FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978
(Funded in part by the National Endowment For The Humanities)

(Funded in part by the Keweenaw National Historic Park Advisory Commission / U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service)

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Dec. 4, 1973

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Mr. Noblet
This is Betty Berry. I am interviewing Mrs. U. J. Noblet at her home on Emerald Street in Houghton. Today is the 4th day of December, 1973. Are you a native Mrs. Noblet?

I certainly am and a very proud native of the U.P. Our family goes back their a pioneer family from Gladstone Michigan which is in ...............County. I am the ninth of a family of ten. I have wonderful remembrances of our childhoods who back in those days things weren't so rosy but the remembrances are golden. The oldest one in our family was Ann and she showed great interest as a child although she had so many duties about the home with a very large family she found time for cultural things. My first remembrance of my childhood was riding with her in the horse and buggy. Especially on Friday to her school in the country, her one room school. She was the seamstress in our family and she always saw to it that I had an attractive looking dress to speak my piece on Friday. She would lift me up on the desk and I would speak the pieces. She would teach me these during the week and that was always a proud moment for me, to go to that one room school and be raised up and I was a very small child. I don't know why she took such pains to do it but we had an experience going home once. The horse, we called him Nig because he was very black and there seemed like there were papers rolling and he became very frightened and started off at a great clip. He hit a stump and turned me a great distance and she fell out and the horse ran home to the barn and left the empty buggy. They later found me and I had been out for several hours but that's the way she got to school driving the horse and buggy.

I Was she a teacher?

R She was a teacher

I How much schooling did she have?

R She graduated in 1900 and there were 4 in her class. Not many kids attended high school in those days especially not many girls. Because it was foolish to educate girls in those days because all they did was go out and get married anyway. My mother never went with that, she had great dedication she said I'm going to give those children something I never had. Something you could never take away from them.

I Did you find that your neighbors also had this attitude?

R No, we were singular in that neighborhood. So the oldest girl Ann went to Marquette and my sister Claire followed her. She graduated in 1901. She almost claimed to be the Valedictorian because in her class there were only two and the other girl's diploma was not signed because she had failed her last examination. Anyway she went through the ceremony of graduating. So my sister always claimed to be the Valedictorian of her class.

I Did your sister Ann take the four year course?
No, it was what they called a life certificate. It was a two year course at Marquette college for both of the girls. There were four of us girls that went to Northern and we all taught one year in a country school. Because in that way my mother said it would teach us the value of the dollar. I was lucky, I got $50 a month for my teaching.

When was this?

In 1915 and 16

Where?

This was in Alger County. I was one of ten who took that teaching examination and my brother was a lawyer in Munising at the time and he said he could get me a job in Alger County. So the others who taught in Delta County were getting $40 a month but I was overpaid because I was getting $50. I rode a logging train up to my school.

Did you live in Munising then?

No my home was still in Gladstone but there was this logging train that went up and back each day. I didn't go back and forth every day but I went home on weekends. Any time I wanted to go down to town they'd see me on the tracks and stop and I'd go down to Trenary and that was our big city. There we had many wonderful times. Dances and box socials that we would attend and it was all that kind of fun.

You said that your mother wanted you to have an education, who was your mother?

My mother was Katherine Gallagher and her people came from Clair County Ireland, and they settled in Albany New York and some how or other, I don't know how her mother and father met but anyway they ended up in Chicago. Where they raised a family. There were three children. Katherine my mother the oldest, and then Peter and then Edward. Her father was a railroad man and they lived on the corner of VanBuren and Halstead Street.

Right in the center.

Yes, and of course in those days it was way off in the railroad section. Then her father died and she began to think this is no place to raise my children and for some unknown reason and I don't know why but she took these children just north of Sturgeon Bay and Green Bay in the peninsula and she did housework I believe to try to keep the children together. Finally she met a chap by the name of William Chapman who was a very sophisticated cultured Englishman. He was so good to that family and then as she grew into womanhood she met my father of Green Bay, Wisconsin and they married. They had four children, the youngest one being eight months old. Previous to this this new location in the north country was opening up and this came later.
I

Now what kind of location?

R

It was one the water and it could see potential as a port especially the wheat fields and there was a railroad train that came in from the west. These had grains and the idea was to transfer it to boat down the lake.

I

And this was to be for transportation?

R

Oh yes, that's what it was supposed to be.

I

Lots of time location means a lot.

R

Oh yes, and my father was interested in construction so he went up to help build the dock with the promise that later he would build a home for his family and bring them later. Well the summer went by quickly and my mother began to get a little bit nervous realizing that there was no railroad and the only way to get up there was by boat. She'd better take that last boat in the fall so she prepared to take the boat and went with the four children the youngest being eight months old. There were two sisters and two brothers. Their step father could not have this family going north and not be assured that they would have milk to drink so he bought a cow and put it on the boat with them. Well then more children came into the family and about the time my middle brother, my brother Richard, who was born just about then and they said the first child born in this community after it is named will receive a very choice lot. My brother missed it by about two months. Then when it came to naming the community there was great controversy. My father and others felt that the town should be named after some Indian. He suggested the name .......... but there was such an English influence in that town and I didn't realize this until later what a great influence the English had in this Upper Peninsula. Because we have today, Kipling Rudyard, Mason and other places, Schoolcraft too that show what a great English influence there was. They felt that if they could give this town an English name there would be a better chance of getting a railroad because the railroad owned the Soo Line Railroad.

I

In the east.

R

Yes. so the problem was solved by naming the town Gladstone after the Honorable William Gladstone, Prime Minister of England. And with that little bit, they got the railroad into Gladstone. It became quite a center there and many jobs were given to the people because of the railroad.

I

Where did your father come from and where did he learn the contracting?

R

He was a self-made contractor. He loved the woods and worked in the woods and he had more of the technical side of it. I don't remember if I told you they came over from Germany in a schooner with the great masts and all of that and there are great stories connected to that.
His father fought in the Civil War with the Wisconsin Regiment. It was really pitiful because there were twelve little ones left and at one point she sold a cow and got $2.00 for the skin of that cow so she made an itemized account of how she spent that $2.00 and hoped it would meet with his approval. The letters are so very touching and then they tell about the battles he had been in and the march.

Sherman's March to the sea.

Yes., Sherman's March to the sea. Those letters are really priceless. Well then they finally moved to Green Bay and he served for twenty years on the common council in Green Bay. He was well respected by all. It was a large family and he remarried after his wife died. She died not too long after the Civil War. Then he married this woman and she was a wonderful mother to those children. She was so dedicated and those children just loved her.

That was often the case, where they married with one or two children each so you have these step brothers and step sisters.

Yes, to get back to my father, he loved reading about Geography. He didn't have a formal education but was a self-educated man. His interests were .......... and History and Geography. He thought the indian name should be preserved but he didn't get his way in naming this little community but it stands today in three different visible places. On the corner of Delta and Ninth St. as you enter Gladstone there's a large concrete building and it was one of the first concrete buildings in this part of the country. It would be a rough job today. They had to lift the cement in a bucket and hoist it up and it had to be mixed by a horse going round and round and right up on the top in very large letters Miniwauksa block, 1901. That was when that building was built. The Masonic rooms are up in that building too, among other things and the Miniwauksa Chapter of the Eastern Star.

The Gladstone High School Year Book is a Miniwauskan Yearbook

Do you know what this word means?

I should know but I don't, but it's a lovely word.

It meant something to those people?

Yes. Another memory I have is our attendance of Sunday School. That was always very important because we always got dressed up to go to Sunday School. In those days it was a great treat to get dressed up, now they run around in jeans and that's the order.

That's right
We had such a marvelous teacher and she was so dedicated that we would try to do everything to please her always and of course the Christmas programs stand out very much in my mind. My dress was always blue and my sisters was always red.

Did your sister make them?
Yes, she was always the seamstress
What did she trim them with cotton eyelet?
Braid or something like that
Covered buttons
Oh yes, and of course the treat was always the Candy at Christmas time.
Where did you get it?
From the Sunday School and we'd march up in front and of course it was always at night with the lighted candles on the tree.
Now your church probably had the kerosene lamps?
Yes they did.
Where was this church?
This was the Presbyterian Church in Gladstone.
And you were accustomed to saying these pieces.
Oh yes and we practiced these pieces at home. Every morning we'd have to go through this rigamarole of going up the steps and turning and looking at the audience and saying our piece before we'd go. Another childhood memory, we were a very poor family and a large family and everyone had something to do. We just accepted those chores. One was we had a very light wheelbarrel. My younger sister and I would push down the wheelbarrel to pick up the dry wood that would just be going to waste for kindling wood. Of course the idea was to see how much we could get before winter set in and they were all covered with snow. And we would be rewarded with something, not much but anyway it was our duty to get that wood in. Although we had brothers some how or other that chore fell to us.
How big were these slabs? Were these the pieces that had been cut off the trees?

they varied in size?
And they were good for nothing except stove wood

I take it by now your father was finally allowed to build his house?

