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CUTTON: This is George L. Cutton speaking interviewing Rev. Ralph Reamsnyder for the Alliance Library, tape recordings. So we'll go back to some of the interesting things in your life and

REMINISCENCES

born in Toledo 65 years ago, educated in the public schools and University of Cincinnati. What was that his seminary? OF his entire life

REVEREND RALPH REAMSNYDER

Reamsnyder, Ralph W.

While folks who served as rector of the church, Toledo and in St. Mark's, Cleveland still remember fondly, it is the folks of Alliance who know best the gentleness of his spirit, the warmth of his dedication, the openness of his heart to all sorts and conditions of people.

First, the whole Diocese of Ohio joins me in saluting Ralph Reamsnyder on this day and in extending to him and his family our love and best wishes for long and happy years in retirement.

Interview by  
Dr. George L. Cutton  
August 29, 1977

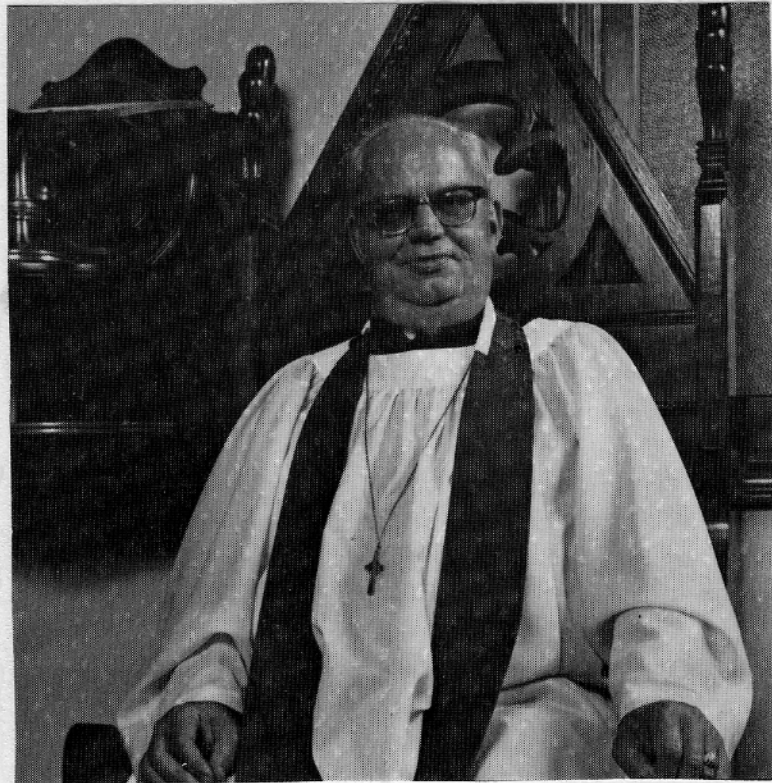
CUTTON: I ought to be able to tell us something for the historical records here. But first of all I want to ask you about your own personal career, where you were born, all that education and so forth.

REAMSNYDER: Well I was born and raised in Toledo Ohio. March 18, 1912 was my birthdate. I attended Waite High

School, Prepared by the Rodman Public Library for the Oral History Project, Alliance, Ohio. in 1935 with a bachelor of Philosophy degree. And then I attended Bexley Hall which was the divinity school of Kenyon

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College and graduated with a bachelor of divinity degree in 1939 and at the same time I was ordained to the Diaconate in the Protestant Episcopal Church by Bishop Tucker, who was then Bishop of the diocese of Ohio.

CUTTON: Now let's see when did you come to Alliance then or where did you go before you came to Alliance? very well.

REAMSNYDER: I went back to my home town. My first church was Grace Church in Toledo. And I served there for three years. And then I went to St. Marks Church in Cleveland, Ohio and was Rector there for six years; and coming to Alliance in February of 1948.

CUTTON: Well then the home town boy made good and came back to the home town. Well then you came to Alliance at a time when the church was, going for a while and about when did it start and something about the early history before you came here?

REAMSNYDER: Well the church officially started here in Alliance as a mission in 1886. And had been operating not too strongly in the community, but it was alive. It is rather interesting to note that in 1935 Trinity became a parish having been a mission up until that time, in this diocese. Rev. John Pattie was rector at that time and it became a self supporting parish. When I came in 1948 the church was meeting in it's building at 820 Linden Ave. And that church had been built in 1915 and they were about ready for a new building. So in 1950 we built the new building, on South Union Ave.



