

CWU LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Margaret McClennan

(Transcription of Tape 1, Side 1)

HS: Today is January 26, 1998. This is the Living History Project, and today we are interviewing Margaret McClennan, who was a student at Central from 1926-28 for her first session here, and we will find out later about other times that she came back. Your interviewer is Helen Smith, and the camera operator is Jean Putnam. All right, Margaret, now, the first thing we'd like you to do is to give us a background of your personal history up until the time you came to Central. I understand you're a native Ellensburg, is that right?

MM: Correct.

HS: Go right ahead and tell us about your early life.

MM: I was born in Ellensburg in 1909, and lived here, actually, most of my life. I taught away for 11 years, and the rest of the time I've lived here, and love it. And I – my life, of course, has practically spanned the century, so I've seen enormous changes, and it's great to remember and compare.

I went for two years of 1926-28 as she said, and then that gave me a two-year teaching certificate. So with that I was able to teach on the two-year certificate. I was 17 when I started Central, and then I went many, many, many summers after then until I had a fifth year, and I did a workshop or something after that. But my life in Ellensburg was quite ordinary. It was a happy life. I had a good home. My dad was a sheep man. Neither of my parents were educated beyond the eighth grade, but I would say they were educated people because they read good things, and they kept up, and they were aware, and so I just [inaudible]. Occasionally they would make a radical error, but not often, and they had friends among all kinds of people from college professors to my dad befriended the feeble-minded man up the street. And so he was very outgoing – just gravitated toward people.

I went to Ellensburg high school, which was the old Washington School, which is where the present Washington School is. It was a building something like Barge, and I went there through the eighth grade, and then to what later turned out to be Cascade School that was torn down a couple of years ago or so. And I graduated from high school in 1926, and I – our class was the grade class [?] and I happened to be the Valedictorian, and scared to death for having to make a speech.

HS: What was the name of that speech? Do you remember what you titled it?

MM: Well no, I don't remember that it even *had* a title, and the Principal [inaudible] – James Morgan from the [inaudible] school in [inaudible] – an elderly man, and it was mainly – I don't even remember what it was – just mainly thanking people for being good to me as I went through school, and I think I wrote it [inaudible], and I didn't have any copy of it. It was [inaudible] to nowadays choose a subject, I think, but we didn't do that. And that's how we did the caps and gowns here. The girls all wore white dresses, and the guys wore dark suits, I believe. And so it was quite an event, both in eighth grade and to graduate from high school, to get that new white dress. And then – well – tell me – one of the questions was how my schooling was financed –

HS: Before we get you coming to Central – as a child in Ellensburg were you aware – were you conscious about the college up here?

MM: Yes. We knew it as Washington State Normal School, and they had the training school here, and when we were in school we used to have athletic contests with the Edison School kids, and we thought all they did there was play. We really were – we felt ourselves superior.

HS: The Edison School was the training school.

MM: It was a training school, and we thought they were very easy on them. We just thought we were a cut above them.

HS: Did you town kids beat them with athletics?

MM: Sometimes. They had some good athletes. I remember Reba Headsheart [?] who was very good in baseball. I think it was mainly in baseball that we exercised ourselves with them, but –

HS: So when you graduated from high school, then, and you got through that horrible trauma of giving a speech, you decided, then – had you always wanted to be a teacher? Is that why you came here?

MM: No. Well, when I was in the sixth grade I had a teacher that had a desk by the window, and she wound up being one of my very best teacher. She used to sit at her desk while we were studying and write letters, and I thought, “Wouldn’t it be wonderful to be a teacher, and sit at that desk and write letters?” And that’s the first thought that I had of being a teacher. And then, through high school I didn’t think much about it. When I graduated from high school one of my best friends was going to Business College in Seattle and wanted me to go too, and I was just about ready to go when I thought of my folks [inaudible] with me – why not go here? There’s a school here – might as well go. So I did. I went in, and the first year I didn’t know what I wanted to do, but if you went to Washington State Normal School, which was a teacher training school, you – you pretty likely would become a teacher. And I never – oh, I wasn’t cut out for business at all, and it’s just really providential that my mind was changed there, and as it turned out, I loved teaching, though I hadn’t been one of these people that dreamed about it already. And I majored in Elementary. I wanted Junior High, but there were so many taking medals [?] for Junior High, so they persuaded one of us to take Elementary, and I was glad I did. I taught Elementary for quite a few years, but eventually got back in Junior High, which was my first love. I [inaudible] to teach Junior High. I liked Junior High.

HS: Do you remember how many students there were enrolled when you came as a freshman?

MM: No, I really don’t know. During the Depression years in the Thirties the attendance went down to 200-some, but I would just guess, I think, 400-500. I don’t really know.

HS: Well now since you lived in town with your parents, did you stay living at your own home?