Oh yes, the house finally got built but it wasn't quite ready when my mother arrived and he was so surprised to see her. He said why did you come so soon. She said because this is the last boat before fall. If I didn't come now, I couldn't get here until spring. So they moved into this house and they did the plastering after they moved in. And the green plaster she said was responsible for the problem with my sister. That may be a fairy tale but she said the green plaster was hard on the eyes.

Something of the chemicals in it.

Yes. The yard was about 100 feet wide and it's hard to believe but we had a garden, we had a pig, and we had a cow which of course gave up our milk. We had chickens; we even had ducks and an eagle. My father had this and prized very highly.

And you were not unusual,

They other families were doing the same thing. We had a very healthy childhood and we played all the games that the children of those days played. Take jacks for instance, I don't see little girls playing with them anymore. That consisted of a ball and five jacks.

Star shaped.

Yes star shaped. Hopscotch and swimming to which our parents objected to very much. But we'd get down there anyway.

You were too close to the water.

Right, too close to the water and on the way home we'd realize and one of the kids would say a scolding doesn't hurt and a licking doesn't last.

Never heard that one before.

Yes.

Didn't you find that you built up competition among each other?

Oh my it really was competition.

And you really used your imagination?

Yes.

A new idea for jumping rope.

Or foot racing. We as a family were taught we should get into contests or races.
Because there were always holidays coming up where we could earn some money.

How could you do that on a holiday?

Well like the 4th of July or Labor Day or the Fair, we had a Fair. We all were made to run, the whole family, the horse and everybody ran. The race horse and it was a beautiful animal. My four brothers were runners, one was a shotputer, and one was a very good sprinter. He made good at the University of Michigan athletic wise too.

In another sense you had a family tradition that you were expected to carry on.

We were expected to carry on and expected to win.

What were the prizes that you won?

Oh my land, we had everything, ice cream freezers, fishing poles, cameras, flowers, and a lot of it went right into the home. There were some cash prizes too, maybe two dollars or three dollars.

That was a large sum.

It was a large sum in those days. And the last race I'll never forget it was the run in Escanaba down Ludington Street. By that time I had decided I was too big to run. I said I'm not going to run anymore. My brother said let's make this the big wind up. We'll get in there and make it one big finale. I said I just would rather not run and he said you do that for me. So we went over there and the boys came in first and second and then came the female division and I remember I did this on purpose I said I can't run because I don't have my shoes. So he said I brought them and he handed them to me and I got into these tennis shoes. I had on a brown silk dress with white dots and I can remember this flopping back and forth and I was getting more angry with each step that I took. I thought why did I ever let myself in for this. So at the end of the race the fellow took my arm and said first place winner. And of course there was skating.

Ice skating?

Ice skating and roller skating. Roller skating we went over to Escanaba on the streetcar for roller skating over there. Or we would go on sleigh rides and they were real fun. All wrapped up in fur robes with hot bricks at our feet and it was a distance of about 7 miles. They were a common thing but very much enjoyed. I feel sorry for the young person who never had that kind of fun. Of course ice skating out at Bay de Noc and of course ice boating.

What kind of boats one or two?

Well maybe two and you could go at a pretty good clip if the wind was moving just right to catch the sails. Then we had shows in the barns that we put on.
Talent shows and I remember my sister's favorite was song and dance. You gotta quit kicking my daughter around.

Had she seen this somewhere?

No, she just sort of picked it up. Then we had these magic lantern shows if someone was well enough off to buy a magic lantern.

Were these kerosene?

Ya, that's exactly right.

Like the ones we have in our livingroom.

Ya, and preceeding these shows we always put on uncle Tom's Cabin. And this one girl who was the heaviest girl in the neighborhood insisted on being little Eva. They thought they'll fix her and this will be the last time she'll want to be little Eva. We'd start out in the morning advertising for the show in the afternoon and we'd put some sort of rope around her where she's supposed to go to heaven you know. They left one portion of the rope where it was pretty thin so they got her up just right and down she came. So that was the end of little Eva.

That was the last time she played little Eva.

That's the last time we put on Uncle Tom's Cabin too. It was a very friendly neighborhood, there was no animosity although I think it would be interesting to talk about the ethnic groups.

What were the different groups that were included.

Well, it was predominately French, but there were many Swedes and quite a few Belgians. They lived in separate communities and they sort of tolerated one another. There was never any pronounced animosity but they just each went their own way.

They had their own street or their own group of houses?

They lived in certain sections of town.

Did they also have their own churches?

Oh yes, the French and the Belgians were Roman Catholic. And the Swedish people either attended the Swedish Covenant Churches or they were Lutheran. They were very religious people. They never went together, they were entirely separate.

Did the children also stay separately?

No in school we were altogether. Of course we weren't part of any one group so we were accepted by all three.
I should say a little about the Indians that lived near us and they would come around once or twice a summer with these huge stacks of baskets in all sizes and shapes small ones and big ones. From clothes hampers to little porcupine jewelry boxes.

What Indians were they?

They were the Chippewa

The Chippewa and the Ojibwa are the same but different names for different tribes.

Was this a reservation or just people that lived in the area.

No, they didn't live right in Gladstone

Had they been put there by the government? Was it called a reservation?

Oh no, they just settled there. And then as the years went by they just scattered out and went into the different neighborhoods. Then we had the peddlers. I don't know what nationality they were. They would come around with their wares, mostly laces and linens and it was always a real choice day when the peddlers came around.

Were they back peddlers?

Yes. And the old chimney sweeps who used to get upon top of the chimneys and sing and clean our chimneys.

Did they have top hats?

Oh yes.

Okay, you went to Marquette for Normal School training?

No, I never went to Marquette.

Where did you get your training?

Well the year I graduated from High School the law had gone into effect that no one could teach country wise or otherwise unless they had gone to summer school. So my family sent me to Milwaukee to a summer course in Milwaukee. That was my first time away from home. Also my first time to pack a trunk. Which was quite a job and my mother was so concerned about what type a packing job could I do. Then I taught in the country and then my parents sent me to Ypsi. To what is now Eastern University and I got my teaching certificate there and then I went to the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago to be ready to teach music in the schools as a music teacher.
At that same time I went to the Art Institute to take courses in art too. That would allow me to teach art too. Back in those days the music and art teacher were combined. So that is my formal education part of it.

Your mother said you would learn how to save a dollar by living in a one room school and teaching, did you also learn to know yourself?

Oh yes, we learned self-assurance but I'll tell you all the way through from the earliest memory that I have my mother geared us to that. We wanted a new dress for an occasion, we would go down and pick out the material, pick out a pattern and go and find a dressmaker to make it. That was all our doing, or shoes or what not. We'd select it and we'd learn by the process of experience what the value was.

As well as what color and shape?

Oh yes, everything. My younger sister and I were in Forensics together. We both did a lot of that. I was in the oratory side of it and she was in ............. Ther're two separate things but the final contest was to be that night. So we each had picked out our material, pattern, and dressmaker to make the dresses to be ready for the day before. So we each went to respective dressmakers and brought them home and my mother said put them on and let's see how they look. She gave an appraising look at mine and didn't say much; she was never much to put on a lot of exclamations but anyway she was still very pleased about it. When my sister put hers she burst into tears and said I'm not going to wear that dress, I look Dutchy. Now back in those days that was the term dutchy. My mother said well you picked the whole thing out and that was what you wanted. She said it doesn't make any difference I'm not going to wear that. She said well what are you going to do, she said I'm going to wear my sister's dress. I'll tell you that was quite a thing in our family for my mother to be caught what should be the right thing to do. So it turned out she wore my dress and I wore one that I had worn before but my mother said let's look at this way privately she said. You know she has a very good chance of winning tonight and if she didn't feel right in a dress it might mean the difference between success and failure.

Yes it would

It would at that so she wore my dress. And she won.

Good. What kind of clothing did you wear when you went up to teach in the woods.

Oh not long ago I ran into one of my pupils and she said I don't know if I told you this, but that first day of school that you were there it was very warm, a warm September day. I had on a whiteknit dress with black velvet ribbon.
I don't know why I dressed like that but this was a special occasion for me standing up in front of that group of youngsters. I had every grade but the fifth.