CUTTON: And then there was, after you came here there was some addition made. What year was that?

REAMSNYDER: Yes, in 1955 the church bought the rectory or parsonage at 1605 Lily Lane and in 1960 our people built a new parish house. This addition to the church building had educational facilities and serves the parish very well.

CUTTON: 1965.

REAMSNYDER: Yes sir.

CUTTON: Well it's interesting to know something about this history before you came here before I go on with yours. The early ministers, you mentioned one of them. What about lay leaders, who was particularly responsible for the church being here?

REAMSNYDER: We've had a faithful group of lay people serving in this church. One of the earliest ones was Mr. Charles T. Bird who served as Senior Warden and lay reader way back in the early times and up until I became rector. He died a few years after I'd been here. He was very faithful, did a great job for this parish in every way.

CUTTON: What was his business?

REAMSNYDER: I don't know what he did really, he was retired when I came.

CUTTON: Oh I see. A retired business man?

REAMSNYDER: Yes.

CUTTON: What other men or people?

REAMSNYDER: Yeah, they were called the Womens Auxiliary, but they have changed their name to The Episcopal Church Women, it's a regional, Diocesan and national organization.



REAMSNYDER: Dr. Eric Eckler was Senior Warden when I came here and he served the church faithfully and well. And Mr. John DeVeney was another of our lay leaders. He was a Vestryman, and he was also very active with the church council. Perhaps you remember him?

CUTTON: What was his name?

REAMSNYDER: John DeVeney.

CUTTON: John DeVeney. Don't remember him, but, he's not living?

REAMSNYDER: No.

CUTTON: Like these women who have had some responsibility here, was there someone particularly in your period?

REAMSNYDER: Mrs. Eric Eckler was very active, still is, she had been in womens work.

CUTTON: Mrs. Eckler.

REAMSNYDER: Mrs. Eric Eckler, yes, Mary. And Mrs. Clarence French had served as President of the church women of the Parish.

CUTTON: Was that Eric \_\_\_\_\_

year do you remember?

REAMSNYDER: Sir?

CUTTON: One was the women organizer, didn't organize before you came here?

REAMSNYDER: Yeah, they were called the Womens Auxiliary, but they have changed their name to The Episcopal Church Women, it's a regional, Diocesan and national organization.

CUTTON: Yeah. was his first name?

REAMSNYDER: Church Women's Association.

CUTTON: What about the church school?

REAMSNYDER: The church school up through the 50's was coming along beautifully. We had about 100 enrollment, which is pretty good for a parish this size. But now it has fallen off very badly. It's down to around 25.

CUTTON: Does that mean that you aren't getting young families?

REAMSNYDER: We're getting young families but they aren't....

CUTTON: Procuding children.

REAMSNYDER: They aren't brining their children and they aren't producing like they did.

CUTTON: No baby boom. here in 1914. And it actually

REAMSNYDER: That's right.

CUTTON: Well \_\_\_\_\_ church in the community you spoke of a man DeVeney who was interested in the church council.

REAMSNYDER: Yes.

CUTTON: And that was right at the beginning, 1940?

REAMSNYDER: Right at the beginning. And also do you remember Hoebecke?

CUTTON: Yes, yes. and you and Walter Loomis of the First

REAMSNYDER: He was very active in the church council. And

CUTTON: What was his first name? What was outstanding in

REAMSNYDER: Leonard. as far as your ministry is concerned?

CUTTON: Leonard. Oh yes. B A C H.

REAMSNYDER: And Carl Myers, remember he was on the Chapel  
committee at the hospital.

CUTTON: Oh, Carl Myers.

REAMSNYDER: Yes.

CUTTON: Well that's all interesting. Especially in view  
of the fact, I believe you and Rev. Walter Loomis were re-  
sponsible for the revival of the church council.

REAMSNYDER: Well, we worked on it. I don't know whether  
we were responsible, I hope so.

CUTTON: Well I looked up the records and there's a federation,  
a federation of churches here in 1914. And it actually  
asked for some playgrounds from the city council. And then  
I found also a record from 1917 which, I guess I was wrong  
about that 1914. 1914 was a ministers association.

REAMSNYDER: Oh. you were President of the Lions?

