FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978
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**Sullivan, John L.**  
July 24, 1974

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I: Okay, I'm Brias Helgren and we're at the Michigan State Police Post in Calumet. Today's date is July 23, 1974; it's approximately 11:10 p.m.; also in the room is Trooper Larry Harju. The reason for this interview is for the purposes to be used for the Oral History Class at Suomi College. We'd like tonight to interview John Sullivan. John L. Sullivan has been a Police Chief in the Village of Calumet, was born and raised in Calumet and knows the area quite well. John, we'd like to have a little background first about you, where you were born and your parents, etc.

R: I was born in Calumet, Michigan, on Eighth Street right in the Village Limits and I was brought up there along the railroad, the tracks of the Soo Line which runs just a block from where we lived. And on the Ninth Street in our area there, there used to be three cat houses on Ninth Street and two cat houses on Maple Lane and one cat house on Foreman Street. When I was a youngster about eight - nine years old, I used to work around these cat houses.

I: When was this, John? I don't mean to interrupt you, but what years?

R: That was about 1922 and '23. Used to work around these cat houses doing little errands for the women who used to run these. Of course them days, I didn't think they were cat houses...I didn't know what they were. And I did a lot of errands for them, running to the store and that. I remember when I was a youngster that I was always going to the drug store and they'd give me a note and I'd look at the note and I thought, "Kodak, why man, they must be taking a lot of pictures, I'm always going up there for Kodak" and they'd give me a big box and I'd give 'em the money and I'd go back and the girls would meet me at the door and they'd say, "Thank you, lover boy". Some were colored, some were Chinese, some were Japanese, all different nationalities were there. And then when I got a little older I started thinking, "Man, what'd they do with these Kodak's all the time before". Then one day I said to my mother, I says, "Ma, they're sending me up to the drugstore for Kodaks all the time," I said, "What are they doing, takin' pictures over there all the time, is that a photographer shop?" And she said, "No...no, that's okay, as long as they give you
going, keep going" she says, "that's their business what they're going to do with them". Then got a little older and started looking at them notes and it said, "Kotex" and I started checking into it and I found out what it was and my gosh I didn't want to go for them anymore. Was kind of embarassing then, I was getting too old to pick up them things. Them were the good old days.

II: How old were you when that was happening, John?
R: Oh, I must have been about fourteen years old and realized that I was sent to haul kotex instead of kodaks.

I: When did you get involved with the Police Department at all?
R: In 1948 I became the Chief of Police in the Village of Calumet.
I: Did you run for this?
R: No, I didn't run for this. I worked in the City since 1937, I used to be a G-Man for 'em and I was a sewer rat and I worked up until the time I went into the service. And in 1941 I was drafted in the service.
I: Was that the Army, Navy...?
R: Army...and then when I came back after 1944...no, '44 I came back from the service, I was discharged, had a Medical Discharge then, and I came back and I worked in the fire station as a chauffeur 'til 1946. The former Chief of Police, Bam McDonald, he had accepted a job with the State of Michigan as a Food Inspector so that made them short. They needed a Chief, so they asked me would I take it and I didn't want the job. And they asked me would I try it for a week and I told them, I says, "You can make me there" and then they didn't want any part of it...too much for them. So they asked me would I take it. I said, "I'll try it for a week." So the first week went by, I was ready to hang up...give up and the President he talked and he said, "Try it another week." Well, that second week I was ready to quit again... kept going on, pretty soon before I knew it, I was there a year, then two years, then three years...and I'm still there and it's 1974 and it's still there...but not the Chief.

I: How many men were in the Department when you first started?
R: When I first started? When I first started as Chief, we only had two men besides me.

What was the most amount of men you had during your time there?
R: During my time, five at the most.

Were you in Calumet when they had so many people there? I know you weren't a policeman in 1913, but were you there when there were so many bars in town?
R: Oh yes, as a youngster I remember when we used to go up Main Street on Fifth Street, you know, all the parents wouldn't let their children go up there because it was so crowded. And people used to...it'd be so crowded that they'd walk down one side of the street from Scott down as far as Elm Street on one side, cross over the road there and go to the other side and go up the other side of the street. They never walked against each other because the sidewalks were so packed that you couldn't push against each other.

