FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978
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SUBJECT:

SOURCE: Fred Paulson

COMMENTS:

Interviewers: Harju and Helgren

R: My name is Fred Paulson. I was born in Oseo Calumet Township and I got mixed up in law work in the early forties during J. R. Pierce's time. When J. R. Pierce ran for sheriff, why he appointed me his under-sheriff after elections.

I: Let's tell them where we're at right now.

R: We're sitting in the kitchen of my house at 624 North Lincoln Drive in Hancock, Michigan. Today is the 23rd of July at 12:15 and I'm being interviewed by Larry Harju and Dorious Helgren.

I: Why don't you tell us some of your experiences and when you first became sheriff. How did you first start out in law enforcement? First, where were you born? You were born right here?

R: In Oseo

I: And what brought into police work? Were your parents in police work?

R: No

I: Your father or grandfather or uncle or anything?

R: No, nobody.

I: What did your parents do?

R: Well, Dad died in 1912. I worked in the Co-op store in Hancock and I spent some time in Detroit, worked in the factories down there for awhile and then the Depression came along, shops closed up where I was working...I worked for a carpenter outfit, carpenter contractor and I was the last man to be laid off. Well, he didn't lay me off, I told him to lay me off. I said, "I don't want to hang around here drawing money for nothing." I said, "There's nothing to do."

I: When was that sir?

R: Oh golly, 1930's...in the thirties.

I: Then did you think of coming up this way?
R: Then I came up here...my wife was from up here and I was from up here, so there was no place to go but home.

I: What brought you into police work then?

R: Well, Jay Pierce...well, I got a job at the Co-op store here and I started to work for the Co-op store. I was unloading feed cars and taking care of the carload lots of everything that came in, cement and everything else and I did that job. And Pierce came up to me one day and asked me to help him get elected sheriff. I said, "I don't know. There isn't much I can do to help." Well he says, "You know a lot of people." I said, "Yes, I know a lot of people all right, but they're a different party than what you're running on." So he says, "I'll take that chance."

I: What was Pierce before he was sheriff?

R: He had his own feed business. Pierce had his own feed business. So we started out going around to different neighborhoods every night. As soon as I'd get through work we'd take off and come back ten-eleven o'clock at night. So that's the way I got started in police work. Jay was elected sheriff by a pretty good majority and he gave me the job as his under-sheriff.

I: When did this take place, Fred?

R: 1942 I think when Jay Pierce was elected sheriff.

I: How long were you under-sheriff then?

R: I was under-sheriff for...oh, a little better than...not quite. Well I was under-sheriff two terms...yeah, two terms and then I quit in the meantime.

I: What did you do after you quit?

R: I went to work for the City of Hancock

I: Did you go right in as Police Chief?

R: Well, no, I went into Houghton as the Chief of the City of Houghton then from there I...

I: This was back in the 30's?

R: No, this was later than that...this was the 40's. I quit Houghton and I went to work for the City of Hancock as night cop. Al Lassiter and I and Ted Carney was our boss, so I worked for Ted Carney. Al Lassiter and I were the only two patrolmen.

I: Was Ted Police Chief at that time?

R: Ted was Police Chief at the time, yeah.
I: So your total strength in Hancock when you started was two patrolmen and a chief.

R: Right

I: So, when did you come over as Chief?

R: After I...I had four terms as sheriff of the County. Ray Smith against me at that time.

I: Did you go for sheriff after you were a night cop here in Hancock?

R: Yeah

I: Then what? Did you run for sheriff?

R: I ran for sheriff, yeah; and then I was elected sheriff. Them days every two-year terms...you hadda run every two years...every third year. Now, I guess, they're three or four year terms. Three-year terms, I think.

I: How big was Hancock then, people wise? You know, how many thousand?

R: Oh, I think there were around four thousand.

I: Can you think of anything that really sounds outstanding that happened to you during that period say when you first started with the Sheriff Department and when you came over to Hancock? Something that really stands out in your mind whether it's tragic, whether hilarious?

R: Well, that case that I was telling you about. That fellow that killed his wife then committed suicide. I had doings with him that morning. I got a call...a call up from the sheriff's office about this fellow sitting in a car; so I went over there and had a talk with him...this was about five o'clock in the morning. And he had a picture of his wife on his bosom like this here and he told me how he loved her. Well, I guess he had a couple of kids. I guess they were on the verge of breaking up or something and so talking to him you could see that he was mentally unbalanced. He said, "Well, nobody wants to help me." I said, "You come on with me. I'll get you some help." And I took him down to the office and I waited until Judge Herman Weider, he was the Probate Judge at the time, took him into Weider's office and he explained his case to him; so they called in three doctors that were going to examine him for his mentality. So, two of the doctors said there was nothing wrong with him that he was just jealous of his wife. So, they released him. I told the Judge, I said, "By golly," I said, "I think they made a mistake." That third doctor that was there he said, "That fellow, there's something wrong with him." He said, "That man is dangerous. He's in a position now where he's apt to kill somebody." He'll either kill himself or kill his wife or kill the kids or something." So, he goes home and he kills his wife and he commits suicide himself.

I: Hmm...yeah, I imagine there were a few things out at that time.
have much problem with the miners or anything?

R: Oh they were fighting all the time.

I: How was the bar situation around at that time? As many now as then?

R: No...well they were rougher them days then they are now. Now it's a fight amongst maybe a couple. Them days when they'd start a fight they'd all get in it. Everybody was fighting. (?) Street used to be the rough spot them days.

I: What street?

R: Tuscocum (?)

I: That's the street that Paul's Bar is on now.

R: Yeah, that was the tough street.

I: Is that where they had the bar that had the swinging doors in front like they show in the old cowboy shows?

R: Yeah

I: I think that was on Tuscocum...that's quite a few years ago.

I: What was your job as sheriff? What did you do? Did you run the jail or what exactly were your duties then?

R: Regular police work.

I: You did everything, same as they do now.

R: Yeah

I: Did you also operate the jail too?

R: Yeah

I: Where was the jail then?

R: Right in the Court House

I: That is where the tax office is now though.

R: The jail...yeah, that's where the jail was, where the tax office is. My office was there just on the other side of that. You know where Mullin's office is?