How many students?

I had 15 so maybe there would be 1 or two in a class. I found myself concentrating very hard on the first grades and eighth graders. Because the first graders, I would be assessed as a good teacher if I taught that child to read or she or he passed their exam.

What exam was that?

State exam. They had to pass in order to go to high school.

Or that would give them an eighth grade certification.

Right, something to show that they had passed. So the ones inbetween I don't know what happened to them. But the idea of a country school is you listen to the other classes so they were absorbing alot of this.

Did it help discipline by having them listen to other classes.

Oh yes, I should say so. There was no ill feeling between the eighth graders and the first graders. They would be playing and the eighth graders would look after the first graders and they would get them all bundled up to go out; it was quite a thing to see. The children ethnically were divided, because a very large portion of them were Finnish. I remember one little boy came in late one day and I said to him are you late? He said I wasa sittin in the living room awhittling when I heard the first bell aringing. Now that was the way they talked. And the Finnish people had certain expressions too.

Who were the Shosures?

Indiana people.

People from the South?

They were from Indiana.

Oh, I see, I had neverheard them speak.

These people all worked and lived in the woods.

Did you live with them or at the school house?

No, I lived about a mile downthe road
In a very lovely home and the only child in that home was my eighth grade pupil. It was a very lovely home and I felt very lucky to have such a wonderful home to live in. As I say I went home every weekend and for her eighth grade graduation they had quite a thing. I helped her mother go through the Sears Roebuck catalog with the light of the lamp picking out a dress for that child. It was a blessed wonderful memory for me to know what was in that mother's heart because she was so proud of that girl. I had a picture of her all dressed up in that outfit.

Well this was before the first World War, were there many changes in your living as the United States contemplated war.

Oh yes, besides the hysteria there was a great dedication in all the war songs, keep the home fires burning. Just one after the other were coming off the press. Myself I had four brothers in the war. One of the brothers was in very heavy fighting because he was an infantry man over there. He had finished all his courses at the University of Michigan all except for a foreign language and he said when I come back I'll take care of that but something happened to him and he never wanted to go back.

Do you think that we today hear about some of these things so quickly that we're not anxious in the same way because we don't have the basis for that anxiety?

Yes, I think we were so willing to accept all the slogans that we just became very involved. Emotionally I remember. When we had our 40th class reunion, they had one person read several of the papers they had given us when we graduated and it was all war connected. The sacrifices, the Red Cross and what people were doing. The whole thing was geared around that. Back there in those days we were involved.

Where were you at the time, were you going to Eastern or were you teaching?

I was in Chicago.

You were in Chicago.

Yes, and the hysteria there was really tremendous. I had gone out to Montana to teach when the war ended. I remember there was a false alliance.

You mean armastese?

Yes. It sort of took the steam out of the real one when it came. It was a great sense of relief.

Did you find the same nervous anxiety, tension or hysteria in Montana that you had in Chicago?
R  Oh no, it would be different because that was a rural community out there, they were ranchers. Whereas in Chicago you were all piled in together.

I  With a lot of news media to tell you what was possible.

R  Not in Montana.

I  No in Chicago.

R  Oh yes, oh yes. Of course the radio station there was very primitive and we felt that were the last words to be able to get anything at all.

I  How was it different from teaching in Montana from the woods and a one room school.

R  Well the Montana school was more regimented. Well I learned a lot in those years and in Montana in the high school I taught English and music. They were interesting people and they were down to earth. Those ranchers, you couldn't fool them, but they were very wonderful people. But this education thing was so foremost in my mother's mind, it was almost a passion with her. This is hard to believe but I went nine years without being absent. To be late or absent from school was a sin. Many times I or others in the family were sent to school ill. But we were bundled up real good and we were now you go there until the roll is called and then you tell the teacher you don't feel well. In the ninth grade I had yellow jaundice and missed the last week of school but the last three years I was neither absent or tardy.

I  Do you remember any real illnesses or epidemics.

R  Oh diphtheria. That was horrible to see those hearses we used to call them dashing in the night with the body.

This was where?

R  In Gladstone. That'll I'll never forget.

I  They tried to dispose of the bodies quickly.

R  Oh yes. They would take the bodies right from the home and the horses would go tearing down the street so there wouldn't be any contamination of the other people.

I  Then they would do what?

R  They would bury them.

I  Immediately?

R  Immediately to the cemetery.
It was horrible for us children.

Part of it being because you didn’t know what was going on.

Ya, we were too young to realize and my mother would stand there and shake her head and the tears would roll down her cheeks because these were people we had known all our lives.

And there was no way of helping them.

No way, no. They just didn’t know what to do.

Then in 1919 there was a big flu epidemic.

Oh yes.

All over.

Oh yes, the teachers would dismiss school and the school was turned into a hospital.

They were.

And the teachers were expected to nurse the sick. It was during the threshing time of the season and there were whole concentrations of people there. They were coming in but were not part of the community but were coming in to help with the harvesting. I’ll never forget one man who would come over because he liked to cook and he would cook a meal for the nurses who were teachers. He said I can’t nurse but I can do this because he said he was willing to do this because these girls were willing to give their lives and that’s what it amounted to. They came out of it all right, they never did have the flu.

Perhaps you were given such a mild dose by nursing.

It could have been, it could have been

Why did you come back to Michigan?

Because my mother had fallen and broken her hip and I felt that I was needed at home and I seemed to be the one of the four girls. Well later on we all came back. And when my mother passed away all the schools were closed because the three of us were teachers and it was a wonderful tribute to a wonderful woman. My father had the wonderlust and he was always looking for greener pastures. He went with the gold rush to Alaska and he came back and I was born and he went back again. Our attic had many burlap bags of rocks from all over the United States. He was bound and determined he was going to strike it rich but he never did. When he passed away some men who were very wealthy men and whom he had helped to make wealthy with his knowledge came to his funeral. I stood by one of them and he said there was a man who lived twenty-five years ahead of his time.

He didn’t have time to wait for it to happen.
That's exactly right and he was quite a person. My mother had quite a few sayings that helped us along the way. Like waste not want not. If you light a candle at both ends it soon comes to not. A stitch in time saves nine. Where there's a will there's a way. There's was no strict discipline just these sayings and if we'd oversleep in that home and there was always so much to do in that busy home she'd look at us and say it's a poor house that can't afford one lady. That was it. I don't ever remember a hand touched me in discipline. But we were afraid, it was sort of a fear and love and respect. It was just one saying after another and where she got these we never knew.

And yet it was very typical of that all over the United States.

Yes. And even with all her hard life she found time to sing. Oh yes, and in one of my grades we had an English woman who was right from England and who loved music. She loved to play the old organ in the school. Her father was an Congregational minister so she had alot of hymns that she was interested in. I remember singing shall we gather at the river, work for the nightis coming. We all sang and nobody gave it a thought. Itwas all about industry and even though we had people of other faiths nobody raised a fuss about that.

Did you also give the pledge of allegiance?

Oh, oh always and so much of the literature we had was of a patriotic nature. And the poems that we learned we always patriotic.

Did they emphasize to any extent the history of Europe?

Not much, we didn't get much of that but we had big doses of American Literature.

Did all the ethnic groups emphasize patriotism in their homes?

Well yes and no because my mind flashes back to the French group that had their big deal on New Years. And there Christmas Eve that was a religious ceremony. There was no exchange of gifts in the French home. That was all done at New Years. They would go from house to house to the food layden tables and you had to eat everything.

Everything that was put before you

Right. Well before they left that house they would stand so erect and they would sing ............. They were French with all the spirit. I used to get goose pimples thinking about how often would we do that to sing our Star Spangled Banner. But there never was a time that the French people didn't get to gether that they didn't sing. It was always in French and it was a carryover from their old country because there was no English spoke in the homes. If they did they would get a clip across the ear.
R Or if any newspaper came into the house it was never an English paper it was from Montreal.

I Did the other groups succumb to this more rapidly?

R Yes, I think so but they still clung to their old country tradition especially around the holidays.

I Did you find that when you were teaching around north of Trenary that these people were preparing for citizenship?

R Well they were law abiding citizens and if any of the children did anything they would be severely chastized for it. They couldn't get away with anything even though it might have been something they were accustomed to. No they were law abiding citizens that's for sure. The Swedish people were very interested in the things in their home, the material things in their home. Everything was always so neat and shiny. They were so proud of what they had and their yards were always so well kept. The French to some extent yes, but there wasn't that real devotion.

I They were ready to put the pot down and have a good soul fest?