I: One way traffic.

R: And our sidewalks were a lot wider then too. Since then, during the WPA days back in 1938...around '38 and '39 and '40 there during the WPA days, our sidewalks were so wide and the population was thinning out, so we had our sidewalks narrowed out by the WPA projects and they turned out about 30 inches on one side the street off the sidewalks and 28 off the other to make that better traveling for two-way traffic also. And then were the good old days. And taverns...yes, I remember taverns and I think there were just as many black pages as there were taverns around. There was eighty-seven taverns in town and I think there must have been about eighty-seven black pages also.

I heard the name of Sally Kikkinen up here several times from different policemen. What can you tell us about her?

R: Sally Kikkinen? She was one of our best customers. Every second night she hit the jail house. She was always arrested for being a disorderly person, drunk and disorderly.

I: How did you first meet Sally?

R: How did I first meet Sally when I become a police officer...was called to a bar when she was throwing ash trays at the back bar mirrors; and I went in there and I placed her under arrest. My gosh, and she called me everything from a fat ass to an orange-pickin ass hole to any darn thing you could think of. Old Sally, she was quite a girl. And she was in jail about every second day. She had a habit, Sally, that when someone put her out of a bar, she'd get outside and she'd take her shoe off...she'd take her shoe off and she'd take her shoe and she'd break the plate-glass window with the heel, and say, "Ha, ha, ha, tell your insurance company to pay for it, they got more money than Sally". And she broke many a window in our town. Many a window Sally broke.

I: What happened this one particular time you brought her into jail...

R: Yeah, we got Sally and she was brought in in the morning around eight and we were waiting to arraign her later on that afternoon and made arrangements to arraign her and well, she was in jail there and she hollered, she says, "Sullivan, Mr. Sullivan", so I said "Yes", she said "I want to go to the toilet". Well, she was locked in a separate cell and to get out to the toilet we had to open the cell door there and then open another door to get in to throw a lock also. So, I walked in and opened the door for Sally and she walked over towards the can and I just walked out, shut the outer door and shut the other and before I could get this other door shut, I felt kind of wet, water
flying and I thought, "What the heck happened? Did Sally get water from the toilet in something and throw it at me?" And I looked and there she had her dress up and she was pissing right at me in my face and that must have been twelve feet from where I was...I couldn't believe it. And I slammed the door and I said, "Sally, you dirty bugger" and I took a hose and I said, "How do you like to get wet?" and I wet her down a little bit. So, then I went on home and I said to my wife I said, "Throw me out some clean clothes". She said, "What happened?" I says, "I ran into a skunk." She says, "Who?" She says, "Who, who is the skunk?" I says, "Sally!" She says, "Sure, sure, it would be something like Sally. What'd she do?" I said, "She pissed at me." She says, "Don't tell me that story, I never heard anything like it." I said, "You never heard of it, I seen it!"

And another time was an incident where the Post Office called me one morning early. They called me up and they says, "We have some mail here for you in the box and they'd like you to get it out of here because it's smelling up the whole Post Office". So I goes up there and I told them, "I'm here for the mail". And he said, "Yeah, get it out of here, it's in your box". So I looked in the box and there's a big envelope all brown stained. I thought, "What the hell is this stink...ah!"

So, I thought someone was sending me a bomb or something, so I set it in a bucket of water down at the Town Hall for a half a day, let her soak; then I opened it up and checked it out and there was human shit and a note..."If you want another hot roast beef sandwich, Mr. Sullivan, just order one."...and by gosh it said it had come from no one but Sally. And the Justice of the Peace in Laurium, he also received one and his name was Sullivan so I suppose she thought I was the Justice...or that was my dad or something, she sent him one also, you know. We both had a envelope full of shit...stink! But there was nothing we could do about it then but accept it and prove it but later on we found out and I found out that it was Sally 'cause I also received a threatening letter in the mail from Sally which I turned over to the Postal Department and they investigated and that time Sally got six months in the House of Correction.