I: Yeah

R: That was the sheriff's office then. And I had an office inside there...private office. And our living quarters were on the second floor. Down in the basement the wife used to do all the cooking
down there and we'd sit around...the time we did have...we'd sit around on the second floor in the living room and our bedrooms were upstairs. The bedrooms...the 97th District Courts are in there...where our bedroom used to be.

I: Well, right next to the court there were some (?) in there that they're remodeling now; but what was that?

R: That was the women's quarters. You mean upstairs?

I: Yeah

R: Yeah, that was the women's quarters.

I: How many cells did you have at that time? How many people could you house in there?

R: Women or men?

I: Men

R: Oh, they had...oh I would say, must have had a dozen cells downstairs for the men and I don't remember how many there were...there was quite a few of them.

I: Did you ever have them filled up?

R: Yeah, they'd get filled up once in awhile, but it was just drunks that you mostly had. Once in awhile you'd get a robber or something.

I: Who was Judge then?

R: Judge...well, you mean Circuit Judge?

I: Yeah, well your District...well you get J.P....justice then, wasn't he.

R: Yeah, Frank McKindles, he was the J.P. and then each locality had J.P.'s.

I: On Search and Seisure, did you ever have any problems with that like now we have to have probably cause and we have to go get search warrants and all that? Advise their rights and all this.

R: No, we'd go in a look it over and then if we'd find something and then we'd go down and get a search warrant. I guess you don't do that anymore.

I: Yes, basically we do that, but it has to be done a little differently. What kind of...did you have radio-equipped cars and things at that time?

R: I was the guy that got radios for these cars.
I: Okay, then when was this?
R: I hadda buy my own cars
I: I noticed in your scrapbook there's a picture here of you with the first two-way radio communication in the county, that was February 22, 1950. Is that the radio you're talking about?
R: Yeah
I: How many cars did you have at that time?
R: Had to buy three.
I: Three cars?
R: Yeah
I: Did they just have monitors or were they two-way equipment where you could talk back and forth?
R: Talk back and forth.
I: How big was your department then?
R: Four men and myself
I: A total of five...boy - oh- boy!
R: Then I had deputies around these different localities that if I needed them, I'd call 'em.
I: Special deputies?
R: Yeah
I: Oh, they were home and then you'd call them at home, and send them out on something. Were they uniformed deputies then?
R: Yeah
I: Did you carry guns and night sticks and blackjacks and all that stuff at that time?
R: Well, carried guns when I was in the Sheriff's Office and when I worked for the City of Hancock we carried...well, we carried guns and we had a little club, bully club.
I: Why don't you talk about the time you got shot. What led into that?
R: Well, we got a call...this happened out back of Chassell...we got a call that some fellow had been shot and they didn't know who shot him and I went out there with Ernie Mescaneou and I went out there and we met this ambulance bringing this Metsa boy, Orville Metsa, bringing him to the hospital.
I: Was he the one that was shot?
R: He was the one that was shot, yeah.
I: When was this?
R: February 4th, 1944, according to your clipping here.
I: There you go, okay what happened then?
R: Well, we went over there and they didn't have any idea who shot him. Was only one thing to do then, I was, 6h I'd say a couple of thousand feet from where this happened...that was the closest neighbor...I told Ernie there's only one place to start. So we started at the closest neighbors. So I went over there and rapped at the door and the Mother came to the door and she was quite suprised to see me there. She said, "What are you doing up in this quiet neighborhood?" Said, "We don't need any policemen up here." I knew all of these people. I said, "Well, it hasn't been very quiet. Metsa got shot tonight." And I said, "Where is your son?" (?) had just brought their son back from the State Hospital and oh, about two weeks before that...and he was blaming...after I talked to him for awhile ...he denied first that he didn't have anything to do with shooting him. So we left there and made a few other stops and then we went back again to this place and I asked the lady, I said, "Where is your son?" She said, "He's in the barn looking bad." I said, "Do you mind if I go and talk to him some more?" She said, "No, go ahead." We went back in the barn and I started...when we got into the barn the Father was...with the barn full of cows...the Father was sitting down milking a cow and I asked him,"Where is your son?" He said, "He's about five cows down." So I walked over to him and I told him, "Isn't there any other way that you can settle the score with your neighbors without shooting them?" And well he said, "I didn't shoot him..." said,"I didn't shoot Orville Metsa." I said, "You're the only guy that could have shot him because there was nobody else around here at the time."

I: Excuse me but it says here in the article that you were talking Finn to him.
R: Yeah
I: Could he talk English at all?
R: He could talk English, yeah. So, I went back to tell the Father that "We're gonna have to take your boy in, that he's the boy that shot Metsa." After talking to him for awhile, we came to the conclusion that he was the guy." So just when I went back to talk to him why I was standing sideways and I just turned to talk to Wiljanen, he pulled out a pistol...he had a pistol in his coat and he fired this pistol and hit me in this arm here first. And then I turned to pull my gun out and then that's when I got the third one in the chest.

I: Did it puncture a lung or anything?
R: No...no, it didn't puncture a lung but there was a door right there
and I stepped out of this door. I always had an idea that when you get shot you're gonna die, so I thought that I'm not gonna die in the barn here. I'm gonna go outside and die in the snowbank. This was in February. So, I stepped out of the door and just when I got out, I heard another shot. And my partner hollered, "Freddie!" And I said, "Jesus, now he's shot." So, I pulled my gun out and I went back into the barn again and I could see these two guys wrestling on the floor and I was getting hazey and I was sweating.

I: Yeah, getting weak.

R: And I didn't know which was Ernie and which was this guy. So I jumped on top of him and he had the gun in his hand and the hammer was going back and I saw the hammer going back and I put my hand in there and he had it pointed towards my eyes so when he pulled the trigger it fell on my finger and I wrestled the gun out of his hand.

I: Huhm...that's quite a deal. What happened to him?

R: Well, we took him down to the State Hospital and that's where he died, I guess.

I: How about yourself? How did you get to the hospital and that? Did your partner drive you down to the hospital?

R: Yeah, he did.

I: How long were you laid up for that? You were shot about three times?

R: Yeah, a couple weeks. Not over a couple weeks.