R Oh yes. And somebody would get a mouth organ out and start playing and someone would haul out an old broom and start jigging. It was a very happy and carefree even though they had worries or financial worries. Everybody was in the same boat and they didn't seem to care or didn't seem to matter to them.

I There was a happy spirit.

R And of course most of the babies were born by a midwife. And if the doctor came he never expected to get paid. His money was all on the books.

I Or they would bring in some potatoes or a pig.

R Yes, that's exactly right.

I Did you pick berries in the summer?

R Yes, that's another thing we had to do was to pick berries. My mother would keep track of the quarts that we picked and she would say now this will keep track of your books for the fall.

I Well that made you feel a real achievement then.

R Oh yes. The other young people who went picking berries and it was a hard job walking five miles on a sand road to get to the berry patch. You'd go by boat to get there and there was always somebody at the dock ready to buy these berries.
Nine cents a quart or six cents a quart, that's what the kids would get.

What kind were these?

Blueberries. We had others too but these were the blueberries. My mother said don't you ever dare sell your berries, I'll buy them. She'd keep track how many quarts and buy our books in the fall and that's how we did it.

What were these books?

Well we hear a lot about the .............. Readers but they were a little ahead of our time but we were getting the after glow because the teacher was always referring to them in one way or another. Then the regular Grammar book where we really learned diagraming and the structure of a sentence. I'm trying to think of the name of the book, the Readers that we had, it was a whole series of them.

Another episode that happened was the failure of the private bank in our town. Many of the people who had money in there were people who had put their money in there and were saving to bring their family over from the old country. Maybe there was just one person left over there who they were working hard to bring over here. Then suddenly you wake up one morning and the bank has failed.

For many of them was banking a new idea?

Oh yes. And it took a while for them to feel that their money was safe. Many of them never did put a cent in the bank because they were afraid of it. They were called Hamel & Sons and they kept shipping money to Wisconsin and they never did catch up with them. They woke up one morning and my brother had just graduated from the University of Michigan and was a young budding lawyer working with an older established one. He went to work and learned that the bank had failed. So he thought he better come home because there were no phones in those days and tell my mother. This group of three or four women were at our house and my mother said you don't look very happy. He said when you hear what I have to say you won't think it's a laughing matter. My mother came from such a large family that she thought something had happened to one of them and she said what has happened. He said the banks have failed. She said is that all. But in our family we had to count the pennies to put a dollar away. $5,000 was gone and the outcome of it was ten cents on a dollar.

When was this?

This was about 1912. Of course that can't happen any more. One of the brothers who worked in the bank was Roy and he had the first auto in town.
It just shocked everybody to see someone going down the street with wheels and no horses ahead of it. That was quite a thing to happen to that little town.

Was the transportation center anticipated ever developed?

Oh yes, the shipping, they would come in by rail to Gladstone and then be transferred to ships. I can't tell you how many men were employed there. The boys in the neighborhood was their job to go down to the trains after most of the feed had been removed and sweep the boxcars. This was to get grain for the chickens. Nobody cared about that little bit but it was a dangerous thing because one boy was climbing into the car and the car moved and he had his legs mashed. They had to amputate.

Did you ever hear of any of the boys trying to ride the trains by catching onto the undercarriage?

Oh listen I had two brothers who were hobos who made the trip to the western fields.

By rail

Yes, I had one brother who came in one night and was very gay and very happy and said do you have a red bandana I can have. My mother said why and he said never mind do you have a red bandana.

This is Betty Berry and I am speaking to Mrs. Eugene Noblet who resides at Emerald St. in Houghton. Mrs. Noblet you came back from Montana in order to be with your mother, what did you find had happened to this little seaport that your father had come to?

Well it was very well established at that time and there was nothing about a population explosion at that time. We stayed around 5,000 at that time I think. The industries stayed very stabled and remained the same over the years, very steady employment for the people. The Buckeye plant as we called it but better known as ......... comprised of several buildings in which they made flooring, barrel staves, shingles, and lumber. It was quite a place. My father built most of those buildings. I always have the memory of carrying lunch to him over the hill.

Did they have one of those shaped lunch pails?

Oh yes and well filled. This business controlled the town. They had an iron on those people. Just as the old song made famous my Tennessee Ernie Ford, I owe my soul to the company store. That could well apply to the Gladstone Company Store. The owner came from the State of Ohio and that's why they called it the Buckeye Plant because he did honor the State of Ohio.
Another substantial industry was the Marvel Iron Company. Here they manufactured, knives, axes, compasses. Then there was the

Now was the flour made there or was this a nickname?

No it was processed in Gladstone. It already was when it reached Gladstone.

It was flour?

Yes. But it was being transferred to the boats. The Belgians as I remember worked there along with the French, and the others. They worked long hours.

How long was the navigation season?

Well we didn't have the big ice crushes we have now so the season was much shorter. Then of course Gladstone was a terminal for the Soo Line Railroad and many men were employed there.

You mentioned the Buckeye as being the big industry of the town, who ran the Buckeye plant?

Well it was I. M. Vuchon and sons. There were two girls in the family but the sons kind of helped the father in the industry.

He actually lived there?

Oh yes, and their home was the home in Gladstone. And as a child I remember walking backwards as I went by the place so I could keep a picture of it in my mind. And I wondered what the inside looked like and as years went by I did have a chance to go inside. They had beautiful oriental rugs and it was really grand all the way through. Mrs. Vouchon was a very lovely lady but not very strong so she couldn't entertain and open up her home. We took a trip one time and one of the passengers said I understand your'e from Michigan I said yes and she said would you happen to know of a little town called Gladstone? I said well because she took me by surprise. She said would you know the Boushon family there? I said certainly and she said Mrs. Vouchon is my very best friend.

Did the Vouchon's do things such as bring in doctors?

Did they ever leave Gladstone?

Oh yes, lock stock and barrell they pulled out.

Did they leave a library?
No, they didn't do a thing.

Did they ever hold big parties for the children of workers at Christmas?

Were they considered good employers? Did they take care of their men?

What do you mean?

If a man was injured or lost in the woods because I imagine they did some woods work.

They did probably the very normal thing and no more.

What would the normal thing be?

Well there were no unions in those days like I said they owed their soul to the country store.

Did they have company money that they printed?

It was just a company bill.

That's right.

They would have a bill to take in and filled out at the store.

That's right. And in many cases the men didn't have any money coming because it was all spent at the company store.

No hard cash because of the store garnishment?

They didn't have much

Now you came back primarily to Gladstone to take care of your mother. Where was your father at this time?

My father was in Lake View, Oregon. He had gone there in interest of his great knowledge that there was gypsum there in great quantities. So my mother passed away in the spring of the year and for four days because of a horrible storm he couldn't get home. She was buried before he could reach home. So he came home and lived with my brother and I because my brother had a law office there. So that is where he went. My mother always said I inherited this great wanting to explore and travel from my father. Although he had a very limited schooling, he was a self-made scholar.
His fields of interests were geology, history, and mineralogy. I recall him sitting in our parlor under the drop electric light studying his text on prospecting and mining. We were never allowed to read a novel unless it were history or geography. But nothing more would he tolerate. He was an adventurer and was with the original gold rush to Alaska. I was born between trips when he went back a second time. I have several burlap bags that he thought were gold rocks from all over the United States. He was way ahead of his time and he had a brilliant brilliant mind. He was not afraid to stand up for his rights for what he felt regardless of who it was. He was a great politician I'll tell you. I was too young to be involved then but you were talking about the Bull Moose party back then.

In 1912.

Yes, and my first introduction to politics was his talking about the Bull Moose party. He had come from a family of four boys and he was the oldest in the family. But he was the only one of the children interested in anything like that.

Did he take part at all as an officer in the county?

He never held an official office? That I know of, but his sons did

What were they?

Oh, they were on the council and they had what do you call what you do with the Boards there and this is an interesting little sidelight Bert's brother and my brother were running in opposition for a city election. Well we were always taught that we had to be ready for these elections. I had voted absentee so Bert came up to see me and I was getting ready and he said where are you going? I said I am going to vote and he said oh no you’re no and I said oh yes I am and I said you are too aren’t you? He said I can't I didn't register. So I went to poles and voted and when the votes were counted my brother had won by one vote.

What newspapers were in those days?