II: Where was that...down in Detroit?

R: Down there, yeah, Detroit. And gees it wasn't long and she was roaming the streets again so checked into it and found out that she drove 'em nuts down there and they sent her to Newberry State Hospital and then Newberry State Hospital and her husband had her released. So, signed her for her release so Sally was back in circulation.

I: What's she doing now?

R: I haven't seen Sally...I seen Sally about two months ago, I was going up the street and I says, "Here comes Sally". But I was dressed in my plain street clothes and Sally says, "Hi, Mr. Sullivan"...I made out I didn't know her, I just glanced the other way. So then she said, "Well, if you don't know your name, Mr. Sullivan, how about you big fat ass hole; 'pickin ass and everything else and she kept swearing at me 'til I was...Oh, a block away, you know. And a lady on the next corner said to me, "There's a crazy lady down there". I said,
"No kidding, is there!" She said, "She was hollering at you, wasn't she?" I said, "No, she was hollering at the guy across the street." I didn't want to feel embarrassed.

I: Well, how old is she, John?

R: Well, Sally right now must be about sixty-five years old. Another time another incident we had with Sally Kikkinen, she lived over there (?) on Acorn Street and she lit her house on fire once there and she called the Fire Department and the clerk over there answered the phone and she says, "I just lit my house on fire," but she says, "let it get a hell of a good start before you send the Fire Department over there." So, the clerk didn't know if she was kidding or not so she called the Fire Department and told them what she said. So, sure and heck they went over there and boy she'd really lit that house on fire. Well, they said to me that she had lit it. I said, "Can't prove it by me," I says, "She called in and said she lit it." So then the insurance company fixed up her home and they just got it all fixed up; 'bout a month later she calls again to the City Hall. She says, "Send the Fire Department over but wait a half a day before you send them over this time so it'll get a good start. I lit it again." So they went over and sure enough her house was all burning again. And the State Police were also there investigating and Sally was intoxicated. So they picked her up for drunk and disorderly and lodged her in jail and held an investigation and then a warrant was issued for her for arson which when she went to court she won her case. She won her case in court because...hu...hu...hu...she had a sharp attorney, she had a very sharp attorney. When the jury got through there when they had me on the stand and I guess when the jury got through with me, the attorney on the stand, I think the jury thought I lit the house on fire.

Il: In other words, it's just as bad then as it is now.

R: Yes! Right!

I: What type of crimes did you arrest people most often for...drunk or larceny or what?

R: No, when...years ago, mostly petty larceny. It was mostly children... kids shoplifting and kids breaking into places, you know. And I don't think I was with the Police Department even three months and done some investigating and rounded up a bunch of kids and boy, them days you know, you'd get along with kids...they'd admit anything you say to them. Say, "Hey, did you see John Doe going into that place last night?" They'd say, "Yeah, I was with him." Not nowadays, they don't even talk to you. They want their attorney there...if they're two years old they say, "Bring my attorney in". I'll tell you another case we had one time. We had a place there before I was even on the Police Force, there was this gas station on Pine Street right along 203 that belonged to a Harmella...Harmella's Gas Station where now the Citgo Gas Station is in the same quarters; and before I was even on the Police Force, every time I'd pick up the paper I'd see where
What did you do, John, years ago if you wanted to search somebody or you wanted to search their house and you knew they had the goods in there, the stolen property? Would you just go ahead and search it or would you...?

No, we'd get a Search Warrant, you know, we used to get a Search Warrant for going into somebody's home if we knew they had stolen property.