CUTTON: And 1917 the ministers association quarmed the council  
federation of churches association as it was then called. And  
I have the record of their first officers. I think there's  
about seven churches involved. And then there was lapse,  
I don't know how long that they kept them going but evidently  
there was a lapse and you and Walter Loomis of the First  
Baptist Church evidently revived the council in 1948. And  
so it's been going ever since. Now I was thinking of your



own experiences in this community. What was outstanding in the life of the church as far as your ministry is concerned? Anything more?

REAMSNYDER: I think one of the greatest experiences, you mean the churches working together?

CUTTON: Yes, or your own churches.

REAMSNYDER: Alright I was thinking of when we had the canvass.

CUTTON: Oh yes. Well that was about 1965.

REAMSNYDER: Our people entered into that with all the other church people in the community and I think it was a good thing.

CUTTON: Well it was a long while since they had such a thing.

REAMSNYDER: Yes.

CUTTON: Well then that's coming to your own experiences outside of the church. You were President or Chaplain or something before you were President of the Lions?

REAMSNYDER: I served as Chaplain in all my years as a Lion except when I was President, I couldn't do it then.

CUTTON: Well I didn't know they had a Chaplain.

REAMSNYDER: They kind of appointed me an official Chaplain.

CUTTON: And what years was that?

REAMSNYDER: I was in charge of calling on the sick. I had a committee.

CUTTON: I see. *at was his first name?*

REAMSNYDER: And things like that.

CUTTON: And what about your Presidency, anything particularly there? *Yeah. member or charter.*

REAMSNYDER: Ah.... no, nothing special. *the blind.*

CUTTON: President of the Lions *\_\_\_\_\_ blind*

REAMSNYDER: I was President of the Lions during 1967 - 1968. In 1968 we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Alliance Lions Club.

*REAMSNYDER: Yeah. Also what would you call it, prevention*  
CUTTON: Local.... *carry on the work in that field.*

REAMSNYDER: The founding of the local Lions Club, in 1943. The Alliance Lions Club is now 34 years old.

*REAMSNYDER: eye tests.*  
CUTTON: I think it's the 25th.

*CUTTON: They have then several years.*

REAMSNYDER: Of the Rotary?

*REAMSNYDER: And buying glasses for people who can't afford*

CUTTON: It's over 50. Okay. Now then in connection with that club. Has it always been active or doing something for the blind or those who couldn't see very well.

*CUTTON: When did they have the beginning of this Rose Fes-*

REAMSNYDER: Yes, uh huh, yeah.

CUTTON: Well, what do you want to tell me about that? *s old.*

REAMSNYDER: I thought of something else. It was interesting with celebrating the 25th anniversary the year I was President. And one of the charter members of the club was the Rev.

*REAMSNYDER: Oh yeah.*

Frederick Drew who was rector of the Trinity Church back when the club was founded. He's deceased now.

*CUTTON: And he was something to do with the beginning of that?*

CUTTON: Now what was his first name?

REAMSNYDER: Frederick Drew.

CUTTON: Okay he was a charter member.

REAMSNYDER: Yeah. \_\_\_\_\_ member or charter.

CUTTON: Okay more about that service to the blind.

REAMSNYDER: They have performed service for, the blind  
I think since Lionism was founded.

CUTTON: That's been their speciality.

REAMSNYDER: Yeah. Also what would you call it, prevention  
of blindness, they carry on the work in that field.

CUTTON: Well that would mean having eye tests.

REAMSNYDER: Eye tests.

CUTTON: They have them several years.

REAMSNYDER: And buying glasses for people who can't afford  
them. And seeing eye dogs, we have taken part in that.  
Operations we pay for those where there is need.

CUTTON: When did they have the beginning of this Rose Festival business?

REAMSNYDER: I would say, George, that's about 20 years old.  
They've done it for about 20 - 25 years.

CUTTON: Well you were here then.

REAMSNYDER: Oh yeah.

CUTTON: So you had something to do with the beginning of  
that?



REAMSNYDER: Oh yes.

CUTTON: It wasn't your suggestion.

REAMSNYDER: Oh no, no.

CUTTON: And what do they call it, Rose.... Not festival.

REAMSNYDER: Just Rose Day.

CUTTON: Rose Day.

REAMSNYDER: Yeah, Rose Day, Lions Rose Day.

CUTTON: And they get donations.

REAMSNYDER: Uh huh.