We subscribed to the Chicago Tribune and it still remains today so. For four generations we’ve had the Chicago Tribune. Of course my father and mother were out of Wisconsin and they had gotten used to it there so that was it. The Milwaukee papers we never saw much of them and there was a local paper to which we still subscribe. We just can't let it go and it has received many awards nationally. For it's type of family newspaper and especially it's photography. They concentrate on the little local bit and somebody from outside would think well isn't that smalltime but it means a lot to the people in that town. And a Crusader who would not let Gladstone die, challenging the people all the time. What can we do, what suggestions do we have, are you willing to work. That type of thing.

Remaining a leader in the community.
Oh yes, And now Gladstone seems to be holding it's own

You went to school in Marquette right?

Yes, and if you didn't go to Marquette then to be a teacher, there was no sense in going because they didn't broaden their cirocenlum as they have now. But back there in those days Marquette meant going to be a teacher.

You taught there for two years before marrying your childhood friend and sweetheart?

That's right.

In 1923

It was interesting to be down there in the college affairs and on the weekends you had the football games and the dances and different things.

While he was working in a highschool did you find it different to be the wife of a teacher?

Well I really didn't have too much time to think about it because the children were on the scene at that time. We had the most unusual athletic boys and they just seemed to be a part of our home.

You had them in your home?

Oh yes, just last summer a man and a woman got out of the car and he said I'll bet you don't know me and I said I certainly don't. Then his wife got out and said and I thought maybe I'll recognize them when she gets out and he was one of the football players on Bert's team from Calumet. He made this trip up after all these years to see his coach. That's the way it has been.

That would be 46 or 47 years

Yes. And further on we got to talking and we happened to mention that we were approaching our 50th wedding anniversary and one of the most beautiful cards reached us on that day. How he remembered that I'll never know becaused just a casual remark was made that in October we would be celebrating it.

The first time I ever found this to be true was when I was being interviewed as a graduate student at ................. and the man said you are engaged, yes. What does your fiance do? He teaches college chemistry. Oh you are going to be a ........wife which left my quite puzzled. Because it didn't occur to me that a faculty wife could be a different breed. From time to time I have found it so and in 1929 you came to Houghton back to your Upper Peninsula to become a member of that breed?
Have you heard of this time to time?

Well we're conscious of a strange segregation shall we call it. I recall at a party that someone said do you know so and so had the gall to invite Mrs.so and so to an affair. They said well what's wrong with that? Why she doesn't belong to the faculty. Now this had nothing to do with the college. But just the fact that she wasn't on the faculty she didn't belong. That hurt and I thought in a small place like this how can this be.

Did you find also a group of people among the local gentry who wouldn't accept the faculty?

Well you were accepted but there was always that feeling that the faculty was trying to run the town. And I remember after a great many times the women's club dissolved and if you were to ask why did it dissolve they would say because the faculty tried to run it. But if you look in the records in the last few years, the faculty wives always held the offices because they were the only ones who would take an office. But when it came right down to it the faculty came in and tried to run the civic affairs.

Among the faculty did you find people compatible?

Oh absolutely, it was a life saver for new members coming in. You felt immediately a source of friendship, understanding, interest and that all came about because of our President's wife Mrs. Hotchkiss. She had the interest of her people at heart, children included. She had a children's party where just the children were entertained. Of course to have your child be asked to sing a song, say a piece, that was a great honor. Then there would be the picnics, where the fur would fly.

Children, children, children.

She organized social parties, there were skating parties, down at the old amphadrom. There was tremendous friendship there, there were no animosities, you didn't feel any tensions of any kind.

What kind of work did you do?

We made things for the children because this was the time when the Copper Country was in pretty bad shape.

This was in the beginning of the Depression

Yes. We worked very closely with the Salvation Army. Mrs. Hotchkiss was very much in with the Captain's wife Mrs. Morningstar. We also did all the sewing and mending for the Goodwill farm. We spent hours repairing some of these things because some of them came in pretty bad shape. Also if something didn't fit our children we'd take it up there because there was still pretty much wear in it.
We worked very close with them. We also made baskets for the poor. We bought glasses for poor children who needed them and couldn't afford to buy them. We bought shoes. We put out a cookbook. It was called on the cover MCMT. This meant Michigan College of Mining and Technology. It also meant Making Cooking More Tempting. That was a terrific project and we had to have two reorders of the books. To this day people still are asking where could I get a copy of the old faculty cookbook. We sponsored lectures. One was from Larry Byrd who made the expedition to the South Pole. We made a lot of money on that. To each mother on the faculty who had a new baby we would send a bouquet of flowers worth $5.00 to each mother.

You talk of doing the work, did you do this work only on the Mondays when you met at Mrs. Hotchkiss home?

Not necessarily. If there was a project we'd finish it at home and see that it got back at her.

Did you have any dues for your club?

Oh yes, $2.00 but when the times really got hard we revised the constitution and dropped it down to $1.00.

About how many people were there?

Well as I remember there were thirty some on the faculty.

Was that all faculty or some administrative also?

Well Mrs. Hotchkiss position was we were a team regardless of what our position was. So did not represent the academic side only, it was everyone. Some of our most ardent workers especially the sewers were people not connected academically.

Did you ever see any plays?

Yes, the silver thread that was a three act play and was a whole college participation. It was put on three nights at the high school. It was beautifully done.

Was this one of James Thurbers?

Yes. It was one of James Thurbers? The .............. was a very delightful play with an English background. Window to the south and the Long Christmas dinner. It was beautiful because it portrayed the generations as they passed along. I'll never forget the Sykes in that because it was beautiful.

Was this when you had the turkey baked for that?

Yes, that was the one.
How did they use the turkey for three generations without cutting it?

Well I don't know how they did it but it was done very cleverly and it was passed along for three generations. It was beautiful and I don't think any of us will forget it.

A delightful one act for any age.

I also remember Pygmalion, Pinafore, The Women, The Importance of Being Ernest, Blight Spirit, Broken Dishes and I know there are more.

There was also .........................

Oh yes, and how beautifully done that was.

She also did the Winslow Boys?

Yes she did

She did the Sweden Hole?

And again as you say she would put on a very short introduction for a group of plays. The other one was the Ladies of the Mob and the other one she used was the ------------ Woman whose soldier son didn't exist.

Yes, the old woman wore a medal

Yes and I have seen this done under her direction.

Yes and there are many more but that just shows you the great many people who had the opportunity to be around Mrs. Swenson, and her delightful ways of directing plays. And Mr. Swenson behind the scenes with the lighting and his committee work.

He was always the perfect gentleman?

Oh yes, oh yes.

They were people you could be with socially

Oh yes. In Several of these plays, especially the pageant, I would be the mother and her two boys would be in the plays and she knew they would do a good job and they would get the experience too. So one time one of the older boys said you know mother if you weren't my mother I think I'd like to have Mrs. Noblet. There was a very close feeling there because we shared alot together.

You also shared many of the community experiences. No doubt the boys were in Scouts and I believe the Swenson boys made Eagle Scouts.
Oh yes

And there were the bands.

The bands, that's right.

The athletics that were taking place constantly as well as the church pageants.

They found many ways so that the families were very close.

The two of you as faculty wives were always very helpful for those who came in. You made us feel as though we were a welcome part of the community.

Well we felt that when we came so it was just natural that we would carry it on. The faculty club meant so much that nobody would think of staying away from a meeting the first Monday of the month.

You also kept standard of social grace. So that when I came 18 years ago you still wore a hat, you still wore your best afternoon outfit, your white gloves, you held your teacup correctly and took small bites. Have you noticed recently the difference with the bluejeans, the halter's that appear now?

Oh yes, it's quite different

Things changed

Well yes I remember that we were really surprised after we had been here the proper number of weeks to get settled and all then we began to have callers. They would call two by two and they were very perfectly groomed and they would leave their calling cards. If you did not respond and return that call your name was mud. This was a very social community that we had come into.

A very formal one

Very formal and that was entirely different from the old town of Gladstone.

Do you think this was partially from the New England influence the eastern influence.

Oh, without a doubt. I wasn't aware of how much English influence there was in the state of Michigan until we had programs on it and then I could see it. Yes and many of the mining executives were from the east originally and they brought these traditions with them.

They have changed since the second World War with a mobile transportation

Oh yes.
R
Yes, all of that is gone at least I'm not aware of any of that anymore.

I
In conclusion do you want to read a couple of your French Canadian poems?