MM: Yes, and I think all of us who – well, I don’t remember any of the – if you were town students – we called them off-campus people – that lived in the dorm or in an apartment. They just lived at home, and they thought that was a sensible thing to do, and I didn’t pay for education. I didn’t think much about it. My dad would give me money for the fees, and I didn’t think much about it. I think not too many students were working their way through. I think some girls roomed – worked for their room and board at some of the homes, and that was a little bit before my time, too, but even then they did some. But that was – there wasn’t much working at that time.

HS: But there were the dormitories for living on campus?

MM: Oh yes, there was Kamola and Sue Lombard – Sue Lombard was quite new – and there was Munson, which was white, and for the boys. And later on there’ll be a story about that. But – there are so many ways I could digress as I go along here.

HS: You're doing all right.

MM: I'll try to think about if there's anything else before coming to Central.

HS: Well you mentioned that your father helped you with money. Do you have any memory of how much it cost him to send you?

MM: No, but I think it – of course, I lived at home and we had the fees. I just don't remember – have no idea what they were. At that time I didn't keep a diary – didn't even think about it. Just my dad paid the money for the fees, and – Barge – on the main floor there was the Registrar's office and the Business office was at the end of that hallway, so we always had to stand or sit in line for hours, it seemed, to get registered, and we didn't have much help. Now I think they have the heads of departments that help them plan their schedules, but we didn't have that. We just sort of –

HS: They treated you like grown-ups, is that right?

MM: I guess so, yes. We were also very perplexed about just what to do. We'd ask each other if somebody could cast a light on something, so – and we paid the fees down the hall. It was just – planned on registration day being a day. We didn't register ahead of time.

HS: Where were most of the classes held that you took? The real large hall of the day? Did you have classes in –

MM: Mostly in the [inaudible] Hall. The Art classes were – as you come up the stairs, there were – the Art classes were on the right, and – oh, I had an English class from Nicholas Hinch, and it was somewhere. Classes were on second and third floor – mainly second floor, and then it was over around Barge – we called it the Ad Building then, and there was a – like a Dormitory with a stage, and then, in the basement was the gym. And I think that was just the girls' gym. I think the boys had their basketball at the YMCA, because they had a kind of high school where I was going. So that was the gym where the girls had most of their –

HS: And did you take PE classes in that gym?

MM: No, I wasn't – I walked to school, and – I was never very athletic, and I walked to school, and they ruled that to be my [inaudible]. And I did take Archery, and later on one summer – well, maybe that was before I graduated – it was – for those two years I took Horseback Riding. A.J. Penney was [sounds like "that cheese"], where they were horse people, and he later became a great race horse man, and he had a string of horses, so we could take a class, and you became friends [inaudible]. I took Horseback Riding quarter after quarter.

HS: And where did they teach that course?

MM: Out East somewhere.

HS: In a pasture, I assume.

MM: In a pasture, just about, yes. And we'd jump ditches, and –

HS: What was his name? Pettit?

MM: Penney. [She spells it.] It was A. J. Penney, and he became very well known as a raiser of race horses and – um – died quite early in – through a wrong operation.

HS: Tell us about some of the Professors that you remember. I'm sure that you had many that you respected. Can you tell us about some of them?

MM: Well Jenn McCorran was probably one of the outstanding ones. She was just out of University of Washington. I think she had a Master's degree.

HS: And how – what was her last name?

MM: McCorran. She was an English Lit teacher, and just – she was young, and attractive, and read beautifully, and very –

HS: As young women you were very impressed.

MM: Very impressed, yes. I had her in a number of summers after that when I went to – I took every class I could from her. And Nicholas Hinch I remember, because he was – he was quite a character. He was sort of a grump, and – but he knew his English, and he even had a – I can't write words in a series without putting a comma before the and, he explained why that should be there.

HS: Even though modern publishers say that it's not necessary.

MM: Right. That's right. If you analyze it very closely, he was right.

HS: Now you said that he was a character. Do you have any amusing stories about him?

MM: Well I don't really. I know that he was hard on the boys, and could be very sarcastic with them. He didn't put up with much. But everybody liked him. He was –

HS: Any others that come to mind?

MM: Let's see. I looked at my Annuals – there was a – well, Juanita Davies, I remember [inaudible]. Well we were taught how to teach music, and we went out in a rural school, or even another school and often had to teach our own music, so we had Eleanor Hale, and we had – uh [inaudible] – Builder – F.O. Builder from Cle Elum. Her father was a big lumber man up there. And then she retired from teaching soon after that, and ran the lumber business herself. And she was very colorful, and she did more than teach that beginning music. But I – Main Peggen [?] was another one. I think we had some very fine teachers at that time. We had one or two that I think of that we remember for the boredom, but Main Peggen – we had one quarter of methods from her, and I think all my teaching years I've used [inaudible], and knew her best, and was able to go on and get along passably well. And Jenny Moore was another one. She had a very bad birth mark on her face, but she was a dear. And she had taught at Henry Rose School, and quite a number – I'm sort of jumping ahead here, but it ties together – quite a number of people went to rural schools, so she gave us a class in how to make a daily program, and how to schedule our time, and almost anything we'd meet at a rural school where we'd have multiple classes. And I started in a rural school, so that was very helpful, and she was a very fine teacher. I was so – I remember these people as being – they gave us a lot in a short time, when we had them. Now they have classes and classes in preparation, and I worked with student teachers in Ellensburg at Morgan for years, but I've often thought we got a lot in those – in the more concentrated time that we had time for. I think those are three of the ones that I remembered particularly. There were others that were nice, but they didn't make quite the impression that those did.