I: There's an article in here, Mr. Paulson, in your book that you arrested a Mrs. Neimi in 1949 for murder where she disposed of a baby, a newborn infant child and you got a confession from her. Can you recall that?

R: Yes

I: I was curious to know how you got a confession where now we have to get an attorney for them and advise them of their rights and everything. Did you do that in them days? See, right here...there's two or three articles.

R: Yeah, well this is the same woman. This is the same woman...she threw this baby over into a snowbank up on top of the hill in Houghton...the last street in Houghton.

I: Was it newborn?

R: Yes, newborn baby...she had it wrapped up in newspaper there. And how they got it, a fellow was going to work and there was a bunch of dogs around this package and he went over and he looked at this
package and there was an infant child in there...just born child and I knew this gal here and I had suspicions that she was pregnant. She wasn't married and I said, "Gee, I wonder if that's (?) baby." And she was living on this farm...well, she had married this guy in the meantime...this Neimi guy. I went over...I had one of your police detectives from Marquette come over.

I: Do you remember who it was?
R: Him and I went over there and had a talk with her...should be mentioned here somewhere.

I: What did you do when you went over and talked with her. You didn't advise her of her rights, there weren't any rights them days, you just asked her about it.
R: Yeah, that's all.
I: What'd she say?
R: Well, she denied it...she said, "I didn't have any baby." I said, "Well, it seems to me that I saw that you were pregnant here for awhile back." "No," she said, "I've never been pregnant." So then I said, "Will you go to the doctors with me." She says, "Chris Bell"...did you know Chris Bell?
I: No
R: He was the Detective on the Marquette...Chris Bell and I went over and picked her up and took her over to the doctor's office and I told the doctor what I wanted. I said, "I just want to know has she had a baby recently within a week or so or two weeks." I said, "That's all I want to know." I said, "Well, we found a baby up on a hill over here and I think it was her." So, I said, "When you examine her, you let her out and I'll be waiting in the car...I'll come and talk to you after she sits in the car with Chris Bell." And then after she came out I went back in and she'd had a baby...he said, "Yes". I said, "How long ago?" "Oh, not too long ago, maybe a week." I told him, "That's our girl then. That's the one that threw that baby out in the snowbank." So then I told Chris Bell, I said, "We're gonna take Rosie in and lock her up." He said, "You damn fool, you're gonna get yourself into trouble." He said, "You can't lock her up without a warrant being issued." I said, "There'll be a warrant issued." So we took Rosie up to the women's quarters and told her to sit there, I'll go and get my wife. I'll have my wife come up and talk to you. So, my wife went up there and talked to her. She acted as a matron. So she went up and talked to her and I went back upstairs again and I finally got a confession from her.

I: She admitted it then.
R: Yeah

I: Well, whatever happened to her? Did she go to prison or what
happened to her?

R: I think she went to prison. I'm not sure now...I don't remember.

I: There is one place here where it says some...what was her name?

R: Neimi...Mrs. Neimi...

I: What was her name before that?

R: Albecca

I: Well, there's another one here where the Mother killed her baby was found insane in '49...Jutunen. Mrs. Anna Jutunen.

R: Yeah, that happened out to Lake Roland.

I: She was found insane.

R: Yeah

I: That was a different incident?

R: Yeah, that's a different incident.

I: What were the most frequent crimes committed around here? You know, A & B, fights, drunks, family fights...?

R: Family fights!

I: Is probably the most frequent?

R: Yeah, both get out and get (?).

I: Boy I bet you really loved that, eh?

R: We had quite a few breaking and enterings too.

I: How was it in gaining the information from the people on breaking and enterings? Did people want to seem to take part and get the culprit?

R: Yeah, they were very cooperative as far as I was concerned. They were very cooperative. They'd say if they heard anything, they'd let you know and some would call me and I'd go back and have an interview with them and talk to them.

I: How was your procedure for getting warrants? Did you go to see the Prosecutor and then see the Judge and he signed it and then go serve it or were you able to pick people up beforehand and throw them in and get it afterwards?

R: Sometimes we'd pick 'em up beforehand. Yeah, it all depends on if
there's a possibility of this guy taking off, well we'd lock 'em up first then and then go get the warrant.

I: Who was the Prosecutor then...was that Steven Condon the Circuit Judge now?

R: Yeah

I: How many hours did you work?

R: Just hours.

I: How many?

R: Just hours, that's all. There were no set hours. The fellows used to work...Oh, they'd come in about eight o'clock in the morning and go home at four. Because whenever they came in they made the hours.

I: If need be, they'd stay longer, that's all.

I: How was the pay then?

R: When I started in police work the pay was...I think I got seventy-five dollars the first for awhile and then got raised to ninety dollars a month, twelve-hour shifts.

I: That was with the County or was it the City?

R: That was with the City and then I got $4,015 dollars a year when I was elected sheriff and then out of that I hadda buy three cars.

I: Out of that?

R: Out of that, yeah! And maintain them and buy gasoline and insurances.

I: When you went from Sheriff to the Chief of Police, how did your job change? Did you have to walk the beat then in the Village or the City where before you were on the highway more or how did it change?

R: Well, I used to walk the beat.

I: Did you handle traffic accidents then too?

R: Yeah...

I: Take the orders that night and everything?

R: Yeah

I: Did you work alone at night, or did you have...

R: Most of the time you worked alone. We used to check...when I was
night cop in Hancock here and there was only two of us working, Al would come on at eight o'clock at night and then he'd go home at eight o'clock in the morning and Ted Carney would come on. So then I used to check the doors front and back. I used to start at four in the afternoon or five in the afternoon and then I'd quit at four or five in the morning.

I: Yeah, a long day. What kind of benefits did they have at that time? You know, now we get insurance and all this type of stuff and our uniforms are all taken care of by the State and this type of thing. How did you work it with the City? Did you have to buy your own or did they kick in half?