Did you have to get somebody that seen this property in there or did you have to just a pretty good idea it was there?
R:   Just have to have a pretty good idea them days.
I:   Reasonable cause...
R:   Yeah.
II:  How about searching their person?
R:   Hah...we'd search 'em every time we'd stop 'em for something, you know. Get 'em up against the building and search 'em and see if they had anything we were looking for.
II:  What kind of training did you have, John?
R:   Police training?
II:  
R:   I never had any police training before I took over the Police House here...never had a bit of police training, not a bit. But since that, I've been to these different schools and classes, etc. they've been having for Police Departments through the State.
II:  Do you feel they've been helpful?
R:   It sure has, yeah.
I:   What kind of radio or communication did you have, John?
R:   Them days? I'll tell you what we had. When I used to leave the City Hall, I had a pad on my desk and it said, Eighth Street, Nineth Street, Pine Street, Railroad Yards, Calumet Armory, Agosy Park. And whatever direction I was going, I used to turn that pad and lay it on the desk and if they needed me by someone would call up and say they wanted the police, they'd say, "He's gone towards Agosy Park." So, the janitor used to go out and look for me.
I:   The janitor?
R:   We never had no car then either...no cars.
I:   He's running down after you.
R:   Yeah, he used to run down and get me and he'd say, "You're wanted on Pine Street." Then the City'd tell me that "If you got someone that you want to arrest and hire a taxi, we'll pay for it." "Man," I says "who's gonna hold 'em while I run and make the telephone call."
I:   Did you carry a gun then, John?
R:   No, I never carried a gun. I never carried a gun or club for fifteen years.
II: That's quite a change on the Police Force over there before.
R: Yeah
I: When did you first get a car then?
R: Well, we got a car after I was there for about three years...they bought one. The president figured that my feet were getting flat so they'd get a car for me to ride around with.
II: Was that in about
R: Yeah, that was around '51 or there abouts.
I: When did you get a radio...did it have a radio on it then or what?
R: No...no...no, we just had a citizens band radio here oh about ten years ago...we had our first citizens band radio.
I: Who did you have it hooked up to...the station house or...?
R: The station and then we had an answering service across the street from us, you know, a party across the street had a radio in there and they'd contact us. They'd answer our telephone and contact us.
I: When would they contact you?
R: When we were in the car and when we were out of the car they...well they'd just wait until we got back in the car.
I: Well, if you got into a bar fight or something, how would you ask for help?
R: You didn't. You didn't ask for help...you had to handle it yourself because even in the bar...the people in the bar wouldn't even help you, they'd run out the other door when they'd see a fight if you asked them for help.
I: I'll be darned...local people didn't help you.
R: Yeah, they wouldn't help you, no! Local people wouldn't help you.
I: Well, do you think the people respected you then better than they do now or did they get along with you better?
R: I got along with people all the time; but still them days they just didn't want to get involved.
II: Even back then.
R: Back then yet.
II: Do you think a lot of that had come about because of the police department they had before?
R: Probably so, because they tell me they had some rough ones there... I heard a lot about the rough ones there years ago.

I: What did you hear, John?

Who did you hear it from, the policemen that were before you?

R: Oh yes, and I even seen one of 'em. I used to see one of 'em... beat the hell out of everybody. A guy could be coming down the street and he'd just have a few beers on his breath, you know, and this officer used to take that club out and beat the hell out of him right there.

I: What guy was that?

R: He's called Paul Speehar.

I: Old Paul!

R: Old Paul Speehar... and the City told me they used to have to give him a new club every week down there.

He'd break 'em up.

R: He'd break 'em up. They had a party in jail one time and he put his head out the little doorway where you pass the food through... what food they'd give 'em... and he put his head out and was hollering he wanted a drink. And this Paul Speehar, you know, walked in there with his club and he says, "I give you drink". And he hit that man so many times over the head that his head was swelling up and they couldn't get it back in through the hole through the bars so they hadda get hacksaws and a torch and cut the bars and bend 'em to get his head back in again.

I: Was the jail in the same place it is now?

R: That it is now, yes. Years ago they tell me it used to be over on Seventh Street, was in a little building over on Seventh Street years ago.

I: What happened to Old Paul?

I: They told me he had a kind of a funny different funeral and when he was dying or something?

R: I remember his dying... he really suffered. He died of cancer and he really suffered. They say that you could hear him hollering with pain for blocks away and people used to say, "Well, everyone else hollered with pain, now Old Paul's suffering with the pain".

I: When did he die, can you remember what year?

R: No, I can't recall what year when Old Paul died
I: Did you ever have any dealings with Paul at all?