HS: Did you ever have an opportunity to have any personal relationships with any of the administrators, let's say? Who was the President while you were here?

MM: George Black. George Black was the President, and his daughter was with me in high school, so I knew her, but I didn't have any personal relations with him, and – well, and I knew some others of his great grandchildren and some little – but not with him. And at that time I was pretty shy, and I had one friend I sort of buddied up to for teachers, but I – I would be uncomfortable with that.

HS: That wasn't your style.

MM: No, and then later on Robert McConnell was president. My sister knew him, and we got to know him in his home – he was one we knew personally, but I think not as far as just having friendships as we would have later on with the Shaws and the Smyser – well I knew him pretty well. He lived across the alley from us. Knew his family, and knew him, and I remember my dad – this isn't very nice to say, but he was a great scholar – Selden F. Smyser that the Shaw-Smyser building here is named for – and my dad was a practical man that knew a lot about a lot of things, and when he would talk to Mr. Smyser he'd come home and just be baffled. He said, "There are so many ordinary, everyday things that he doesn't know!" But in return, he was a great scholar in other areas, and I had a class from him. And then Henry Whitney, of course – he was the Registrar, I think, when we first went, and I got to know him well. In fact, the house I live in was built by him, and only the two of us have lived there. So [inaudible].

HS: Well tell us about student government. Were you aware of student government?

MM: Not much, because I think the off-campus people didn't get so involved in what was going on with the campus people. We knew them, and sometimes we'd go to their dorm rooms once in a while, but mainly we'd fraternize with our off-campus students. So we didn't get so involved, but they did have an Associated Student Body, and one of the officers of the Associated Student Body is still living in Ellensburg. As far as I know, we're the only two that went to Central at that time that are alive. There are others – a few others around that really [inaudible] her – Kitty Moe – and she was the Social Commissioner for the ASB, and then – they had a number of organizations. I wrote them down.

HS: Oh good! Good. Share those with us, because that will be very interesting.

MM: They had a Hyakem group that would produce the Hyakem, which was our Annual, and they had a newspaper called Student Opinion, which a number of people wrote for it, and then it was very active with music. They had Boy's Glee Club, and Girl's Glee Club, and a [inaudible] liked to put on Operettas, so they put on Operettas, and then we had a little art theater somewhere upstairs in this building, and that was considered –

I had two annuals. I meant to bring them. It's interesting, the pictures they show. I was just reading it this morning where it said that they thought that this was the first little art theater in the state. And so quite a number of people were interested in dramatics, although I think they just put on a few plays. But Sue Crett [?] and other people had majored in that. And then, of course, they had the three big social events. They had dancing every week in Kamola Hall, but the three great social events were the Snow Ball, the Varsity Ball, and the Colonial Ball in April.

HS: Parsley ball? Parsley? You said Snow Ball, Parsley Ball?

MM: Varsity.

HS: Oh yes, Varsity Ball.

MM: And the Colonial Ball.

HS: Now those, I assume, were formal occasions?

MM: They were, but the formals and – the girl's had lovely dresses, but they were short. All the – not as short as they are today, but I would say knee-length. And I was looking through at all the pictures. There are no long skirts. They were all short skirts at the time.

HS: And tell me – at these formal balls did they have the long receiving line that everyone had to go through before they went –

MM: Well I don't know, because I wasn't a dancer, and I didn't go. I think they did, though. They had patrons. They did – even the high school had patrons of teachers and parents, and so on, and I think in college we did, too. But I don't know.

HS: Tell us about some of the extra curricular activities that you were personally involved in.

MM: Not many. I would have to say – when I first went, I wasn't a bad girl as far as doing some of the bad things people do, but I was frivolous, and I loved football games, and I loved the basketball games, and I enjoyed people – rather shy, but I still enjoyed people. So I wasn't involved in many things on campus, except that I enjoyed the programs and especially the football. And at that time it was surprising that they had such a good football team, because there were many more girls than boys. But there was a Roy Sandburg from Marysville that brought a lot of athletes over here, and he was an Assistant Coach, and [inaudible]. And two of the fellows I remember as being outstanding – we just thought they were very special. One was Dick Peterson. He was called Babe Peterson because he was so small, but he was such a good athlete, and he later married Alta Peterson, who you may know, and he became a businessman in Ellensburg. And then Tex or Lynn Robinson was probably *the* football star, and very popular, and when I spoke at the Study Club one of the women said that she had had him as, I think, her high school Principal. But outside, I think as far as activities were concerned we did things off campus, but [inaudible]. All the friends I have – the only one that I think was very involved with campus things was Helen Hoffman, who was very interested in music. And she would be a Glee President. Otherwise we'd – I don't know what we did. We went to movies, and just enjoyed ourselves without doing anything very special. As I say, I'm very frivolous, and I didn't – I don't think I was silly, but I wasn't very serious about anything. So.

