

Virginia (née Dashner) Ewalt (1924-)
Classmate of Madelyn Payne Dunham
Oral history recorded June 21, 2011 (Run time 56:42)

Virginia Ewalt was interviewed at the clubhouse of her residence in Augusta, Kansas on June 21, 2011 by Teresa Baumgartner with Steve Cless as videographer. Also present for part of the interview was Nina Parry.

In this interview, Virginia (June 8, 1924-) describes her childhood, life in Augusta Ks as an adult, and the Augusta High School Reunions. Virginia was a classmate of Madelyn Dunham, graduating from Augusta High School in 1940.

She talks about socializing in the 1940s and going to the Blue Moon in Wichita where young people would listen to “top bands” and dance. She was in a play with Madelyn their senior year in high school, but she recalls very little except that Stanley came to watch play practice once.

She describes downtown Augusta of the 1940s as a vibrant place with many shops, five drug stores all of which had soda fountains, and Lear’s Restaurant where many people went to eat. She also talks about going around to beautiful places in Augusta where the young women would take pictures of each other to send to their classmates and friends who were serving in the Second World War. Madelyn Dunham (this took place after her marriage) did come along once or twice.

She tells the story of how the only black student attending Augusta High School in the 1940’s was chosen by his football teammates to be team captain.

00.00-00.	Camera, sound adjustments
00:00-07:23	Childhood: Virginia describes growing up in Augusta, Kansas. She recalls taking the bus to Wichita to eat lunch at the Ellis hotel, attend the theater, and listen to live bands. She attended country school until the age of 12, when she attended high school in town. Country kids were not accepted by city kids.
07:23-10:26	Friendship with Madelyn Payne: Virginia knew Madelyn when they were in the senior play together, and they were in some classes together. On one occasion, Virginia met Madelyn’s husband Stanley Dunham when Stanley attended a play rehearsal. Couples were allowed to dance at the Augusta skating rink from midnight until 2:00am. Boys who worked at the aircraft factories in Wichita arrived home in Augusta at midnight.
10:26-11:06	Pearl Harbor: Virginia learned about the attack on Pearl Harbor.
11:06-13:01	Girlfriends in high school: Virginia names her closest girlfriend and Madelyn’s close friends
13:01-18:00	Living in Augusta, KS: Virginia describes life in Augusta after high school graduation.
18:00-23:58	Augusta High School reunions: Virginia describes the Augusta High School reunions. She notes that Madelyn sent a note and some Macedamian nuts to the 50 year reunion.
23:58-30.45	Augusta after WW2: Virginia describes stores, restaurants, and activities in Augusta after the war.

30:45-33:17	The Depression: Virginia describes life during the Depression, and shares her thoughts about the lives of children today.
33:17-44:00	Father's career: Virginia describes her father's life working for Sinclair Oil company as a pumper, and playing on the company's baseball team. She describes her childhood living in the oil company town.
44:00-46:29	Married life: Virginia describes her courtship with her husband, and raising their 4 children.
46:20-50:29	Black student Herman Reed chosen as football team captain: Virginia notes that one black student, Herman Reed, attended Augusta High School during her high school years. The football team members chose Reed for their captain, but the administration refused. After the entire team threatened to quit, the administration agreed Reed was the captain. Reed went on to become a professional football player and to work for the city of Los Angeles. Reed and his black wife attended one high school reunion. He wore a white suit and she wore a white dress. The couple sat by themselves, until Davy Cohen (who was Jewish) asked Reed's wife to dance. Herman Reed died in 2010 from cancer. Virginia did not know Reed in high school, but developed a correspondence with him later.
50:29-56:42	Notable Augusta High School graduates: Virginia describes the career paths of notable graduates from the Augusta High School class of 1940. She describes workplace limitations for women. 56:42: group photo.