

7-6-2001

# Glenna Rogers interview for a Wright State University History Course

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Glenna Rogers

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## Repository Citation

Spangler, C., & Rogers, G. (2001). Glenna Rogers interview for a Wright State University History Course. .  
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Glenna Rogers

C.S. Where did you go to high school?

G.R. Jamestown, Tennessee, York Institute. You know that sounds like an institution, it probably was. No it was named for Sergeant York because he was born there and he and my grandfather were friends. I grew up with Sergeant York sitting at the dining room table a lot of times because I lived with my grandparents when I was little.

C.S. What kind of neighborhood did you grow up in, this was a small town?

G.R. Oh, it wasn't even a town, it was a farming community. There was not even electricity or anything when I was little, when I was growing up. We didn't have electricity; we had kerosene lamps and outside toilets. That's more than you wanted to know?

C.S. What year did you graduate?

G.R. 1953.

C.S. What did you do for fun?

G.R. I don't think we had fun (laughs). Probably, we played in the creek with my cousins and we played baseball with a broom and a like a rag ball. Though actually, we didn't really have any fun. I didn't never got to go to ball games or anything 'cause we lived too far away. So I guess that's as close to fun as we ever had. I think we built playhouses and something like that, made mud pies when we were little. But that was it.

C.S. Well, what about on date? What sort of things did you do for dates?

G.R. When I was in high school? Well, see I wasn't allowed to do that either. I think I had two dates when I was in high school and my sister had to go with me. So when I came to Dayton then, I had never been out of the hills and so it was just like a whole big world, I was like a twelve year old going to a carnival or something. I didn't know what to do, and I had been raised so strict when I came here. 'Cause I caught a ride with somebody I knew that lived in Dayton. I said the first person I know that's going out of here when I graduate from high school, I knew I had to stay there that long, and as soon as somebody's leaving here, I'm going with them. So, it was my stepmother's sister that came on vacation about the time school was out and I said can I go to Dayton with you? She said yes. I didn't hardly know them. So I, they let me stay with them for two weeks. She took me to find a job. I had never been on a bus, I'd never been, I'd, you know, never been out of the hills. So when I got a job, which was quickly, because, I guess, apparently high school wasn't out here. Because we got out earlier in the hills. So my first job was at McCall's, McCall's printing and I met some girls that worked at McCall's, so they lived in a dorm type thing. We had a housemother and so I knew I had to go there because I didn't know how to live by myself. So I moved in there with those girls and I guess that was my first actual venture into the world was then. And then I was scared to death, I didn't want to, you know,

ah man, I don't know if I wanted to go out with guys. 'Cause everyone wanted to fix me up with a date. Well, I would make sure they were going with me, you know it was like a double date. I just knew you didn't go out with guys by yourself. And I think the first movie that I saw, or that I had a date to go to a movie, was down at the old RKO Keith's, and it was like On the Beach with Burt Lancaster. That was my first like, movie movie that I saw with a date.

C.S. Well that was what I was going to ask you, was where you went to see movies?

G.R. That was the first movie I ever saw with, you know, except for Gone with the Wind. And then, I guess, from there maybe I think drive-ins were big then so we .. to the drive-ins because it was cheap I think it was fifty cents then and go down to the drive-in, so you could take your own popcorn and everything. I think that's where we went to the movies for quite a while, although we, I didn't have a car. We had to go with somebody that had a car. I don't even think that any of the girls that lived at this dorm thing had cars. So I don't remember how we got to the movies, I guess one person would have a date and we'd all go along (laughs). She probably only had that one date.

C.S. So, who were some of your favorite actors and actresses?

G.R. oh, well Kirk Douglas was just absolutely wonderful, and um, of course I always loved Katherine Hepburn and I guess I still do. I didn't ever get into like the Marilyn Monroe type, I guess. I like the old classic type people maybe, but I was just in love with Kirk Douglas. I remember that, I don't know why, but I was.

C.S. Where did you like to shop?