HS: I wanted to ask you one thing about – where was the football field?

MM: That's a good question. The football field was just east of where Hebelers is, on the North part facing 10th Street, and I can remember a game of football – a class getting there where there had been snow. They had scraped off the snow, and there was a pile of snow on each side, and we just – nowhere to sit. We just stood in the snow and watched the game. So that was – I remember it very well there.

HS: And then you mentioned that the basketball games that you went to – where were they played?

MM: I think they were all played at the YMCA. And then – right then – right after that, a basketball – I mean a gymnasium was built which is the SUB now – where the bookstore is. I think that was the gym. And I remember coming home after out of town, and going to a game with AJ Penny, and the building was just new then, so it had been built, and they began before I started, because that was my first year of teaching, and the gym was just new. Then I think I should say something, too, about – I don't think I've said – I've got a two-year certificate. I can teach on a two-year certificate, and I was 19 when I started teaching, and here and there I'd take time off, and at that time – I taught two years in that rural school, and I had never gone to a rural school, and I'd never lived on a farm, but Jenny Moore told us how to do it, and I had to teach Agriculture to the eighth grade boys. I taught the other four grades.

HS: Now where was this first school?

MM: It was out in Washougal, Washington, over by Mt. Pleasant. It was about 30 miles out, and it was a very interesting community with many young people about my age. And then I taught in Kelso, Washington in the Thirties, during the Depression times. I'll have to tell many stories about that. I had to save all of – my salary went down to \$564 for the year – for the whole year – but everything else was inexpensive. I had wonderful room and board for \$22 a month, so we – and we were all in it together, so we didn't have the hardships that people did in the cities, and in the East. But it was a – times were tough, and we learned to value money. But I was going to say that then I went and got – then - they allowed me to teach – I could teach, then, for the third year, and then they required a fourth year and gave a BA in Education, and then, of course it went on to a – through Master's degrees, but I – converted Master's programs, but it was just a slow growth as they would add on.

HS: Well tell us about that first rural school experience, teaching Agriculture, and all the problems you ran into.

MM: Well I taught them what the book said, and I'd read aloud about breeds of cattle, and breeds of dairy cows, and sheep, and oh, about horticulture and all that. I learned a lot as I was teaching it, and the boys in the class that lived on the farm taught the practical things. They knew that side of it, so we got along fine. And at that time – when I graduated from eighth grade we had State exams in every subject, and if you didn't pass you had to get a grade of 88, and if you didn't pass then you could take a – take some more work during the summer and you could try it again. But I had those too, the first two years I taught, so we really taught pretty thoroughly because none of us knew what they were going to be, and when the test was given – it seemed to me that somebody else gave the test, and they were graded by the State. So – but my students did very well, and the two succeeding years a couple of girls got the highest scores in the County.

HS: I'll bet that made you very proud.

MM: Yes, it did.

HS: Because in essence, they were testing the teacher as well.

MM: Yes, they were. They really were. And as I remember the Agriculture boys passed their test, too, so -

HS: Well speaking of tests, when you finished your two years, did you have a State test that you had to pass to get out of the institution?

MM: No. However, we – if we taught three years and then came back for one quarter, we would get a [inaudible – sounds like “lights,” or perhaps, “life's”] diploma, and so some of our [inaudible] and I have a Life Diploma, but they just thought that people would be finished by that time, and you got a Life diploma after you'd taught three years, and – you had to have recommendations from your Superintendents, whoever they were, and we had to go to school one quarter to get that. So things were very different from these days.

Well, I don't know how interesting this is, but I just could say that I'm reminded of all these people with the names of buildings, because so many of the buildings on campus now are named for professors and teachers that were here.

HS: Go ahead and discuss some of those.