R: No...oh yea, one time. Yeah, one time me and my buddy...he had about a '27 Model Shiv with running boards on that...we run a cross street on the corner of Pine and Sixth. And Paul Speehar happened to be there and he blew his whistle and he said, "Stop!" And we stopped and he took that big club out and he started pounding the running board 'til the fenders started buckling and "Now," he said, "for your punishment" he says, "you go 'round the blocks...you go 'round the blocks and you come back here and you stop. And if you don't stop I get you in the morning." So we hadda go 'round the block and stop and then he said, "Okay, 'round the block again and stop." And we were going around the block for a half-a-dozen times and he says, "Now I guess you learnt a lesson. You burnt a lot of gas." He says, "Now next time I catch you I throw you in jail if you do the same thing."

I: What nationality was he?

R: He was...I think he was an Austrian and boy he was a....anyone spit on, the sidewalk lookout boy, he'd say, "Take your spits and go" and he'd start swinging that club, you know. "Take your spits and go."

I: Didn't the kids tease him a little bit?

R: I don't know

I: They probably didn't dare.

R: They didn't dare tease him.

I: He had a bad sense of humor.

R: Yeah, I guess so

I: Did you ever see a policeman beat anybody to get information out of him or how did they interrogate people?

R: (Laughter ...No, no I didn't.

I: Did you ever do it yourself?

R: No, I never hadda...I never hadda 'cause I used to sit down and talk to different people and they'd give me more information than I even wanted, you know.

I: What kind of complaints did you have...were they having fights or mostly bar complaints?

R: Mostly bar complaints...bar complaints and larceny...petty larceny.

I: Bar fights, you mean.

R: Yeah, bar fights.

I: Outside of that time you got the twenty-five juveniles there on B & E, how many people have you ever jammed in that jail at one time?
R: I've seen as many as nine in there. One night...there was a bar on Fifth Street right where the Red Garter is now...and there was two night officers. There was Fred Billiba who was a night officer and Al Gonya who was a night officer. They were night officers and I come in the morning to work and there was nine guys in there and this bar tender. So, they left a note that they'd be down to see me first thing in the morning, so they come 'round and they told me, they says, "Anyone'd walk in this guy's bar, he'd wait by the door and as soon as they'd open the door he'd haul off and hit 'em," you know,"And they'd go to the police department and says...he slung me over." And then he'd call the police and say that this guy's fighting in here, you know, he slugged me." So, they'd go over there...them days, you know, you didn't have to see it, "Hey, you're under arrest for creating a disturbance in a public place", so was going on and on and they had about nine in there then that night. So finally they thought they're gonna watch how come they're gettin so many calls. So they went over to see the guy and as soon as he opened the door they seen the bartender there...the owner's gonna haul off and slug this guy. So, they grabbed him and they put him in jail and went and took his keys from him and locked his building up. Next day he was gonna sue everybody but he was the only one next day that we run through court. I turned all the other nine loose. Yeah, turned 'em all loose, I said, "Go...go", I said, "none of your fault."

I: Where did you put the women? The two cells are real close together.

R: Yeah, well women were on one side and the men on the other when we had women in there, you know.

I: Well, didn't they have something between 'em so they couldn't see each other or what?

R: Yeah, there's a solid wall between the two cells there so you can't see each other...and there's a solid steel wall between the two cells there.

I: When was that building built that's there now? How long has that jail been in there?

R: Man...it's been there since I was a kid and that's fifty-four or five years ago now. And I don't know when the building was even built...there's not even a corner stone on that building...down at City Hall.

I: Has the theatre always been in that building? Was it all built at one time?

R: No, the theatre was built later on. The City Hall was there and then the City Hall was remodeled sometime after that and changed around. Years ago...they tell me where the fire station is now years ago they used to have the fire station in there in the same place where storing their trucks now in City Hall. They say there were horse-drawn rigs in there years ago.

I: Did you ever get shot at, John?
R: No...no I didn't.

I: Did you ever have to go into a house where there was a fellow with a gun or something like that?