R: They kicked in half.
I: Did they?
R: Yeah. What'd they come out and buy your uniform and then draw it off your pay later or something?
R: No...that uniform lasted as long as you were on the job. That was the only one you got.
I: You had one uniform, that was it.
R: Yeah
I: When you hadda work long hours and clean them inbetween.
R: Yeah, right.
I: Boy, I guess so. So as far as comparing the two, Sheriff and Chief of Police, the only difference was probably walking the beat and shaking doors probably more as the Police Chief as compared to the Sheriff. He had a bigger area to cover.
I: It shows here in 1949 you handled 532 traffic accidents. That seems like a lot.
R: That is a lot
I: And 172 drunk and disorderly. How many people did you have in jail here at one time that you had to feed and take care of? Can you recall at all?
R: Oh, I would say, fifteen was the most.
I: Fifteen and your wife had to cook for all them
R: Yeah
I: Did you have any jail breaks at that time?
R: Well, I used to let the guys go downtown for a beer or something and some didn't come back and then we'd have to go and find 'em.
I: These were probably your minor offenders, probably.
R: Yeah
I: Drunks or something that were trying to get dried out a little bit.
R: Yeah
I: Did you have much problem with political pressures at all?
R: No...no!
I: What training did you have at all...police training?
R: The hard way.
I: Just learned...on the job training, right?
R: Many ways that's the best way.
I: You weren't required to have any schooling when you started then. When you ran for sheriff there wasn't any requirements...if you were elected, you were the sheriff.
R: Yeah
I: Whether you had any experience or not.
R: Yeah
I: Just ot have been popular with the people in town at that time.
R: Right. People like Jay Pierce...when I went to work for Jay Pierce, I was working you could say policeing...I policing all these dance halls out here in the outlaying districts when they had...cripes there was dance halls all over the area...Electric Park and Otter River and Snake River Hilton...I used to be bouncer around them places and that's how I got started in that kind of work.
I: Well, that's what kind of got you in the popularity of the people up there...thought you'd be a pretty good police chief.
R: Saw that you had quite a lot of dealings with mentals.
I: Had a lot of mentals. Yeah, we just got during those Depression days when there was nothing to do.
R: What did you do with them?
R: Sent them down to the State Hospital in Newberry.

I: Did you hold them here for several days?

R: Well, we held them here until they were done with the doctors

I: What kind of facilities did you have for them? Did you just throw them in a cell?

R: Just threw them in a cell block, women upstairs.

I: Did you ever have any problems with them trying to kill themselves.

R: Sally Kikkinen tried to burn...we had her, she was a problem. She set fire to the...there was excelsior padding and on top of that excelsior padding there was a canvas soaked in linseed oil and really bolted down tight. I don't know how the hell she ever got it loose and she set fire to that stuff.

I: How old was she at the time?

R: Oh, she must have been thirty-five, I guess.

I: Most of the mentals that you had, were they more in the mid range, say in the...

R: Sally wasn't a mental, she was miserable bitch somehow.

I: I heard that before. John Sullivan from Calumet mentioned Sally Kikkinen.

I: We heard a couple tales of what she pulled on him a few times there too.

I: Did you have a lot of that where you arrested the same people over and over and over again?

R: Yeah..yeah.

I: Well, in Calumet we have a fellow there that we've arrested over a hundred times.

R: Who is that?

I: Ernie Nethario...he's still getting arrested

R: Yeah, I had Ernie many times. The guy is harmless, you know, as far as the guy himself is concerned.

I: It's just for drinking mainly, for being drunk of the highway.

R: Kubion...I see his name in the paper every once in awhile from Lake Linden. We had Kubion in jail. Of course, the Kubion we had is dead...he's dead now.
I: Is that his dad?
R: It's his brother, I think.
I: What kind of reports did you make out, if anything?
R: We made out...I used to make out a report to the County Board and when I was working for the City, the City Council.
I: Handwritten outfit or did you have to type these?
R: Typed them.
I: Did you make reports on crimes...on breaking and enterings and things...did you have to make reports on that?
R: Well, we didn't have to. They didn't demand it; but we did anyway. We used to give it to the State, yes. State and the Federal government, I used to always make them out and send them in.
I: That's for the Uniform Crime Reporting.
R: Yeah...yeah. What was the matter with Joe there?
I: Apparently he wasn't turning them in...he wasn't making them out and he hasn't for several years, I guess and he wasn't turning them in.
R: I retired when Hoyer was appointed City Manager. I couldn't get along with Hoyer because...
I: You retired as Chief of Police in Hancock?
R: Yeah
I: What year was that?
R: 1962, I retired.
I: You were born in 1900?
R: 1902.
I: How many patrolmen did you have then?
R: I had a good crew of
I: What did you do, work your way up from patrolman to the Chief?
R: Yeah...well no, when Ray Smith beat me...Ray was Chief here in Hancock and when he went up to take the Sheriff's job, I came down and took the Chief's job here then. Mayor Lahti asked me if I would take the Chief's job.
I: In other words, the election changed jobs.
R: Yeah
I: What year would that have been?
R: Well, the year I was elected...I took office in '49 and I had eight years...fifteen.
I: Did you have much dealings with C & H Security up here, at all? I mean, did they get down to Hancock very often?
R: They just strictly stayed up north then.
I: Yeah, they policed their own properties there. The only time I ever had anything to do with C & H was when the strike broke off there.
I: What happened during the strike-time down here?
R: Well, there's nothing special happened here elsewise C & H...they had a little trouble there at the mill there one time and they wasn't gonna let the fellows...the strikers were raising hell there then...they weren't gonna let the fellows go in there and dump the coffer. So, they called me and I went down there and I got the guys to let them go in and spill it. So, that was about the only incident...see, there was about five - six hundred strikers there and there were two of your boys there, two detectives there.
I: Was that Miller the detective that came up here one time?
R: Yeah
I: Do you remember him?
R: Yeah, Jack. I went out there...I went out there alone, about five - six hundred guys there...there were cars coming...four cars of fellows that was working outside there. Most of them were supervising which they were entitled to work. So, they started to go out...I don't know if you fellows know where that (?), there should be a road there that went in there off of 26 before you got to Lake Linden there was a road that turned in there.
I: Right, headed up the hill?
R: Yeah, just right before you got into Lake Linden.
I: Right
R: Yeah, then there's another road that came out straight from...so the strikers blocked the road with these cars all turned around. They...one guy left a yell out, "They're going out the other entrance." I jumped in my car there and I didn't know that your boys were there and I stopped the cars before they come out...before they came out on the highway. I said, "Now, you guys close your windows, lock your
doors and when I wave you guys to come out, get the hell out of here as fast as you can." I said, "Don't stop...don't...whatever these guys are gonna holler at you, well you just take it and keep going." So, I talked to this strikers there, I said, "It's not gonna do you any good..."...they were talking about turning 'em over.