MM: Shaw-Smyser, of course, and Reginald Shaw was another one. I didn't have a class under Reginald Shaw, literally. He and his wife we got to know personally, and he and my dad were very good friends, and a dear, dear man. The Shaw-Smyser building, and of course, there was the library, which I'll talk about, too. There was a Quigley Hall –

[Transcription of Tape 1, Side 2]

MM: [Tape starts in mid-sentence] was very scholarly, Biology teacher, but not much of a teacher, and he'd stand at the board, and I remember students having a kitten that they were throwing around in the class, and he was totally unaware. And Munson Hall was the boy's dorm in those days. There was a Grupe center. Mary Grupe was a Psychology teacher, and she – well, that's what she was. And there, of course – Juanita Davies was in our Music Department for a long – so Stephens Hall, and – he was a great character. People always – certain teachers, everybody talks about them. He was one that people were always discussing remarks that he would make in class. A weighty man – [inaudible]. And then, of course, there's Black Hall, named for George Black, who was in McConnell auditorium. [?] Dr. McConnell was President during some of my summer school sessions. And I mentioned the Anderson Building. I don't know – Kamola was there forever, it seems – from way, way back, and Munson and Sue Lombard are newer.

Let's see – my major was English and Literature, and I had some good coaches [inaudible – loud background noise]. There were quite a number of clubs on campus, also, like Crimson W Club for fellows that had got a letter.

HS: Athletic letter?

MM: Athletic, yes, and then there was the Chi Omega, which was a Psychology Club, and there was a Scribulous [?] Club, which was journalism people. Harold O. Tim was the Club Sponsor – my history teacher who thought people should know more about other peoples of the world – sort of an Anthropology Club. There was a Science Club, there was an Alpha Row Club, which was Art; and there was a Delta Phi Chi, which was Drama; Alpha Zeta Chi, Music; and all these sorority and fraternity bands; and there was a Home Ec Club; and Kappa Phi was Kindergarten entry. [?] I don't think any of them were very active. People signed up for them at this or that. I think they weren't very active.

HS: You don't recall any grand and wonderful things that they accomplished.

MM: No. Well Kappa Phi was, I think, one that people talked more about. It was for Kindergarten Primary hopefuls, and –

Oh, the bookstore – I should talk about that. I meant to bring my Annual so that you could see that, because there's a picture of it in there. It was in the basement of Kamola Hall, and it was – there was a post office on one side, and this little cubby-hole – not much more than that – where all the books were ordered, and you bought your books there, and they also had candy bars. But it was really not much more than a cubby-hole.

And I have to talk about the library. Of course, the library was Shaw-Smyser Building, and it was hard to see how that could be converted into classrooms, because of the high ceilings, and tall windows, and the tables – there were tables all over – I have no idea how many, but they were quite close together. There were six chairs at every table, and people studied a lot there because they didn't always want to buy books, or the teacher would say, "Well this book is on reserve", and you'll have to go back and back to get the book on reserve. They're always in demand, and of course they had the stacks on the east side, so they did have the stacks also. But it was very much a social gathering place, also, and a lot of dates were made there. I think a lot of romances started there that ended in marriages, and people – it was quite the thing to go to the library at night, and while you knew what study you had to do, but the librarians were always trying to quite people down because there was so much [inaudible] going on.

HS: It was a great place for social contacts.

MM: Yes Siree, it was, yes, and – but I think – when I go into the SUB now and see the comfortable chairs that people can sit in, and overstuffed, and all the luxuries, and then I just remember these hard, straight chairs and kind of grey-looking tables, and nothing was fixed to be attractive, but we didn't care. We were young, and we liked to meet people there – and do our studying, also. Of course we studied during the daytime also, but at night it was very much a gathering place for various things. And I don't remember even buying – I bought some books, but I think mainly we just used the library books, and then the ones that were on reserve, that we'd have to wait our turn for. Now I think those are the main things that I have written down. Do you have questions?

HS: Indeed. Let us go ahead and pick up, now, after your first two jobs. Then, when did you come to teach in Ellensburg?

MM: In 1939, in the fall. I taught '39-40, was my first year here. I taught in Kelso during the Depression, and Kelso wasn't a very nice town. But when you lived there, and you knew people, and we – the teachers were [fraternizing?] – something else I must tell – the young teachers – and the interesting thing was, at that time, that many places – it was true in Kelso, and I know it was true in Ellensburg – married women were not allowed to teach. They said their husbands should be the ones earning the family income, and the married women were [inaudible – could be “out”], and the teacher who taught next to me was secretly married. Her husband was teaching at junior high. But they were [inaudible] married, and so there were a number of young teachers that I don't know how they – there was an abundance of teachers, and why there were so many when they didn't have married teachers, I don't know. But it was a little difficult to get jobs, and after finishing the two years most people either went to a rural school – sometimes with all the eight grades, sometimes 40 miles, or 50 miles from a railroad in Montana, way out in the sticks, sometimes in a two-room school – two room rural school, as I was in – or else they went in to Seattle as interns, and they were under the supervision of other teachers there. So there were some that did that. But it was quite a concern to get a job after we'd finished, but I know in Ellensburg, too, there were – there was a grade school principal who was a married woman, and she had a special dispensation for that, and we just can't imagine that. Now I have to say, too, that one couple – I was thinking they were married all the way through, but they – I'm pretty sure they weren't married. A couple got married, and went to school a second year as a married couple – the only married couple – and that was –

HS: Was that shocking?