R: No...no I didn't. No, I never have run into anything like that. In all the while I was Chief, there was only two people that I know of that died of injuries received from cars inside the village limits.

I: Inside the limits in Calumet?

R: Yeah, right. There was old...Gents he was called...Genty Sullivan and we found him in the spring of the year on the corner of Fifth and Pine Streets in a water hole. In the spring, you know, them days the streets weren't plowed down like they are nowadays, there were deep ruts in the spring and the water holes and...

I: The dirt and everything..

R: ...yeah, dirt...trucks and that used to come through and we found this man in a hole right on the corner of Fifth and Pine and Lord knows how many vehicles went over him, you know.

I: Oh, he was layed down in the ditch.

R: Yeah, he was in one of these holes, yeah. And that's the only one we ever had die. He hadda be hit by a car first there, we figured, someone hit him...he was dressed in dark clothing that night, dark lighting on the streets and that. And then the other case happened ...that there happened in the spring of about 1950, I'll say. No, it wasn't in 1950, I'll have to take that back. I think it was the spring of 1949 when that fellow...that was the first year I was there when that fellow was killed there. Then before that, was in 1948, on Fifth Street where the Quality Food Store stands right now, a woman was going in there...was in the store with her son. And her son run out into the street and was struck by a car and nobody seen the boy get struck by a car and the boy run back in again and told his mother that a car hit him. And he had sort of a big bruise on his forehead; so the mother took him home and called a doctor...by the time the doctor come over there the boy had passed away, you know, with a concussion. So them are the only two that...fails we had in the village.

End of Side 1

R: Well, when I was there the prosecutor was Steven Condon then.

I: Circuit Judge now?

R: Yeah, he's a Circuit Judge now, Steven Condon. And something used to happen that amazing...he'd come up to see you, you know, and you'd give him the dope right there...no papers, nothing...and he'd say, "Okay, I got everything" and okay we'd go to court and then we'd win our cases.
I:  No kidding!

R:  Yeah

I:  How did you get along with the Justice of the Peace...that's all you had them days, wasn't it?

R:  Yeah, we had two Justice of the Peace.  We had two Justice of the Peace.  One was in Laurium, Con Sullivan and one was in Calumet, Norman Tresides and Norman Tresides is still living.  He's up in his eighties now and he's spry as ever.  I had a funny experience one time with this Justice of the Peace.  He gave me a warrant...I went there to pick up a warrant.  (?) had signed a complaint against someone and I don't know why in the heck he didn't give it to Baskams, so I thought, "Well, Baskams sleeping so" "I said, "I'll serve the warrant." He called me up there and he give me that warrant and he told me "I got a warrant for so-and-so," and I never even looked at the warrant, you know, because Baskams left a note there telling me what it was all about and this and that.  I went over to this...it was a woman I was supposed to pick up...and I went over to her house and knocked at the door and I said, "I got a warrant for your arrest". And I pulled it out of my pocket and I opened it up and I had a blank sheet of paper.  Well, them were the good old days.  I just stood up and I said, "Hear ye, hear ye, lay to the Township of Calumet, you" ...I won't mention any names because she's a married woman now, "and so forth have caused a disturbance within the City of Calumet in the City Hall with Officer Fredrick Passafit." And I pulled up, she says, "Can I read it?" I said, "Well, you can read it when we get to Court".  So, I had another fellow with me, his name was (?) Anderson, he liked police work...he never got paid for anything...he done lot of police work for me and the sheriff and different police departments, but he never did draw a penny of pay because it was an honor for him to work for the police...and he was along with me that day, so when we come by the Court, I told Jim, I said, "Hey, Jim, would you walk up to the court, I got a few things to do a minute." So, Jimmy walks her up to the court and what'd I do?  I takes my pen out and I makes up a warrant.  For if an old attorney was around then, he'd a sued me for everything I had.  So I made up a warrant and I got up and put it in front of the judge, and the judge looked at me and says, "What is this all about?  Where'd you get this?" I said, "Shut up...that's the one you give me". And I give him the big wink and he says, "Okay!" And he read it aloud to her and she pleaded guilty...paid a fine of $10 and $7 costs.  The judge got $4 that day, the arresting officer got $3 on every arrest.  The more arrests you made the more money you made.  Them days you used to walk down the street and you'd look at your shoes and you'd say, "My heels are gettin low".  Here comes a drunk, you'd pick 'em up and bring him to the judge, you'd get enough money to buy a pair of heels.