R
Oh I'd like to. I've always been attached to some poems by Doctor H. Drummund who is a doctor from Scotland. He found his way over to the wilderness in Canada and his book was edited in 1897. So it surely gives you a picture of those years. We think of Canada as being a wilderness place today. Parts of it anyway but think what it was in 1897. He would have to go with his horse and cutter or horse and buggy to the homes of these sick people. He couldn't afford to be going to these houses every day because there were miles in between so he'd go and stay there until the person was well enough for him to leave. So he got to know them, all ages and all emotions. This one is called Little

You bad little boy
Not much you care how busy you're keeping your poor
Try to stop you every day from chasing the hen around the hay.
Why don't you give them a chance to lay

And when you tire you scare the cow.
Sicken the dog till he jumped the wall
and that ain't no good at all.

End of tape

I
This is Betty Berry. I am interviewing Mr. N. J. Noblet who is a retired Professor of Forestry from Michigan Technological University. We are in his home on Emerald Street in Houghton. December 5, 1973.

I
Your long and productive life has been spent in the U.P. Mr. Noblet, would you share it with us?

R
Yes, I would be glad to do that but I really think we should start with my parents which really goes back many years. They came to the United States after the Civil War and settled in Gladstone, Michigan which is in Delta County. My father came from Loriane France at the age of 14. That was in 1886. My mother came to the United States from Montreal Canada 1885. By chance they both settled in the Delta County area. My father became a camp foreman and my mother was the camp cook. They both worked for my mother's brother Zee Martell. It was at this time they got to know each other and soon after they got married and continued their lovely camp efforts before the turn of the century. Going beyond the days of my parents, my mother's forebearers came to Canada from France in 1665. They were part of the French Army that came to Canada to war against the Indians and the British in the Quebec Province. After the war instead of going back to France they settled in the Montreal area and became Canadian citizens.
Part of the Martell family which was my mother's maiden name still lived in the Montreal area of Canada. Some moved to Western Canada while others came to the United States. They settled in the Delta County Region of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Here they joined the operation of logging of Michigan's great White Pine Forest. Yes in 1905 the pine cut in Michigan was close to five billion board feet. The largest cut for any region of the United States for that particular year. At an early age my father worked in the woods and in the summer moved to Gladstone and worked for the Soo Line Railroad. This railroad still operates there. The pattern in those early days at the turn of the century was to work in the woods during the winters and hit the towns and farms during the summer. The whole family would go into the woods in the winter and live in a log cabin. These circled around the main camps that were there. The main camps were made up of a cook camp on one end and a men's camp on the other end. Between the two camps was a breezeway with only a roof to show it's presence. One could go from one camp to another without being exposed to snow or rain. These camps in many cases housed as many as 250 to 300 men. It was a regular little village. In those early days hardship was a regular pattern. Everybody worked hard and accepted the routine without too much complaint. The hours were from dawn to dusk. The men in the camps made their own entertainment playing mouth organs, cards, horse shoe throwing, carving wood and so forth. They did their own washing and boy you could smell it.

One of the rules at the camps was that no one spoke at the dining table for two reasons. One to prevent arguments. That was essential to prevent them. And second, to eat as quickly as possible and get out. The cooks had to start working for the next meal. The same food was prepared and served at all meals. Breakfast was the same as the other meals. Pies, cakes, donuts, meat, potatoes was served for breakfast. The lumber camps in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan have completely disappeared. The kind of timber is gone and the building of many roads with modern transportation are the chief factors bringing on this condition.

New harvester equipment also played an important part with their disappearance. With the passing of the lumber camps went the lumberjack. They either followed the lumbering industry to the west, going to the west coast or moved to the farm to spend the balance of their days.

I was eight years old when I started school in Gladstone. I remember the fine teachers in the Gladstone schools. They were helpful and understanding. I do not recall that discipline was ever a problem. We respected our teachers and knew they were there to help us.

In Gladstone we had a melting pot of nationalities. The French, the Swedes, the Belgians, the Finns, the English and also Hungarians were scattered throughout the area. The varied nationalities got along very well, in the schools. I'm referring to the youngsters in this case. The families, the adults, did not mix and were very clannish and spoke their own language.
French was spoken in my home but when we got away from the home it was all English. My parents like most folks were in favor of any education. They helped me to get an education far and beyond the average youth of that time. My parents had set rules for the home and their behavior, they were strict. And we respected our parents. We had little or no reading matter in the home. I can remember only one reading matter ever coming into our house. The Press from Montreal Canada used to come once a week but in time that disappeared. I worked summers at the Vener plant, painting houses, ticket seller and billing clerk for the Soo Line Railroad. I handled merchandise from the trains to boats. I could make enough money in the summer to put myself through college for one year.

The first time I voted for a President was in 1920 when Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat, ran against Warren Harding, a Republican. I was in college that year at Michigan Agricultural College as it was known at that time. Of course now it's Michigan State University. In my particular case I was always interested in athletics and took part in all high school sports, as well as in college sports. I came by it from the interest of our neighbors the ......... boys. They had a pole vaulting pit, a shot put circle and a hundred yard alley track. That was only a block from where we lived. I spent much time with them. Working out for better days to come. I became aware of a certain young lady back there and her name was Gladys. This was while participating in athletics in their alley. That friendship grew to a point that upon my graduation from college in 1922 we were married in Grand Rapids Michigan. In the ensuing years, five children were born, three sons and two daughters. They're all university graduates. We have sixteen grandchildren and one great grandchild. On October 17 of this year we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary. My going to teaching and athletic coaching following my graduation was because forestry education did not produce jobs in those days in that profession. I had taken education courses of course to permit me to teach. This is what took me to Grand Rapids Vocational School for three years before going on to Cadillac High School for a teaching and coaching assignment. I was in Cadillac for four years before reporting to Michigan Tech in the summer of 1929.

Mr. Noblet while you were in college what specific courses did you take to prepare you in a field for teaching and what did you do about this great fun you had in athletics? With the neighbor boys?

Oh yes, well in going to Michigan State as a freshman in 1917 it was my intention that my major in college would be forestry. That was only a normal situation as far as I was concerned because even as a youngster I was very much interested with everything that pertained to the woods. Hunting and fishing, we did an awful lot of that in the Gladstone area so it was just natural that I should follow forestry as a profession. And at the same time I did think that there might be a possibility that I might go into teaching. So actually my minor was in the teaching field.
That's how I saw to it that I got those courses that were needed. Well where does the athletics come in? Well as I mentioned before in high school I took part in all types of sports, and excelled in football, hockey, and baseball. With that background I did get some encouragement from Michigan Agricultural college to come there and participate in athletics at the same time naturally I would carry on my regular education. So from my freshman year at Michigan Agricultural College I took part in Football, Baseball, and Hockey. I got three freshmen letters. Then the next year I went into World War I I dropped out of college but came back in 1919 as a sophomore and there really went in for athletics. Then I really went back for athletics along with my

Scholastic

Yes, scholastic work. Football I must say was the big sport and I won four letters for that. At Michigan State position wise I played two years at quarterback and two years at halfback. Our competition was almost exactly as it is at Michigan State today, the University of Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana were all on our schedule so it wasn't exactly something that was easy or anything like that. It was work.

This was the big forerunner of your big ten system?

That's right, that's right, it was soon after that Michigan State went into the big ten.

Mr. Noblet you also continued with your baseball, your track, and hockey so you were well prepared to coach. Then in 1929 why did you come back to the Upper Peninsula you had been out of it?

Well I'm glad you asked that because we definitely had our roots very deepin the Upper Peninsula. It was from the time I started teaching at Cadillac our intention to work toward the Upper Peninsula. That's why we took the teaching job at Cadillac because it was much nearer to the Upper Peninsula than Grand Rapids. Then after being in Cadillac every day we would watch the news and read the paper as to what was happening in the Upper Peninsula. Because that's where we wanted to be. Yes, I came to Michigan Tech from Cadillac. My coming to Michigan Tech was to direct athletics and coach hockey, football and track. And in these sports I had already had seven years experience in coaching those sports besides naturally participating in them while at Michigan State. The basketball was to be handled by Don Sherman whom I hired as my assistant. When I came to Michigan Tech it was with the understanding of building a strong athletic program with emphasis on hockey.

The college enrollment was down to approximately 350 students. Just think now we're over 5,000. A strong athletic program could encourage more students to come to Michigan Tech. That's what we wanted.
The first step to bringing the college to the public was our eastern hockey trip in 1929. In my first year at college, that is Michigan Tech, we played Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Williams. The results of the games after a tiring trip were one game win, one tied, and two losses. The four games we played were the best in the country to give any team a battle for their money. Of those boys who made the trip east four are still living in the Houghton-Hancock area. They are Nick Kaiser, Emil Riutta, Ed Gilles, and Toivo Toivonen. Now that was 44 years ago. Our hockey schedule was much like the ones of today. Only today they play alot more games than we used. We played Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Marquette University and the American Soo. That is back there in 1929 and besides playing the four eastern teams and some local teams probably for practice purposes. As the first in flying a hockey team to a game, Michigan Tech did that in 1934. We flew from Milwaukee Wisconsin to Minnesota to play the University of Minnesota. It might be interesting to tell you how that happened to be arranged. We were playing Marquette University in Milwaukee at that time and it was a promise to the hockey team that if they won that game we would fly as a first to Minneapolis. Well the boys were just tickled to death to have a chance to do this. Well I have to tell you we didn't win the game nor did we lose it, we tied it.