G.R. Well then we went downtown all the time because we didn't, there wasn't any malls and if there had been we wouldn't have had any way to get there because we had to go on the bus. And we'd always go downtown and there was, of course, Rike's and the home store, like Elder Johnson's and I thought that was really classy. If I had enough money to go there and get anything, but there was some little old tacky shops along Main Street then, that was where I could afford to buy something, was those little cheapy shops 'cause I didn't make very much money, but if I ever could afford to get something from Elder's or Rike's then that was my favorite when I could afford it. And Maude Mueller candies. That was a treat to get to go to Maude Mueller's. Then I worked downtown after McCall's. I worked at E.F. McDonald's, downtown, so I get ... or something when we got paid. I'd treat myself and go to Maude Mueller's and get candy. That was a big treat.

C.S. What fashions were popular?

G.R. Tight, straight legged jeans, like you had to grease yourself almost to get into them and we'd all sew them up, you know, sew the legs up a lot tighter than they were. Ducktail haircuts, even for the girls. I remember having one of them. I'm trying to thing what length, how we wore the skirts. I think they were just knee length. I don't remember any extreme sort or long. Then I guess after

the ducktail, is when the bouffant (laughs) came in. So I guess we went from the ducktail to the bouffant. But as far as, all I can remember on the clothes is just, girls didn't wear, I mean, when we went downtown we would never have gone downtown with those jeans. We had to put our white gloves on and a hat and, I don't know how I ever managed to get a hat and white gloves because I was so poor, but I did. I wouldn't have gone downtown otherwise. I guess we wore dresses probably with that, I don't remember wearing skirts, maybe a nice skirt and blouse, but then it was a skirt and sweaters.

C.S. What kind of music did you like?

G.R. Of course that was about the Elvis era so we loved Elvis and Chubby Checkers and we used to go out to Gene Barry's, he used to be Gene By Golly Barry was out on West Third Street. He played records in some window, store window, and that was the biggest thing if you could go in there and buy a record and 45's of course with Gene By Golly there. So any of the rock and roll stuff.

C.S. My next question is what did you do for entertainment at home?

G.R. When I was still single or after I got married? Oh staying in... I don't remember, except the TV. When I came to Dayton was the first I ever had TV. Down in the hills we didn't have TV, we did get electricity down there when I was still in school, but we didn't have a TV. TV was the only, and then you know, then people visited a lot with each other because there wasn't as much to do. People, and friends, and by then I had one of my sisters lived here. So we'd visit back and forth. You, know just do, I don't even remember having cook outs that much because I don't think people had grills that much then, It wasn't the big thing.

C.S. A lot of people have mentioned playing cards; did you play cards at all?

G.R. Yes, we did, I forgot to mention that. We were never allowed to play with cards that had faces on them when we were growing up, see this was the Bible belt where, and so we played Rook, so when I came up here it was, so find somebody who knew how to play Rook cause that was the only kind of game I knew how to play and we would play Chinese checkers and we used to play that, my sister and I, she moved up here after she got married. We played Chinese checkers and of course Rook, and there was Liverpool Rum, that was the first thing I learned, you know it was kind of like Canasta where you had to do seven or eight different things with the cards. you know to make the card game complete and get so many of the... so that was the first game I ever learned other than Rook, with those nasty old cards (laughs).

C.S. One of my questions was what did you do on summer vacations or breaks, so I know before you came up her summer breaks were probably...

G.R. We worked in the cornfield or made hay or you know, those kinds of things. The only big treat that we had then, it would be so hot in the summer, we'd get to go to the river. The river was right there and then the river was clean, you could swim in the river. So that's what we got to do every evening after we

worked in the cornfields and the hay fields. We got to go swimming in the river and cool off and that's how we got our bath (laughs).

C.S. Who did you think of as your role models?

G.R. Then, I guess the only thing that comes to my mind was my grandmother because they raised me. My mother died when I was four years old, so I stayed with my grandparents for a few years until my dad remarried. So, I guess I always thought that my grandmother did this, and she did that and I wanted to be able to cook like she did and to can and to do all these things. That 's the only person I could think of, of course my grandfather was a neat guy too, so that was my two idols, I guess, if there is such a thing. I just wanted to be like my grandmother and have flowers and garden and all that kind of stuff.