I: The cars?
R: Yeah...I said, "You turn 'em over and then somebody's gonna burn to death." I said, "There isn't any job, any company that worth a life of a man." I said, "Now, guys use your heads, for cripes sake, let 'em go...let 'em get out of here." So, they were gonna have some kind of a gathering down in Lansing, I guess it was, they were gonna have the meeting so I made it a point to go down there; but they wouldn't let me sit in on the meeting.

I: Oh no?
R: No...Judge asked me, he says, "Are you associated with the company?" I said, "No!" So, he says, "Are you with the union?" I said, "No", I said, "I'm just an innocent bystander." I said, "I happen to be the Sheriff of Houghton County." I said, "I think this strike means more to me than it does to C & H and it does to the strikers." I said, "I've got the safety of all of these men, both sides." Judge says, "Well, I'm sorry, but the only ones allowed to sit in here is either company men or C & H men." I said, "Then I'll excuse myself and I'll be on my way."

I: What Judge was that?
R: I don't know what his name was...labor Judges or some damn Judge down there anyway.

I: Well, wasn't that in the District Court...or Circuit Court...or was it just one of their meetings they had?
R: One of their meetings.
I: Un hum, that the company had.
R: In reading your book here, back in 1951 there's a picture and article where the first women jurists were picked for the County. Was that true then that before 1951 they didn't allow women on the jury?
R: Yeah was that?
R: I don't know...they just
I: Wasn't a place for a woman at that time
R: Just didn't allow it...wasn't a place for a woman because there were no facilities for women being on the jury.
That's kind of interesting because with the Women's Liberation movement now, it's kind of interesting to see that.

You couldn't do that now anymore.

You know, looking through your book here, I see a lot of names that I know now even...back in the fifties...we're still arresting the same people you arrested in 1950. Calvin Learhin was arrested and he spent ten years in prison here and we're still arresting him.

Yeah, he was always in trouble.

He was in violation of probation and was sentenced to ten years in Marquette Prison...taking indecent liberties with a female child under the age of sixteen. And also there's in here somewhere where we sent a sixteen year old to prison. Would that have been a case where they waived juvenile?

Seeing he was a juvenile, they waived it.

Un hum.

What did you do with juveniles them days? Did you just slap them on the hand and let 'em go or were they brought in.

Well, they had a fellow names Bill Bennets that used to be Judge Weider's Assistant. Bill took pretty good care of...

Was he more or less Juvenile Officer?

Yeah, yeah, he was a Juvenile Officer. I think (?) got his job now.

What all did he do with 'em...a juvenile offender?

Well, sometimes they'd...

End of Side 1

What kind of a sentence if anything, did they get?

Well, they'd be...most of 'em by the time were placed on probation and they had to report to Bill Bennets or either Judge Weider. The bad ones were taken down to the school at Adrian. Didn't have to go down there too often.

Was that girls then or boys or both?

That was girls.

Because I worked down there three years ago and it was a Girl's Training School then; it was all girls. But now they keep both boys and girls there.
I: What happened on this sixteen year old that they sent to prison? What did he do?

I: That was on a breaking and entering here. Toward the back here of your book.

R: I can't think of his name.

I: Do you remember what he did?

R: Do you remember the incident on that one?

I: Do you have any idea the number of people you arrested in all them years you were a policeman?

R: Golly, no.

I: Just a whole bunch, eh?

R: Yeah, lots of 'em.

I: Did you ever get any mass arrests; you know, like where the whole bar was involved all fighting like crazy and you just...?

R: We had a bunch there one time, I had a bunch of whores all hauled out of there one time.

I: What jail was that?

R: Calumet.

I: Yeah, how many were they?

R: Oh, there must have been fifteen.

I: Fifteen of 'em. Where'd you put 'em?

R: Upstairs in the jail.

I: Jail?

R: Yeah...that's the first time that that place was ever

I: Weren't them kind of houses kind of open years ago and they were right out on the street...

R: They were paying...see, they were paying these guys. Where the hell do you think these sheriffs made their fifty thousand...hundred thousand, they sure as cripe didn't get salaries that they could see.

I: How do you mean? You mean they were paid off?
R: Sure they were paid off. When I took office there, I don't know if every sheriff had the same telephone conversation with different priests and ministers and leaders of the community that I did. Why they all wanted to know what I was gonna do about the houses of prostitution? I said, "There's only one thing to do with 'em." I said, "They're illegal, they'll be closed." "Well, I suppose you'll be like the rest of them." I said, "Well, let's see. Let's wait awhile before you start comparing me with them other guys." So we finally pinched 'em and we got 'em all one night.

I: All from the same house?

R: No, we pinched that nigger place and then that big one that was in New Town there and then that one in Laurium.

I: You had blacks up here then, eh?

R: I didn't think that they were here around Hancock.

I: Yeah

R: Was that just female blacks or were colored people actually living there.

I: No, prostitutes.

R: Oh, they shipped them up from down below.

I: Yeah

R: So there were fifteen of 'em you got.

I: Well, did you kind of fan out or just you and...

R: Well, we made...went out there with four cars and State Police were in on it too. They took a load of them down and then from there we went to Laurium and pinched the house in Laurium.

I: What kind of sentence...fines did they get?

R: Well, just hadda fine 'em and ordered them to leave town, that's all.

I: Oh, did they leave town?

R: Yeah

I: Did you get much static from the local...?

