.

GEIGER: Yes. And it is still going today. Quite strongly.

CLEM: Yes. It is. And I think a very respected organization in the city of Alliance and well known for its award each year of the Woman of the Year. What other organizations were you active in?

GEIGER: Well the Quota Club of Alliance which is business and professional women. And aside, those are the two principal service organizations that I have been connected with. I did some service, I served on the Advisory Board of the Salvation Army for about fifteen years and on the Family Service Committee of the Red Cross. And I also served as a trustee on the old Community Fund, which later went into the Community Chest and then I withdrew from it.

CLEM: And then after that it would have become United Way as we know it today. You were also active in the Youth Center too were you not?

GEIGER: That was a project, almost I would say, one of the first projects of the Women's Division. And it was just about going.

at that time when the current trend was to find something for young people to do. They were having too much time on their hands and some cities had already started Youth Centers and that's where we got the idea. Our funds initially came from the disbanded Civilian Defense which now today is known as Civil Defense but at that time it was Civilian. They had some funds left over which they gave us with a stipulation that if we didn't need to use them all it was to be returned into the Community some way or another. We got other funds from the Community Chest. But we had so many contributions. And it was located at what used to be the old Purcell House at the corner of Market and Linden. It has been torn down now. And the Purcell family who indirectly was connected with Mr. Rodman because Mrs. Rodman was the former Hazel Purcell. They loaned us the use of the home but we went into a great deal of repairs. We probably ran that center for about five or six years and it was called the Aviators Hangar. And we had several school teachers including Mr. Linsmaier, Ernest Linsmaier as one of our teachers, or we should say..... And eventually because it was expensive to operate and because the family had more or less decided that it was time to tear the home down, the activities of the Hangar moved into the high school and they continued to call it the Aviators Hangar and to hold it on Friday nights, but then it was supervised by faculty there and we withdrew. But we had a great deal of fun and a great deal of pride that we got it going.

CLEM: Yes, indeed. And did you find then that it was limited strictly to the Alliance High School youth by calling it the Aviators Hangar?

GEIGER: I think it was to the three upper classes.

CLEM: Primarily.....

GEIGER: Yes.

CLEM: To serve Alliance's high school. And to find some wholesome recreation for the young people to go. Yes. A very fine beginning. Well now the Youth Center as we know it today is located out on State Street.

GEIGER: That's right.

CLEM: And this is finally the end result of your efforts.

GEIGER: Yes, it moved from the old Purcell Home to the High School and then eventually out to State Street.

CLEM: And it's quite a fine facility today.

GEIGER: Yes, it is.

CLEM: Well have we covered pretty much everything? Is there anything that we have left out? We might take a tape sometime and do something more on the Women's Division and some of the other clubs that you were involved with. Thank you Thelma.

ALLIANCE AREA YOUTH CENTER.....	Geiger 52
ALLIANCE CITY HOSPITAL.....	Geiger 27, Geiger 43
ALLIANCE CITY SCHOOLS.....	Geiger 12
ALLIANCE HIGH SCHOOL.....	Geiger 54
ALLIANCE REVIEW (NEWSPAPER).....	Geiger 1
ALLIANCE WOMAN'S CLUB.....	Geiger 37
AVIATORS HANGAR.....	Geiger 53
BALDUZZI, DICK.....	Geiger 44
BUTLER, CY.....	Geiger 24
BUTLER RODMAN PARK.....	Geiger 25
CAMERA CAPERS (NEWSPAPER COLUMN).....	Geiger 36
CANTON REPOSITORY (NEWSPAPER).....	Geiger 31
CARLI, GRETCHEN.....	Geiger 46
CASSADAY AND TURKLE FUNERAL HOME.....	Geiger 30
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.....	Geiger 51
CITY HALL.....	Geiger 2
CIVIL DEFENSE.....	Geiger 53
COMMUNITY FUND.....	Geiger 8, Geiger 52
COPELAND OAKS.....	Geiger 27, Geiger 49
DASKALOV, DRS.....	Geiger 42
DUNBAR, BERT.....	Geiger 25
EAR TO THE GROUND (NEWSPAPER COLUMN)....	Geiger 35, Geiger 49
FIRE STATION.....	Geiger 11
FIRST LADIES (NEWSPAPER COLUMN).....	Geiger 32
GEIGER, MRS. HAROLD.....	Geiger 1
GRIMES, HOMER.....	Geiger 52
HALL, ALYCE ANN.....	Geiger 32
HAMRICK, MRS.....	Geiger 32
HANLON, JOHN.....	Geiger 21, Geiger 25
HASTINGS, JIM.....	Geiger 23
HEGGYS.....	Geiger 8
HESTON, CHARLTON.....	Geiger 46
HOILES, MR. AND MRS. FRANK AUSTIN.....	Geiger 4, Geiger 27
JACKIE GLEASON SHOW.....	Geiger 45
K & W MOTORS.....	Geiger 7
KING, DR. ROBERT.....	Geiger 45
KING, PERRY.....	Geiger 45
KIRKLAND, SAM.....	Geiger 7
LANDMARK, SEA-LEVEL.....	Geiger 38
LEGUILLON.....	Geiger 36
LEXINGTON HOTEL.....	38
LIBERTY SCHOOL.....	Geiger 46
LINCOLN MEMORIAL.....	Geiger 38
LINSMAIER, ERNEST.....	Geiger 53
LIONS, ORNAMENTAL.....	Geiger 37
MABEL HARTZELL MUSEUM.....	Geiger 36
MAIN STREET.....	Geiger 28
MARY TYLER MOORE SHOW.....	Geiger 44
MAYORS OF ALLIANCE.....	Geiger 7
MILLER, RAY.....	Geiger 36
MOUNT UNION COLLEGE.....	Geiger 29
MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA.....	Geiger 47
NOODLE FACTORY.....	Geiger 36
NURSE'S RESIDENCE, ARCH AND COLLEGE.....	Geiger 43
OHIO NEWSPAPER WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION.....	Geiger 48
PARK AND BROADWAY SCHOOL.....	Geiger 11