I:  Didn't you get a salary from the City then?

R:  Oh, sure you got a salary from the City.

I:  But that was salary plus
R: Yeah, that was what you call the fringe benefits.

I: What kind of pay did you get from the City then?

R: Well, them days we were making big money then. I was working fifty-six hours a week on the job and about fifty hours on call and I was making...let's see, in a week I was making about $45.

I: This was back when?

R: Oh, back in 1948, '49.

I: Did they give you your uniforms?

R: No, they didn't give us anything.

I: Well, what did you wear for a uniform?

R: Oh, we had to buy our own uniforms. I used to send away...I used to send to Detroit to the Detroit Uniform Company for shirts. I used to pay $18 for those shirts in them days and they were the best in the west. Now you pay $18 for these sleeveless outfits and nothing to them.

I: Did you have any insurance benefits or any benefits as far as...

R: No...no, we never had no benefits. We never even had...we worked seven days a week...seven days a week...no paid holidays...no insurance...no nothing! And then if you were late five minutes for work then someone would be over to the town hall and squeal on you if they seen you going to work five minutes late, you know, but nobody'd ever mention when they'd see you go home late from work, you know, they'd never say anything about that, but go to work five minutes late and they were all ready to squeal on you.

I: Yeah, and I notice there's a practice they have in the Calumet Police Department that I imagine happened a long time ago also, where if a drunk comes in...if he had too much to drink...he just walks in the police station, goes back into a cell there and sleeps her off, wakes up in the morning and makes the coffee and apparently he's all done. He just put his night in jail and he walks out.

R: Yeah, we put up a lot of 'em. Years ago, they used to put up so many there, this was before my time, they used to put up so many they had to sleep on top of (?). The lumberjacks used to come out on the weekends, you know, and they figured that at least they were spending money in town so they'd put 'em up for the night here.

I: John, can you tell me about...this happened a few years ago...when Calumet had a...several boy scouts that were sleeping in the building and there was a shoot out at the station where it is right now and there's still holes in the wall there?

R: Oh, how many years ago was this now...I'm gettin old now, it's hard for me to remember all these things...I'll say it's back about
seven years...maybe not that long...but, one night there was a troop of boy scouts in town and they were gonna shack up or camp out in the school grounds and the night police told them it was a little cool that night that if they wanted to sleep over to City Hall, they'd make room over there in the back room for them. We have a back room back of the fire trucks there. So, the boys slept there that night. So, that night during...through the night there, the police officers on duty (?) and (?) were on duty that night, and they seen guys up by the Michigan House on the street and they had some open containers of beer, so they told them they says, "Hey! Get back inside with your beer...get rid of it". So, the boys must have got a grudge against them, so after later on when (?) was gone home and (?) was on a separate call over in Rambletown happened out on an emergency case over there and when he came back he thought he heard some noise inside the police station. And our door going into the station had a mail slot on it and we had a habit of whenever we'd hear someone in there, we'd just raise the mail slot and we'd look right in there and see what was cookin in our office. So, Fred heard that noise that night in the office so he just opened the mail slot and he peeked in there and he seen a man in there with a fire axe and another one there with two guns in his hand facing the door, so he moved back slowly. And just when he moved back they started firing right through the door; and Fred moved back and he radioed the State Police and that and the lads run up the alley. And the best part of it was, that night Fred asked me could he use my small gun. So, I told him he could use my small gun, but he put it in his locker he was ready to go home just before that and he was without a gun out there when these guys had broke into our lockers and they got all our guns which was about five of 'em. I think we had two thirty-eights...three thirty-eights, one snub-nosed (?) and two forty-fives. And they cleaned out our ammunition and they had a little war of their own that night. They went from there...they run up the alley, across the railroad track and they pounded on a few doors there trying to get people to wake up and get their cars...to use their cars. One party they went they asked them for the car keys over there across the tracks, I guess one of 'em, he said, "Get out of here, you ain't gettin my car keys." So, they took their guns and they broke a few windows on his door so he called the police. So when the police found out they were in that area, then pretty soon they were in another...Schultz's over there near the (?) and they went in there and they demanded the keys and the party that was there, he was home from Pennsylvania and he had a Lincoln Continental parked out there in the yard, and they wanted the keys for that Continental and he thought they were some friends of his that come over and were just kidding about "How about the keys?" "Sure...sure" he said, "I'll give you the keys." And they says, "We mean business". And they parted a shot through his door and up into his ceiling in the kitchen and he said, "You can have the keys, you can have anything you want". So, when he seen that and his brother-in-law was sleeping out in a tent with the children out there, his brother-in-law was sleeping out in the tent and he jumped one of these guys. But Mr. Schultz said, "Turn 'em loose, we don't want no one to get shot around here"...because the other guy had the gun on him already, you know. So, they took off...they took off down the railroad track and
by that time the State Police got in on the chase there and they caught them down on the bottom of the Quincey hill and they blew out their rear tires before they got to 'em.