R: No, not a word.
I: Very good. That must have been a pretty exciting evening there.
R: Imagine you got called quite a few funny names that night when you picked 'em up.
I: Yeah... Jesus, there was some pretty girls there.
R: Yeah... Jesus, there was some pretty girls there.
I: Boy, I bet. Most of them pretty young gals, were they?
R: Yeah
I: Yeah, that would be quite a deal. What'd your wife say when you come in with fifteen?
R: She knew what was going to take place.
I: Yeah... well, she was prepared then.
R: Yeah
I: How did she take to her duties... she was a matron for you when you were a sheriff and I imagine she helped you when you were Chief of Police down here and she's just kind of your right-hand man, wasn't she?
R: Well, she... when we got out of the Sheriff's Office, why she died that following July. She worked her fool head off there and get to the point where she was going to enjoy herself and she got cancer and died.
I: That's too bad.
R: That's the mother of my three kids.
I: Can you remember anything unusual that happened to you... anything outstanding that happened to you when you were a policeman? Anything that really upset you like any bad car accidents or anything.
I: Or something that might have even been kind of funny that might have happened, you know. Kind of a weird chain of events of something that happened.
R: No, I can't
I: Like this prostitution ring... I imagine that was probably pretty interesting and funny at the time. Did they resist at all when you arrested them? Were any of them fighting or kicking or scratching and this type stuff?
R: Well, one did... went after the meter man. Two of the State Police went up in the rooms with these gals and got to stripping and got
down as far as their underwear and...

I: Oh, they were going undercover.

R: Yeah, that's when we went in.

I: Kind of got 'em with their pants down.

R: Yeah (much laughter)

I: I says here that Sheriff Paulson has cracked down on speeding in the county. Did you have a radar? Years ago, the one with the cable across the road? Or did you just have to clock every car?

R: Well yeah, you had to clock 'em.

I: So you used the old time watch deal.

R: There was no arguments about it. If you pinched the guy and he said he was going forty-five - fifty miles an hour, we was satisfied he was going that fast, that's all.

I: Did you have a water patrol then too when you were sheriff like they have now?

R: Well, we had a boat there that we used to use for dragging for bodies; that's about the only patrol we...

I: Did you have many drownings?

R: Yeah, we had a lot of drownings

I: Did you?

R: A lot of drownings according to your book here...there's drownings on every page almost.

I: Why do you think that is? The kids didn't have a place to swim or they didn't know how to swim or were they careless or they didn't believe in life preservers.

R: Well, just careless I would say.

I: How do you think people feel about police now compared to how they felt about them when you were in?

R: I think they respected us more than they do today.

I: Did they ever call you names or anything at that time?

R: They didn't dare, probably. Did you ever have much trouble when
came time to arrest somebody.

R: Oh once in awhile you'd get into a scuffle.

I: Did you ever have any problem with bear roaming around getting into the town?

R: Skunks, of course

I: Well, we've got those all over.

R: Skunks in East Hancock. That was about all

I: You sure were involved in a lot of things here. How many years were you a police officer, that includes with the county?

R: About thirty-two years.

I: You were involved in a lot of incidents during that time, I would imagine.

R: Yeah

I: How did you get along with him?

R: All right.

I: How did you determine which ones you sent the person to...the people you arrested? Say you'd give somebody a ticket for speeding, how did you determine which one you sent them to?

R: Well, it all depended on which locality it happened in.

I: Oh, they'd cover certain areas

R: Well yeah, but you could take 'em anywhere you wanted to, but I used to if it happened here in this area here, why I'd take 'em to McKindles and if it happened in Calumet, why I'd take 'em to Calumet. Con Sullivan was the J.P. in Calumet at that time.

I: Was that John Sullivan the policeman, his dad?

R: No

I: No relation.

R: No...and Norman Tresides used to be J.P. after Con died and then when
Norman quit, Roy Ruth (?) took over.

I: Well, you retired in was it '62?

R: 

I: They give you a pension at that time?

R: God bless the city!

I: They didn't have it then.

R: Nope!

I: Did you have trouble when the carnivals came into town? Jack (?) was telling us that that was a time when they had a lot of problems. They had a lot of people come in town...

R: Yeah, well we had a lot of trouble with carnivals; but I never had any serious trouble. I had 'em...like the gypsies, for instance, they'd rob these guys; so I'd go over and see the manager and get their money back for 'em and tell the manager to send them guys the hell out of here because if they're around here they're gonna go to jail, that's all. So that took care of that.

How about the bums in the summertime that used to follow the trains around? Did you have problems with them? What did you do with them?

R: Who?

I: The beggars and the people that came in on the trains in the summertime?

R: Nobody came in.

I: Do you think that's kind of because this is a dead end?

R: Yeah, I suppose. Once in awhile you'd get a straggler in here but they didn't give us any trouble. They'd come up to the jail and want to sleep for the night and then they'd take off when it was morning.

I: Were you around during the massacre? The Italian Hall massacre? Or were you down below?

R: No, I was up there.

I: Were you up here...they had a Christmas program going up here when they had that.

R: Yeah, I was supposed to be there. A dime saved me from being in that mess there. One of the drivers asked me to go to Lake Linden to help him deliver a load of feed down there; so I went with him and I got a dime for going there. I was just a kid then; and when we came back I told the driver, I said, "Gees, something must have happened in
thing...I said well...

I: ...boys that were out there and gonna

R: I said, "Them fellows gotta show what they're doing too, you know. I got along with the State Police all the time.

I: Were they stricter when you first came up or...

R: Well, I would say yes. They tried to make a little show, I guess.

I: Did the people have any resentment when the State Police came here and they started giving traffic tickets out and they started being a little harder on people? Was there any resentment from the people towards the policeman?

R: No...they used to come up and see me about it. I said, "Well, what the hell." I said, "If you were speeding and you get a ticket, well there's speed limits and everything else." But, I don't think they'd go without a State Police Post here anymore and that eased our work up too a hell of a lot, you know, you had a Post down there and we just called the Post.

I: Didn't have to run all the way out there to take care of things.

R: Yeah...by the time you'd get from Houghton to Alloway why where the boundary line is, why... We had a lot of accidents them days.

I: Car accidents, you mean?

R: Yeah

I: What was it mostly? Was it just from driver error more than mechanical or did they have a mechanical problem with the wheels falling off?

R: Well, they had that, but that wasn't too much. It was speed and drinks.

I: Didn't the bad roads have something to do with that too?

R: Well, you better drive according to the rules. Of course, I suppose they wanted to get there faster. Of course you have your...there were a lot of accidents. What's that?

I: Homecoming queen? Pretty girl.