PENNEY, J. C., STORE.....	Geiger 28
PERKINS, MAXWELL.....	Geiger 46
PHOTOGRAPHS FOR THE NEWSPAPER.....	Geiger 18
PUCKETT, NANCY.....	Geiger 32
PURCELL, HAZEL.....	Geiger 53
PURCELL HOUSE.....	Geiger 53, Geiger 54
QUOTA CLUB.....	Geiger 52
RAILROAD STATION.....	Geiger 38
RED CROSS.....	Geiger 14, Geiger 52
REED, PAUL.....	Geiger 22
REEVES HOME.....	Geiger 37
RETARDED, CLASSES FOR.....	Geiger 15
REVOLUTIONARY WAR SOLDIER.....	Geiger 37
RIDE, WALTER.....	Geiger 37
RIVER CEMETERY.....	Geiger 37
RODMAN, C. J.....	Geiger 29
RODMAN, DR. JAMES.....	Geiger 29
RODMAN, MRS.....	Geiger 53
SALVATION ARMY.....	Geiger 52
SALVATION ARMY BUILDING.....	Geiger 38
SAVALES, TELLY.....	Geiger 44
SEA-LEVEL MARK.....	Geiger 38
SEARS AND ROEBUCK.....	Geiger 28
SENN, FLOYD.....	Geiger 7
SIDDALL, MR.....	Geiger 27, Geiger 29
ST PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH.....	Geiger 46
STANTON, DR. BENJAMIN F.....	Geiger 13
STANTON SCHOOL.....	Geiger 11
STATE STREET SCHOOL.....	Geiger 11
STEFFY, CLARENCE.....	Geiger 21, Geiger 27, Geiger 29
STEPPING STONE.....	Geiger 36
TEAR-JERKER STORIES.....	Geiger 20
TURKLE, EDGAR.....	Geiger 27, Geiger 30
UNION AVENUE METHODIST CHURCH.....	Geiger 15
UNION AVENUE SOUTH.....	Geiger 12
UNITED WAY.....	Geiger 8, Geiger 52
WAGNER, MRS. ALVADA.....	Geiger 15
WEBB, WALTER.....	Geiger 37
WEBER, MARY EVELYN.....	Geiger 32
WFAH RADIO.....	Geiger 4
WIDOW'S PEAK ON HOME.....	Geiger 38
YARNELL, MRS.....	Geiger 31
YMCA.....	Geiger 37
YOUNT, LOUISE.....	Geiger 46

LIIONS OF ALIANCE.....	Geiger 36
MABEL HARTZELL MUSEUM.....	Geiger 28
MAIN STREET.....	Geiger 44
MARY TYLER HOWE SHOW.....	Geiger 7
MAVORS OF ALLIANCE.....	Geiger 36
MILLER, RAY.....	Geiger 28
MOUNT UNION COLLEGE.....	Geiger 47
MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA.....	Geiger 36
NOODLE FACTORY.....	Geiger 43
NURSE'S RESIDENCE, ARCH AND COLLEGE.....	Geiger 48
ONTO NEWSPAPER WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION.....	Geiger 11
PARK AND BROADWAY SCHOOL.....	