Oh oh

So the boys said what are we going to do now. My answer was we're still flying to Minneapolis.

They had tried their best

Yes. They certainly did and I must tell you Marquette University had an awful good team. Their major asset was two very good Canadian players, that they brought in from Montreal that really gave us trouble all during the game. Most of our hockey players came from the Copper Country area. They continued to come from this area for some years in the future. The athletic department worked hard to promote high school hockey. This was to train the boys to play the game for the college needs of the midwest. As far as that goes I'm referring to developing the needs for the hockey teams of the various schools.

Michigan Tech entertained the first football team to fly to a game. In 1932 the Selfridge Field Flyers from Mt. Clemens Michigan came to Houghton in two trimotored transport army planes for a football game here. It was the first time that a football team had ever flown to a game. The outcome of the game was 13 to 6 in Tech's favor. Among the notables on the Army Flyer's team was Harry Wilson who two years before was an all american half back on the west point cadet football team.

Our athletic program with a small enrollment gave us a meager budget to operate our program for sports. In 1930 it was hardly more than $3500 and a decided handicap certainly.
Our enrollment was going up however and this helped the budget. It was never my intention to play and stay in athletics. My education at Michigan State was in forestry. I have both a Bachelor of Science and a Masters Degree both acquired from that institution. In 1935 I recommended to President Grover C. Dillman the fine opportunity to establish a forestry department at Michigan Tech. It's first class would start in the fall of 1936 and of course I would be its first department head. Writing up the four years of courses followed.

The seven years of athletics which I carried out would be turned over to my assistant Don Sherman. All department and course matters which I recommended to Doctor Dilman and pertaining to forestry were accepted by the Board of Control. It was up to me to go to work. Help was needed so I hired Professor Bob Miller as my assistant in that first year which was so important. There were ten students in that first class. The Department evolved from a one year to a two year, to a three year and onto a four year graduating course. In the ensuing years faculty members were added to the forestry staff. Some of whom were Professor Vern Johnson in 1940. Doctor Gene Hesterberg, Doctor Eric Boredeau, Doctor Richard Crowther, and Doctor Robert Brown. They all joined the staff in those early days. Several additions were made to the curriculum in the ensuing years. The forestry department was the recipient of valuable properties. The Ford Forestry Center with buildings, a sawmill and three sections of timber we got from the Ford Motor Company and the Fisher land north of Michigamme with timber for research purposes was added to the other valuable property to be used for forestry. In 1945 we started the practical woods school for World War II returning veterans. It was a one year course to train men in the practical side of forestry. It's first instructor was Professor Steinhill one of our first graduates in Forestry. Our camp was an ideal location for the school. It continued in operation until it's use was no longer needed. From the humble beginning like an acorn the forestry department has grown like a mighty oak. And to the second largest department on Tech's campus. I am very proud of the present forestry department at Michigan Tech, and the great accomplishments it has made; it's new forestry building is one of the finest in the country. And one that every graduating forester can rightfully be proud of.

After 40 years of teaching I decided to retire.

I did forestry consulting at Tech. During my tenure at Tech I served under five presidents, Doctor Hotchkiss, Carson, Dilman, Van Peldt, and Smith. Doctor Gene Hesterberg took my place as department head when I retired and holds that position today.
In the history you talk about the woods and forests, did the people come to Gladstone because of the woods, the woods that were there, the white pine?

Yes, yes, in those early days, they followed the lumbering profession.

Where did it start?

Well it started in Maine and that was way off on our East coast. And honestly that's where Paul Bonyon came into the picture. Maine claims Paul Bunyon but of course in time your white pine and your lumbering profession and industry disappeared from those eastern seaboard states but moved west. So our friend Paul Bunyon went from Maine to New York to across Canada in the Buffalo area to Michigan so he was located in Michigan and doing some heavy heavy logging. From Michigan he went to Wisconsin and you'll find when you look at the records Wisconsin claims Paul Bunyon as their own. All right, but in time Wisconsin timber disappeared, what happened to Paul Bunyon, he disappeared too. But, he went to Minnesota. He was following the timber of the country prior and to the point of when he disappeared. From Minnesota he went to the Rocky Mountain areas and finally landed in Oregon to Washington where he had to quit because there were no trees growing in the Pacific Coast area. So our friend Paul Bunyon covered the entire width of the United States following the lumber industry of the country.

When did he come into the state of Michigan?

It was about in the year 1850.

Do you know of any use of Michigan timber other than the building of local cabins and an occasional boat? Did they use in those pre-revolutionary days any of the Michigan wood?

Oh yes, oh yes, I recall making a trip into Northern Wisconsin where a special group of men were hazing huge red pine. Those were being sent right to England to be used as rubbing rales on the sides of British oceanliners. So even in more recent years alot of that Pine found it's way into Europe and into other countries in that particular area. So that was definitely part of the history of our white pine.

When I mentioned 1850, the deer herd in Michigan started about that time. Well you might ask, why didn't we have deer before? Because in a virgin forest your deer are very very thin if any at all. Because of your tall trees, your ground is shaded and you don't have plants on the ground. They use this for food. But once this is cut your deer will have alot of available food close to the ground which is easier for them.

Did these animals come in from Ohio and Indiana which were being settled at this time?

Yes, they did, they had to come from the areas which didn't have as hard a winter, the snow didn't cover the small plants and feeding was not a chore.
I can tell you this, that back there prior to the turn of the century and probably in the 1870's and 1880's our deer herd in the Upper Peninsula used to migrate to Wisconsin, southern Wisconsin because of the fact that the food that was next to the ground was covered with snow. So the deer had no food and he had to migrate out of the country where your snow was much less than any snow we've ever had. So it's a true matter that the deer used to migrate just as the birds used to migrate from the north to the south. Although the deer never got into the real southern countries like the geese and other birds.

They couldn't go that far?

Well it's an interesting point that deer don't migrate now they go to the swamps where the food is closer to the ground but they suffer for this because the food is scarce and they have to get along with what is there.

What animals would have been here if the animals didn't come when they cut down the great whitepines in the Upper Peninsula. How did the Indians live off the game?

You know if you go back to those early days very little is said about the bear. Now a bear is much better physically constructed to overcome the winter season. They would hibernate so a bear could get along in the winter where a deer had to migrate to where the food was easier to get. The bear would hibernate and that would save him from the trouble of having to look around for food.

How much of the State of Michigan had White Pine?

That White Pine belt start promptly on the line between Muskegon Michigan and Bay City Saginaw Michigan. You see pine grows on light sandy soil. That soil starts on about that east west line there. Below that line that is your rich farming soil. So you have a different condition there. But the deer had gone beyond that line because of the fact that your farms had wood lots and small growing low plants which makes it possible for the deer to find food which they needed to exist. But of course the swamp areas where cedar, spruce and balsum grow that is the ideal type for deer.

Did the men come in to cut the woods around Muskegon first?

Yes, Muskegon was very handy because it was a port on Lake Michigan. Then of course your market way back there in the 1850's and 1860's was Chicago. So they could load the lumber schooners as they called them at the Muskegon Harbor and they would sail down to Chicago where they were unloaded because pine was the 100 percent tree that was cut back there in those days. It went in for flooring, timbering, door frames, window frames. The whole house was built out of white pine.
Did they bring it out of the woods and cut it or did they send the logs down?

The logs came down the rivers and of course the loggers had their harbors on the lakes so the mills were built at the mouth of the river and from there you had a finished product. This is what went to the cities. Milwaukee and of course I've already mentioned Chicago. Now Menominee at one time had better than twenty mills at the mouth of the rivers. So your mills were located at the mouth of the river so your logs could be transported by the river to the mill. From there of course it went to the mills where the machinery did the cutting and things like that.

When did they bring these different processes to the Upper Peninsula?