R: Oh, that's my niece.

I: No kidding.

R: Susan's daughter from Calumet

I: When...let's see...Keweenaw County sheriff was here all of the time I would imagine...
I: Did you have much dealings with him...did you have any?

R: Yeah, we'd...as far as the work was concerned why we didn't have. Ted would take care of his own and I'd take care of ours.

I: I bet it was a little slower up there than it was down here, I imagine.

R: Yeah, we'd...as far as the work was concerned why we didn't have. Ted would take care of his own and I'd take care of ours.

I: Did you work for any of the other states? I know Jack Fox said he went to Milwaukee a couple of times and he went down to some training school in Lansing. Did you go to school down there to these schools when you were Chief and did you leave the state at all? I noticed once here you went down state to pick up some three men on a breaking and entering charge...or something...three prisoners. Was it the sheriff's duty them days to transport prisoners out of the state, like now?

R: Yeah

I: Well, can you think of anything else?

R: Well, they've made a profession out of police work today why a guy would stay in like when I was there...a guy would stay in until the head would change and then he'd get out and get a job somewhere else. Now, most of it's all Civil Service which is a good thing. Fellows can make a career out of it. Like I had...you know Warington?

I: The fireman down at Hancock, you mean?

R: No, his son. Harry's son...the guy that's new.

I: Yeah, he works for State Police Intelligence Squad down in Lansing.

R: Yeah, well he started his police work with me. George Jetta started his police work with me. He's the head of the Post. I was always trying to tell these guys, "Get something..." I said, "use this as a stepping stone." I said, "Get something else for yourself." I said, "You got nothing here." I said, "After you get the Chief's job," I said, "What have you got?" I said, "You don't even have a pension here in Hancock." And a lot of them...most of these fellows that are working at the College, like Michigan Tech, used to work for me.

I: I know, Frank Sweeney was your deputy. Sweeney

R: Yeah

I: ...according to this article.

R: And a winter job...what's to get a guy to apply for a job in these different places, they like to work here in Hancock. Like I said, once you've got the Chief's job, what have you got.

I: Did you ever have any problems with drugs like we have now? Drugs are a big thing right now.
R: Drugs?
I: Yeah
R: That was an unheard thing.
I: You didn't have any
R: No...no, we never had any drugs.
I: Just predominately alcohol more than anything else...the drunkers.
R: Un hum.
I: Boy there's a lot of items. Just a full time job cutting out items in the paper here.
I: Here's an article in 1942, where Werner Maki from Baltic plead guilty to drunk driving. He paid $2 fine, fine and costs.
R: Of course the court costs, that all depended on the Judge.
I: Well here's one, he paid $2 for being drunk and disorderly and $50 for drunk driving. What do you think is the big difference between police work now and when you were a police man?
R: Well, it's more technical today than it used to be them days. You've got to be more careful because people are just waiting for a chance to sue where they didn't them days. You took a guy and you locked him up and that was it; and when you once locked 'em up, why sometimes you'd let 'em go in the morning, but lot of times...but now if you lock a guy up you better run him in front of a Judge before you let him go because he'll sue you for false detention or something.
I: Well, didn't you arrest people for being drunk and then the next morning you let them go and they never did go before the Judge? They just sobered up and the next morning they left.
R: No, they weren't
I: Did you just have any overnighters that you just kept the night and then kicked out in the morning?
R: Very few...very few.
I: In Calumet they had quite a few...Calumet still does. There are a few that just wander in there...they just had too much...on their own accord and they'll just crap out there and the next morning, away they go.
R: Well, that's entirely up to (?)...Sullivan used to be Chief when I was in. So, now I'm firing them.
I: Now, you're working in your garden and enjoying you retirement.
R: Well, the retirement would be okay if there was a little more money coming in.

I: And the cost of living goes so high and yours doesn't increase.

R: No

I: Hardly at all.

R: I don't know what I'd do if I didn't have this little side job of process serving.

I: You do that for Mr. Wisti and Jaskelinen?

R: Well, I do that for any guys. Different attorneys call me. I used to get calls from Reinland. Rineland, he'd call me from Calumet. Quovilin used to call me from Calumet.

I: I think the sheriff serves a lot of papers too, don't they?

R: Yeah, but I think I serve more papers than the sheriff's department does.

I: Do you?

R: 

I: Are you still deputized then for the sheriff?

R: 

I: Did you carry a gun when you were in your own clothes, years ago? When you were off duty and when you weren't working? Say when you were the Chief of Police of Hancock, did most of the policemen carry guns when they were not working... when they were off duty?

R: Yes, because you're the first guy... in case there is trouble... you're the first guy that they see walking down the street, why they call you.

I: How did you get these speeders? I see more and more stuff here... cracking down on speeding in county... you just clocking 'em? Just jumping right behind them...

R: 

I: The old clocking method. Do you miss being on the police department at all?

R: Well, yes you can't help it but miss it. It kind of gets in your blood.

I: Did you have any riot type things like we have now? Down at the college we had the Detroit riot or even small things like we had
in Lake Linden here this past Memorial Day. Did you have anything like that?

R: Well, you'd get a riot once in awhile, but didn't amount to much.

I: It was mostly a local thing?

R: Yeah, well like the college.

I: What was that? Mainly kids protesting something or other or just getting drunk and having a good time or what did it amount to?

R: Well, getting drunk and starting a riot amongst themselves. Lock them up in jail and have the college man come over there...had the college man come over and pick 'em up and either take them back to school or send him home to his parents.

I: Did you have a lot of trouble with the college them days?

R: Well, every once in awhile something would break out

I: That was before they had their security there, right?

R: Yeah. That's a good job that security job at the college.

I: Yeah, that is a good job.

I: Did you ever use anything like dogs or anything? For tracking up here?

R: No

I: Like when you were looking for someone that might have just broke into a place or something? Did you make use of the lie detector from Marquette?

R: Yeah, quite often.

I: How did you find that? Did the results come pretty good?

R: Yes

I: Did you find it was a help to the policeman?

R: Oh, yeah! I would say yes. It's the psychological effect that's on the guy to that lie detector...they know that they're on the lie detector and they better start speaking the truth.