MM: It was a little shocking. It was. It was just – well, they're married. It was a – it was not the thing, at that time. I remember them very well, but that seemed strange, and we see how that turned out.

HS: Were you going to tell us something else about Kelso? You said, “That reminds me, I've got to tell you about – ” was it during the Depression? I don't remember what –

MM: I think that reminded me of only single teachers.

HS: So after Kelso, then –

MM: I went to Riverton in the middle of the year. I had applied. I tried to get out of Kelso for quite a while, but it was very hard then to change jobs, and I had applied in Bremerton, and had a good interview, and they said they had no openings, but they would keep – well at the middle of the year a teacher was fired because she had an apartment, and she had a boyfriend, and I don't think they knew anything, but she had an apartment, and that was – when I went there they told me not to get an apartment, so I lived in a private home. And some of the teachers roomed together and rented a home – maybe several teachers – so I went into a very difficult situation because the students had liked her so much. And I had – it took a while to win them over. But I just taught there one semester, and then I had the chance to come to Ellensburg, and that was one of the hardest decisions I ever had to make, because I loved it in Bremerton, and yet the home – I loved Ellensburg, and there was a real pull. And I was away long enough – I think young people need to get away from home, but I was away long enough so I had done the necessary [inaudible] that people do

when they flap their own wings, and I finally decided to come to Ellensburg, and never regretted it. It was very providential, and immediately after that WWII started, and they had portables, and portables, and it was just a nightmare teaching there of children coming in from all over the world there – Navy – so it was a good time to have left Bremerton, and it was a good time to come here.

HS: What year did you come back here?

MM: Thirty-nine and Forty.

HS: And how long did you teach here in Ellensburg?

MM: Twenty-eight years. The first year I taught sixth grade, and then I – there was an opening in seventh grade, so that was my chance to get into junior high. I taught all the seventh graders for a period – after that it got to be too many – and I always had an eighth grade home room, and the last years I taught ninth grade. But I like junior high. I believe in junior high.

HS: Oh, I agree. They're one of my favorite age groups, but you're right – people wonder how one could tolerate them.

MM: That's right. And I think you came into junior high, if not the next year after I retired – and I retired early. I was 58 when I retired, but I think a year or two after that.

HS: That's right. I came right on your coat tails.

MM: I think so. I think so.

HS: And I need to say for the tape that Margaret McClennan left a fine legacy at Ellensburg Junior High School.

MM: Well I did love it, and it's – I just cherish the friendships I still have with some of our former students.

HS: And I'm sure that you probably – in that length of time, did you have opportunity to teach children of some of the students that you taught earlier?

MM: Oh yes. Yes. And if I'd taught one more year, I would have had another generation.

HS: Oh my!

MM: But I had quite a number – the first year, I had children of my peers, and then I had children of those that I had taught, and [inaudible – could be “none of it”] special. I can just remember once in a while I would call a boy maybe by his dad's name, instead. It would just slip out. But I felt we always pleased him.

HS: But that must have given you a great feeling of being a part of the continuum here.

MM: Yes, that was very much so, and I could see even mannerisms – it was so interesting to see mannerisms that the parents had had. It was a wonderful experience. I said to Keith Weaver, once – who was my dentist, and one of my peers, also – I said, “It must be very dull being a dentist. With teaching, every class is different.” And at that time – well we had block of time [?] later to – the first year was just a separate class. Every class is different, and every child is different. It was just always such a challenge, and I would teach one English class after another – Language Arts, sometimes Literature – but I never

taught two just exactly the same. The classes were different. You'd do a little differently. Then I said, "There's such variation in such a town."

"Well," he said, "Every mouth is different." [Laughter]

HS: Can you give us some of your philosophy on how to be a successful junior high school teacher? Because it is an age when they are going through such changes – emotionally, physically – how would you compensate for that? You started out with a love of that aged child, so that was to your benefit.

MM: Yes, yes.

HS: But how did [inaudible – both trying to speak at once].

MM: We did – the last year I taught there was a wild ninth grade that – I was teaching mainly ninth grade then – that I say they were the first class that when they got to high school, they got on drugs. When they were in ninth grade, they were drinking. Now of course, there were many of them that were – the leaders in the class, they never were. Earlier, there was no drug or drinking that you have to think about now, and we didn't think very much about – I know – after I look back, I know that I must have had some girls, particularly, that were abused. They were so withdrawn, and I worked so hard to try and get a rapport with them, and at that time I just thought they were withdrawn, and – you know – we didn't talk about being abused in the home. Maybe other people were sharper than I did, but the other teachers didn't talk about it either.

HS: No, I think it was not to be spoken of.