I would say they gradually came in because as the pine disappeared in the southern part of the state the companies moved north. They moved to where the timber was. I would say that would be in the 1860's you certainly had settlements of lumbering in the Upper Peninsula. But it never reached it's peak until we got into the turn of the century and soon after. Then the Upper Peninsula was cutting heavily. The Chicago Lumber Company operated itself out of Munising and they called themselves the Chicago Lumber Company because the stuff all went to Chicago. The company was from Chicago.

Munising is on the north side of the U.P.

That's right.

How did they ship out?

Well

Through the Soo Locks?

Yes, they'd have to go around, that's right. Of course there was the railroad. The Duluth South Shore was in there then, the Soo Line and the Chicago North Western Railroad was there also. So there was some movement of lumber by rail.

Your father worked in the woods, what did he

My father started out probably at the age of 18 years old. That's when he went to the woods and in those days your youngsters went to work very young. My dad used to tell my brother and I that he worked by the piece and we used to ask my dad why did you work by the piece? He said production was my thing and he said he used to work from daylight until dark. The more ties I could make so much a piece the more money I could make. So he said if I made twenty-five or thirty dollars a month, I was doing good.

Each tie he had a certain credit for
Yes, and I might say this, well he considered a day's work as far as cutting ties are concerned if I can't cut 50 or 55 ties a day something's wrong.

Now later he went out into the lumber camp, was this his camp or was he hired?

No he was hired, that's where he became when we were youngsters, foreman of the camp. He dished out the work. And the way it was those days was one person had a strip that he would take maybe fifty feet wide and he'd cut all the trees in that strip. Then next to him was another guy and he had a strip; so as you completed your strip they you would move to a new strip. So the work was definitely quite scientifically divided up between the men. There was some kicking too where one guy would say you gave me a rotten strip but you had to take it or take your pack and move out. So that was the way it went in those days.

How did they take out the trees, with hammer and chisel after they sawed or with axes?

Well of course your main tools in those days, each cutter had an ax and a one man cross cut saw. See you also have a two man cross cut saw where one is on each end of the saw. In fact I can show you a white pine saw down in our basement. These are a tremendous relic to have. So with that ax and saw and a couple of wedges they used to use if that log pitched. They used to use a double edged ax, one edge they would pound the wedge in with the flat of the ax, one blade was for cutting knots and the other blade was as sharp as a razor and that was to make the undercut. There were no power saws in those days, they were all hand saws.

Then each man had a strip, he didn't have a partner?

Well depending on the timber itself, if you happened to run into a heavy stand of big timber, then you used to operate with two men to a crew. Because you had to get one guy on one end of the cross cut saw and the other guy was on the other end. But a single hand cross cut saw there's a handle only on one end.

How big would a big tree be then?

Some would be as large as five to six feet in diameter. And as much as 135 feet tall.

How many of these large trees could a two man crew take down in a day?

Well that's a sixty four dollar question right there.

Well think about that one, once the trees were down then the wagons would go in and load them?
Yes, of course after the tree was dropped then it would be cut into standard length logs. Sixteen feet was the standard length. Then they would go in. Now believe it or not in those days most of the animals that went in were oxen. In other words, they were slow and didn't get wild and rear up like the horse did sometimes. They would skid those logs out to a loading area and that's where they would load those logs on the tremendous sleds.

How many feet would be in one of those big logs cut into a sixteen foot section.

Well some of that timber that was cut would average five to seven hundred feet to the log.

These loading stations that these were taken that were on the banks of a stream of water.

Yes, yes, and in many cases they would drop the logs right on the ice in the river. I can show you pictures of thousands and thousands of logs piled up on the ice on the river twenty to thirty feet up. Then of course the next step would be when the ice melted and the water started coming up from the melting snow, then the logs on their own free will started moving to the mill. That's why these mills were built at the mouth of the river. Because that's where the logs were expected right then and there. The Menominee River was a tremendous speeding stream that went to the mills at the mouth by Menominee and Marinette Wisconsin. The Escanaba River was another one. Your own Sturgeon River right here delivered millions of feet of logs to the mills that were in Chassell Bay, the Mills that were in Portage Lake. All were fed by logs that came down the Sturgeon River.

In you had the person who did the cooking and who was called the camp cook usually wasn't he?

Ya, he usually was the camp cook. Then you had a cookee and he was the helper see.

Then the person who went out and actually cut the tree was called what?

He was called a cutter

And the person who went to get them?

They were called the skidders, they went to get the product and brought it in. Skidding means pulling it. Usually depending on the size of the timber you would have one horse and one man and if they were big timber you would have two horses. It would depend on the character of the timber that you were cutting.

These were the sixteen foot sections that were taken to the loading area?
Now you have to keep this in mind Betty that sixteen foot was your standard size log. Then sometimes all that was left in the tree was a section that was fourteen feet long.

I mean it wasn't a whole tree that was

Oh no no, Now back there when I told you a pine tree was 135 feet tall you could get seven or eight logs out of it.

Then they would take each section to be loaded.

Well you had your skidders, your teamsters who handled the logs and loads then you had the men who were on the drive. They were the men who took care of the logs at the river and the movement at the river and that's know as the drive. The movement of the logs down the river to a place where they're going to be manufactured.

This was your spring drive that happened when the water cooperated and came up.

That's right. It came substantially up. In fact in many cases to bring the water up they would build dams across the river. Then when the logs got to that dam they would break the dam. Then you had a movement of water that was six, eight, ten feet high that would move toward the mouth of the river and with it of course the logs.

A great six foot high wave of water?

That's right.

Then when they got down to the mough of the river what happened to these logs?

Well then at the mouth of the river with the mill that was there then the logs were in what they used to call log ponds. Then as the mill needed the logs the men would take poles and deliver them to the mill where the bull chain used to pick them up and haul them up where the saw got a hold of them at the mill.

How would they know whose log that was?

Well they had what is known as marks. I've got a whole box of log marks downstairs. It could have been that an ax was the trademark. The Diamond Match Company that operated and went out of business in 1896 in Ontonagon, that had a diamond as their trademark. In the middle of the diamond they had an initial. That particular mark was for a particular person. So that when his particular log came down the river so his logs went here and his logs went there and the other guys went through the same process.
R  So that is what I have, is a real souvenir from those white pine logging days. I've got the white pine marks.

I  When was the mark put on?

R  The mark was put on in the woods so when it was dumped in the river they would know whose they were.

I  When they got down to the river someone would just stamp them on?

R  Oh yes, yes. Yes because here you might have a hundred different loggers so here he would have his mark. Then they came to what is known as sorting ________ His logs would come into this gap and it was almost like a tunnell.

I  This was at the mouth of the river?

R  At the mouth of the river, yes. Sometimes rather far up the river they had them too.

Where branches of the streams coming together, there would be enough logs coming together to sort them at that point?

R  Yes. You had to have quite a few of them because those logs marks weighed five, six seven pounds. They had a handler that was three or four feet long and you'd swing it just like you would swing a sledge hammer. Would you like to see a log mark?

I  These logs were then put into the log ponds at the mouth of the river. Now why did the company own these logs?

R  Well actually in the first place these companies got the land that had the timber from the federal government that were land grants. These were to so and so for fifty sections or so or a hundred sections of land and of course they would get the timber rights. In most cases not only did they get the timber rights but the land with it. But actually after the timber was gone then the land had no more use.

I  So in order to get the lumber out for the lumber companies they would give assignments to the people who worked for them?

R  Sure, sure. They were called jobbers and they were jobbers for the lumber company. Your Diamond Match Company that operated out of Ontonagon they had as many as 150 different people logging for them so you can see they had to have some way of identifying the logs, so they had these marking hammers.

I  Would each of these 150 people set up a camp?

R  Yes, yes.
R  Yes.
I  About 300 people.
R  Two hundred, two fifty people, they had tremendous big camps
I  Then they would be responsible and be paid according to how many logs
    they got in.
R  That's right, that's right. The logs were scaled at the mouth of the
    river and they were usually paid right there because the jobbers who
did the cutting of the timber for the company, they had to pay their
man. In most cases they were not money people, they were operating
from day to day only. So there was no trouble as far as getting paid
I  And each year a jobber would be given a certain assignment.
R  That's right.
I  They would contract for a certain amount of work.
R  Yes, that's right, it was usually so many acres or this side of the
    river or that. There was never a lack of areas that needed logging.
I  When the logs reached the mouth of the Ontonagon River and you said
    they were taken to the yards of the lumber company.
R  Yes, yes. when the logs came down the river and into the mouth of
    the river, they stayed in the mouth of the river until the mill was
ready to pull them out. That was definitely the procedure. That's
why in some cases you had so many mills at the mouth of the river.
Each one had their river approach so they would get their logs and this
one would get their logs and so on.