CUTTON: For roses, of course roses go to the doners.

REAMSNYDER: I served on most of the Boards in the community;  
But the money, most of it.

REAMSNYDER: All of the profit goes for the eye work, yeah.

CUTTON: All of it. Well then that means that the club  
pays for the roses.

REAMSNYDER: Yes, they pay for the roses out of money from  
the sale.

CUTTON: Oh they do.

REAMSNYDER: But they can't take any Rose Day money and use  
it as General Fund.

CUTTON: No. I see.

REAMSNYDER: It's just for sightsaving, sightsaving is a  
better word I think.

CUTTON: Sightsaving.

REAMSNYDER: Uh huh.

CUTTON: Okay, what else were you particularly interested in?

REAMSNYDER: Oh I don't know.

CUTTON: Outside of the churches.

REAMSNYDER: Outside the church.

CUTTON: You were a golfer.

REAMSNYDER: I like to play golf, a little. I'm not a good golfer but I enjoy getting out.

CUTTON: Well it some of these if you remember some committees or something in the community besides that?

REAMSNYDER: I served on most of the Boards in the community; the Red Cross Board, the YMCA Board, Visiting Nurses, what else is there.

CUTTON: Very interesting. And what about your wife Dorothy?

REAMSNYDER: Dorothy, she's very active in the hospital auxiliary.

CUTTON: Is she a member of that? Is there an auxiliary association?

REAMSNYDER: Yeah it's an auxiliary hospital association. And she's also worked for Red Cross on Blood Donor days and now she is working in the Chaplain's office at the hospital every Wednesday.

CUTTON: That's a good thing.

REAMSNYDER: She tried to get the ministers wives interested in it. And she has a few of them working there.

CUTTON: You were President of the Ministers Association.

REAMSNYDER: Uh huh. It had a great deal of cultural oppor-

CUTTON: And was Dorothy the President of the other?

REAMSNYDER: Ministers wives, uh huh. college being there there are things offered that we can take

CUTTON: Well as I think of it, you were also interested in the progress of the city. I presume you lent your influence in the development programs going on.

CUTTON: As we think of it, I think Alliance has kind of stop-  
REAMSNYDER: Oh yes. Uh huh, yeah.

CUTTON: And also some of these celebrations that we've had; Carnation Festival and so forth.

CUTTON: In population. I hope it's not stopped growing in  
REAMSNYDER: Yes.

CUTTON: So you've always been interested in going on here in the past.

CUTTON: But they, many people live now on the outskirts and  
REAMSNYDER: Uh huh, very much. in Alliance but don't have

CUTTON: What do you see as the status of our future let's say not the status let's say the future of the churches in Alliance? by little.

REAMSNYDER: I think sincerely that the churches are doing a great job in Alliance. And right now most of us are in a, what would I call it a slump. But I feel that we're going to come out of that and we are working together as Christians and we will find the answers and God will show us what to do.

CUTTON: Well thank you.  
CUTTON: There's more and more co-operation every year.

REAMSNYDER: Oh you're welcome.  
REAMSNYDER: I believe so, honestly.

CUTTON: And what about the community itself? It's always



been a cultural community. *Want to ask, do you have any re-*

REAMSNYDER: I think it had a great deal of cultural opportunities with the Art Center and with the little theater, what's that called...Carnation Theater. And of course the college being here there are things offered that we can take advantage of and we should. They have speakers and programs. I think it has a great future, for a town of this size.

CUTTON: As we think of it, I think Alliance has kind of stopped growing.

REAMSNYDER: I think so.

CUTTON: In population. I hope it's not stopped growing in other respects.

REAMSNYDER: I hope not.

CUTTON: But they, many people live now on the outskirts and have the advantage of everything in Alliance but don't have to pay any taxes for it. And the only way that we can get at them I guess is to extend the limits. And we're doing it little by little.

REAMSNYDER: Little by little it's being taken in.

CUTTON: It's quite a historic community and all the past but it's also got great hopes. I believe in all the interests, for the future. Can you think of something else?

CUTTON: Well thank you.

REAMSNYDER: Oh you're welcome.

CUTTON: Only one thing I want to ask, do you have any regrets about retirement?

REAMSNYDER: I'm going to enjoy it.

CUTTON: Well I've retired three times. But I still keep busy. And I guess you'll do the same. Thank you.

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