MM: No, I think so. But I would say Ed Erickson was the best Superintendent I ever had, and he gave a talk to us when he first came – to the whole faculty – and I've asked him to write that up and put it in the teacher's magazine, but he never did. But one of the great things that he mentioned is that you're a teacher. You're not to be buddy-buddy. And I've seen teachers just loose it because they were so eager to have a rapport with the students that they liked that they were too soft, and then they could never get the discipline back again. So it's important, I think, for the kids to know that you like them, and they will. They can tell. But you have to keep a – what he said. You're not to be a buddy-buddy, you're to be a teacher. And that way – in that respect – and then – discipline was never very easy for me. I know some teachers that just would enter a class, and nothing would ever happen, but – but – I think I had good order, but it was always harder for me. I didn't – it wasn't just one of those natural things. I remember as a student teacher I was – it was never tested for discipline. You just – just – [inaudible], and it wasn't, and he was so colorful and whatever, that he just had that personality.

HS: So how did you achieve order? Because you certainly had orderly classes. What do you think you did to achieve that?

MM: For one thing, have everything well organized, and have a system about things – a system about sharpening pencils, and a system about leaving the room, and try to seat people so we had – for classes during the War years I had a boy's class of 50, and on opposite days a girl's class of 50. Well, you can imagine the difference. With the boys, I pretty much had to be a police woman. For the girls, everything was easy. When you get that many boys together – teaching them spelling, and vocabulary, and penmanship – but we got along, and – but I think one of the great things is to establish standards at the beginning, and then have a system, and be consistent with the system. Whatever it is you're doing, be consistent with it. And then also, to make everything be fair. And I remember kids coming into the class from another class and just seething about teachers that had showed partiality and weren't fair, and I used to say that I want to be fair. I don't want to have partiality. Some students you normally get – have more – closer with than others, just because of their personalities, but you try not to favor those. But I said, I don't know – maybe I am not fair sometimes, but I want to be, and maybe these others want to be, too, but we

have that many students, and we know some better than others. That would calm them down, then. You keep a dignity, but still, you – you're real. I guess that's what I want to say.

HS: I know that you always had very high expectations for your students, and I think that's important. Would you speak to that a little bit. Was my observation correct that you did have high expectations?

MM: Yes, I think I did. And I think other people – maybe those I just taught – and I believed that I was teaching grammar to the seventh graders, and I loved it, and I believed in it, and I believed so much that it was important for seventh graders to have a good start in grammar, and if they got straightened out in seventh grade they would go sailing right through the rest of their way. If they didn't get straightened out in seventh grade, in eighth grade they assumed they knew it, or assumed they understand, and in high school more so, and I know Marian Clobicher [?] did a lot of re-teaching of things that I had taught, and I thought I made it happen, so we know they don't retain things forever. But I had many, many students – Bill Reynolds told me – he was our high school principal, I guess you know – he said, “You don't know what an influence you've had on these young people,” he said, “They don't tell you that you were teaching them well, and so on, but when they're seniors in high school they talk about it.” And that was very gratifying to me. But I just believed that it was so important. And when I taught seventh grade, and I enjoyed it so much, and – when they would just catch on and see how – and the little tricks for teaching how the prepositions, and so on, and when – when they would catch on it was wonderful, and I know ones that really caught on turned out to be very good students. Marian Clobicher, the senior teacher and junior year teacher, would tell me this one was really – did well. They weren't all [inaudible] as others were. There were all these ranges of different interests and different abilities, but I believed in what I was doing. And then I had them write a lot, too, and I would liked to have been able to make them write more, but I corrected what was written, and went over it with them. So I believe in that, and that was very enjoyable to me, too – having them write. I didn't think of myself as – now I know it's very important to have high standards, and – but I just – I don't think I thought about that too much. I just thought that I probably should teach.

HS: Well we have time for – if you have some other things you want to introduce into this record.

MM: I'm just glancing over this paper now to see if there's anything that I –

HS: We might ask – in recent years on the college campus, of course, there have been many times of stress and upset feelings. Did you experience any of that during those two years that you were here first?

MM: No. No, I think not. And I think I was sort of unaware, and I don't know how much friction – I don't know if this is what you're talking about or not, but I know – I guess it's all right to use his name – Glenn Hoag used to tell us – he said, “You wouldn't believe the jealousies and divisions that are among the faculty.” Well I was never aware of that as far as school, but ones that had – I think that's been true maybe all the way, but –

HS: But of student unrest, or student demonstrations?

MM: No, no there was nothing like that, and I would say – that was something else I was going to say – I think the demonstrations were rallies for football games. [Laughter] I don't remember anything like that, but I've often thought – and this is off the subject, too, but we were talking the other day about Dr. Brooks, when he was President of the school, and it was such unrest, and Berkeley, and University, and I had students who were going to University and they were afraid to go to the library because it was a dangerous place to be, and he was always able to keep everything here, and I don't think there were any real – anything close to a riot, and I've just often thought – I think a humble man, and very – just did his job. And I think it was a great thing that he did during that time [inaudible – could be “in our midst”] where he kept his cool.