I: Yeah, and lot of times it just verifies the fact that they're telling the truth too, you know, that what they already told you is the truth. I think we find more cases that prove that a person is telling the truth, you know, than we do that actually are lying. As a matter of fact, they call it a truth verifier now. They don't call it a lie detector.
R: They don't, eh!
I: No, they started calling it a truth verifier now.
R: I don't know. I was a hell of a policeman as far as a policeman was concerned. Now like lot of times I'd get behind a guy and the guy'd wabbling all over the bloody road, all drunked up; and I'd pull him aside and take him home, take his keys away from him and tell him to come down in the office and pick the keys up in the morning. Then I'd chew his ass out.

was the end of it

R: That was the end of it

How did you determine that the guy was drunk? Did you have some test that you gave him? We have the breathilizer now.

R: Naw we didn't have nothing.
I: It was just a matter of observing him and I suppose knowing him a certain amount.
R: Yeah, a lot of these guys around town here don't know how the hell they got home...like in the wintertime I was always afraid of them freezing. So, I'd try the doors and see which door would open and see that they get sittin on the couch and then I'd leave 'em there and let 'em go.
I: Then you knew they wouldn't freeze to death anyway.

R: What did you do for communication before you got the radio there in 1950? How did you...
I: Telephone
R: Call telephone?
I: Yeah
R: What if you had a car out on the highway and you had a bad accident somewhere? How would you get to the car?
R: Well, there were all certain spots where...
I: You had call boxes?
R: No, didn't have call boxes but places where they'd have a light on and something.
I: Oh, you mean, the red light would come on and he knew to call the Post.
R: Just a light...some house.
I: House light or something?
R: Yeah, house light or store light or something...they'd put a light outside and if the light was on well then they wanted you.
I: I can remember in Ishpeming they had that...oh in 1955 probably...they still had a light then and they still had a radio too, but they had a policeman walking the beat checking the doors and checking the bars and things and they had a couple lights in town. When they wanted him, they'd turn the lights on.
R: Well, I don't know about in Hancock, but we had one in front of the City Hall in the middle of the street on top and then down on Hancock Avenue in the middle a red light would come on. When that light came on why you just called in to see what was the matter. I don't know if that's going anymore or not or did they take it down.
I: Now they're talking about putting a whole new radio system in here now. The sheriff got a grant from the Federal government for a new radio system and it's supposed to be changing over pretty soon. As a matter of fact, I think I seen in the paper the other day they had bids out for it. But our radios, we can get Marquette from our cars lot of times.
R: You can, eh?
I: Yeah. Well, they're keyed up pretty good too, the ones down below though...they'll reach half that far.
I: Yeah, that's because of the towers.
I: The location, right.
R: I understand that these Hancock boys here go up on the hill over here with their car and park and go to sleep.
I: I've never seen 'em there, but it's possible.
I: Yeah, it's possible. I know they don't want to get caught. They'll fire 'em right away, especially with your new City Manager.
R: Yeah, (?) a good guy too.
I: He fired one of the policeman once before for that, one of the ones that works in there now. And after (Slock) left, they hired him back again.
R: Who was that?
I: Bates,
R: Bates?
I: Yeah...did you have political problems when you were Chief in Hancock like they have now down there, you know, where the City Council is fighting between themselves and they're fighting between the policemen?

R: No

I: You didn't have them problems

I: Did you get pretty well what you needed as far as equipment and what not?

R: Yeah, I did.

I: Seen the Council and told them you needed this or need that and they pretty well went along with you on whatever you needed.

R: Yeah...show 'em what you needed it for and there was no trouble

I: Did you make liquor inspections...did you go in the bars and check the bars for staying open after hours and serving minors and things?

R: Yeah

I: Many violations for that? I mean, did you get very many?

R: No...all we'd do was just go and give them a warning one time and that was the end of it.

I: There weren't too many kids in the bars then anyway, was there?

R: No. We bought the first police car for the City of Hancock. We bummed money and we bought the first police car for the City of Hancock.

I: What kind of a car was it?

R: I think it was a Chevrolet.

I: You mean you bought it yourself by taking up collections?

R: Took up collections and turned it over to the city.

I: Do you remember having any high-speed chases then.

R: Well, sixty - seventy miles an hour was considered high speed then.

I: That's what I mean. Did you have people who'd try to get away on you?

R: Oh yeah

I: Did you chase them then or did you let 'em go?

R: No, we'd chase 'em. Chase them either enough to get their license number.

I: And then the next day you get them
R: Yeah...I don't know if you could do that anymore...get them the next day.

I: Oh, we have to go to the prosecutor and get a warrant then. So, we get a license number and then we go get the...usually we catch them. Some get away occasionally, but not that often really; and if we get them or depending on the situation, we just let them go, we'll get a warrant the next day.

R: Yeah, I liked police work. Well, you had to like it to be in it. If you don't like it, you're no good there. And another thing, hours shouldn't mean anything. If you got work to do, that's the time to do it. Lot of times you can't stop and then start back at it the next day.

I: Just stay on it until you get her finished, eh...this eight hour stuff just wasn't there.

Something to shoot at, that's all.

I: Right. If it was possible to get off in eight hours, that was fine. But if you got something to tie you up at the end of the eight hours, you just stick with it.

I: Well, anything else. Can you think of anything Mr. Paulson?

R: No, that's about all. Ah, who's the Chief in Hancock now?

I: Well, they're talking about appointing a new one...Gordie Berryman...Sargeant Berryman is acting Chief until they decide for sure. They gave (?) thirty days in which to make up his mind what he wants to do. I think they're gonna wait 'til after that.

R: Joe was no Chief. Joe don't know how to handle men, that's it. It'd be foolish to take Joe back...just all right doing the job on the night force.

I: Well, that's what I mean. They wouldn't take him back as Chief.

R: I asked the fellows one day; I said, "How often you guys check the... of Side 2
ELECT
FRED J.
PAULSON
for
SHERIFF
OF HOUGHTON COUNTY
On the Republican Ticket

Fred J. Paulson
HOUGHTON KAUNTIN
Sheriffiksi
Republiikanen tikitillä.
Kannottaaan pyytää äänestämme
ja kannustamme.
Kokenut sheriffin viraston
tehtävissä.