

**Lois Olsen Cox, née Olsen (1924 - )****Schoolmate to Madelyn Payne****Oral history recorded October 4, 2012 (Run time 47:42)**

Lois Olsen Cox was interviewed on October 4, 2012, in the BCTV Studio on the Butler Community College El Dorado campus. Interviewer was Teresa Baumgartner and videographer was Steve Cless.

As a younger schoolmate, Lois (born March 16, 1924) admired Madelyn Payne when they attended Augusta High School. Lois recalls Madelyn as a very proper, well-respected, and “upright” young woman. She sees similar qualities in the president, especially in his determination and his willingness to work hard. She describes Madelyn as being dignified and acting older than she was while still being happy as a high school student. She makes a point to describe Madelyn as inclusive and being willing to befriend the “country” kids when she herself was a “city” kid, and this was a time and place when there were fewer friendships of this type.

Lois also had a small comment and signature from Madelyn in her autograph book. It says that while they never “palled” around, Madelyn considered Lois to be a “true” friend who is sincere.

This interview has many stories of Lois’ early life, including one story about a week-long dust storm during the Dust Bowl, although her memories of the Depression are not of hardship. Her guardians were able to buy up mortgages from those people in town whose banks failed, indicating that her family had more money than some others in Augusta during the Depression.

She also has some memories of World War Two and finding out that war had been declared. Her most vivid story, though, is about the impact of the war in the years that followed when classmates would gather for class reunions and they would read out the list of their fallen friends.

00.00-00.	Camera, sound adjustments
00.15-13:05	<b>Childhood:</b> Lois describes her childhood and high school experiences. At the time of the interview, she was 88 years old. She describes growing up on a farm and how she got to school. When she was a freshman in high school, she attended Banner School, which was a rural school. She describes her experience taking Algebra from a manual arts teacher, having previously learned only arithmetic. She describes how she loved farming and wanted to be in the agriculture class, though girls were not allowed to take agriculture. She describes how after three years, she was allowed to take agriculture, and how she met her future husband in that class. She and her husband had been married for 71 years at the time of the interview.
13:05-20:00	<b>Madelyn Payne:</b> Lois attended Augusta High School with Madelyn Payne. Lois describes Madelyn as well respected, well dressed, with a good reputation. Madelyn was dignified and mature; she did not party as did other classmates. Because Lois was a country girl, some city girls would not talk to her. However, Madelyn was friendly to Lois.

47:29-51:00	<b>Relationship with Madelyn:</b> Madelyn signed Lois' autograph book, even though Lois was an underclassman. The April 24, 1939 inscription reads: "Although you and I have never paled [sic] together, I regard you as one of my truest friends. So many are friends for just what you can do for them but I believe you are sincere. Love, Madelyn Payne". Lois sent a copy of this entry to the White House. President Obama replied: "Dear Lois, Thank you for the wonderful note. It's good to know that my grandmother was sensible even in her early years! Best Wishes, Barack Obama"
20:00-23:09 28:34-29:41	<b>The Dust Bowl years:</b> Lois describes her life on a farm during the Dust Bowl years. She describes attending a one room school. The teacher spent her time teaching the 6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , and 8 graders. The upperclassman spent time helping the younger students. This is when Lois first thought about becoming a teacher.
23:09-28:34	<b>Adulthood:</b> Lois describes her teaching career, her education, and raising 5 children.
29:41-32:16	<b>The Depression:</b> Lois describes her family's and the city's experiences during the Depression.
32:16-37:19	<b>Entertainment:</b> Lois describes her family's entertainment during her childhood years.
37:19-42:23	<b>Courtship:</b> Lois describes her husband's and her courtship.
42:23-47:42	<b>Pearl Harbor:</b> Lois describes hearing about the attack on Pearl Harbor, and her and her Augusta High School classmates' experiences during WW2.