HS: And he held that job a long time. When other Presidents were falling like proverbial flies.

MM: That's right. Yes. Um, [long pause] there's some things here about – [inaudible – three syllables] – women's rights? I never think about that. Or sexual and racial discrimination – I don't know if they even had a Black – they had a Black student or two in high school, but I don't remember. I don't remember even seeing any in the high – pictures in the Hyakem. [Something about black athletes, inaudible because the next question is already being asked.]

HS: It seems that you went to school during a Golden Age.

MM: Yes, really. And Prohibition was in effect when I was going, and of course, nobody was drinking. If they were, it was way out in a cabin someplace where they got some moonshine. It was never mentioned on campus, or never – never talked about somebody drinking. Homosexuality – *never* talked about. One girl – there was one woman that I knew later – I got to know then – was a lesbian. I knew somebody who had had an experience with her. That was a new thing – just the – talk about her [inaudible] was not –

Boy's responsibility – I don't think that was ever stressed. They did have military service, then. They had no welfare programs – no violence! Of course, there was no TV, so there was no violence to look at, and there wasn't any violence around. I don't know ever – remember hearing about any fellows having a fight. In grade school, yes. Not so much emphasis. There was emphasis on physical fitness.

HS: But what about dieting? You know, girls now sometimes have such terrible problems with being thin, and –

MM: Yes, I think that wasn't – wasn't something to consider.

HS: Well I think you did hit a golden time.

MM: I think so.

HS: Tell us a little bit, now –

MM: [Inaudible] Maddox, and he's always saying that he thinks that I lived in a wonderful time. I rode on trains, I crossed the ocean both ways on the Queen Mary. I didn't fly until I was 75, but there were many experiences that I had that people – I met somebody the other day, somebody 38 years old, they'd never ridden on a train.

HS: How sad.

MM: Yes, really, how sad. If they go to Europe they would, because there are many trains there.

HS: What about your experiences coming back in summer schools? Did you find that to be exciting? Did students treat you as an equal?

MM: Yes. Well, I would be with ones that had gone to school when I first went, so I would know some, and I would get to know new people, and I enjoyed going to school. I just – I loved going to school, so – so – when I would go during the summer times I had classes that I very much enjoyed. I remember a poetry class that I can't remember his name – he was a poet himself, and was just wonderful. And a visiting History Professor on Social / Cultural / Religious / Scientific History of Europe. He was so impressed, because most of us had never had a prerequisite – it was required, but somehow we got into it without that, and we did so well, and were so interested – one day he stood in front of the class and I think he shook for five minutes when he saw the test results that we – and he asked how many of us had the

prerequisite, and just three raised their hand. He was just overwhelmed. But anyway, it was a wonderful class, and so – I really enjoyed going to summer school, and I don't – I think still I didn't have too much to do with ones that lived in the dormitory, but – because my Dad was a sheep man, and I loved to get out with him, and doing things, and – so I didn't get involved in the campus things that people would have [inaudible] in the dorms.

HS: Speaking about dorms – now you've said earlier that you weren't much of an athlete, but were you a golfer?

MM: Yes.

HS: Now tell us about something special.

MM: Oh yes. Well, I'm reading in the paper just now the other day about somebody making a hole-in-one, and he was supposed to get a medal for it, and I got a little medal for my first one – and I don't know where it is now, but anyway – it was kind of a little bronze medal – the first one, I – and I knew there was golf very much, because when I came here it was a private, and it was very expensive, and I was teaching, and I was out a ways, so I didn't follow it very much, but when I taught in Kelso we had a golf – it was a half hour walk from the school, and the Principal would encourage a friend and I to go out and play after school, and we'd finish our work, and then we'd go out and play, and I made two holes-in-one there. Then I came to Ellensburg, and T.J. Stockton – a real estate man and a good friend of my dad's, and a man who was manager of Penneys played golf, and asked me to golf with them, and I said, "Well I can't play with you men."

"Oh, come along."

So I went out with them, and on the third hole I made a hole-in-one, so – but that was my third one, and I had never heard of anyone making three, except in a – I just glanced over this front page – just glanced over it, but I saw where somebody – a professional – thinks that he had made his fourth. And of course, it's really totally accidental – some of the shorter holes – but that was about my one claim to fame.

HS: Well this has been a delight to talk with you, and we have – we know that you feel that you had a *good* education at Central, so I would ask you either to wrap up with a final sentence or two about your feelings about Central, or your feelings about teaching – either one.

MM: Yes, well I felt that I got a very good start at Central, that really influenced my teaching all my years. And I learned at the very beginning about how to teach [inaudible] from [inaudible] and that Martin book was just wonderful – teaching how to teach long division, and all these – so we had good reference books. And we had very dedicated teachers and professors, too, that cared about us. And I have always thought of Central as being a strong school. [End of Side 2. The second McClennan tape is a duplicate of this one.]