I: Is this the Continental?

R: Yes, the same Continental. Yeah, they blew out the back tires to get 'em stopped and they apprehended the two gunmen who were in there and they was brought back and brought to justice, served time and they're out again.

I: What happened to the boy scouts?

R: The boy scouts in the morning... when I went to work in the morning and I called the boy scouts out there and I told the boy scouts, I said, "Hey! Pretty good of you kids from down in Illinois," I says, "Give you a place to sleep and everything and then you wreck my office like this." And then come in the office and everything was strewn around and they swore up and down that they weren't in there. And I said, "You had to be, there's no one else in the building." I said, "Which one of you got the gun and was doing the shooting around here?" I showed them the bullet holes and my, they didn't know what to think... they thought "What is this, a get up?" You know! So finally I told 'em what happened and they said they never heard a shot or a thing in the night and they were just... they were just twenty-five feet away from where it happened. It was just lucky that none of them kids come out when they heard them shots.

I: What'd they hike up all the way from Illinois?

R: I don't know how they got here. I guess they run back.

I: How long have you been a Calumet Township Constable?

R: Oh since 1948.

I: Every couple years you run for election?

R: Yes right.

I: Did you ever run for sheriff?

R: No, they asked me to run for sheriff one time and I said, "No, got enough worries without running for sheriff."

I: What do you do as a Constable?

R: As Constable, you make your liquor checks through the taverns through the township and whenever the township calls you, they got a complaint that somebody's got a car or it used to be dogs and that; but now there's a dog warden, don't have to worry about dogs. And the only time you have trouble with cars, in the winter when somebody parks one or two nights, you know, on the street, you know, then the county always puts a warning ticket on 'em and then they call you
and then you notify the people by telephone or else go and see 'em and ask them to move 'em or else give 'em a ticket which is a dollar at the Township Clerk's office under their ordinance.

I: John, do you remember when the State Police started here, this Post here in Calumet?

R: Yes!

I: Why did that come about? Why were we brought in here?

R: Oh, why were you brought in here...we needed police protection outside the village. There was none outside...the mining company had their police department...the mining company had their police and in the end they had as many as thirty-five on their police department...I'm sure it was thirty-five. There was one of the last men running running it was head of the State Police, he was called Jack Miller. He used to run it when they had the big department of thirty-five men, you know. Jack was retired from the State Police; but the mining company police took care of the mining company property, you know; but there was a lot of other things going on and they had to have a Post up this way because whenever we needed the police before that we had to call L'Anse for help, you know, on these different state jobs, etc. We'd call the L'Anse Post to come up here and we had good cooperation from the State Police from L'Anse and from the Calumet Post also.

I: John, other than what you already told us which has been pretty exciting, what's the most outstanding thing that you can remember that happened to you since you've been a policeman or even before that when you were working for the gals in the houses.

R: Yeah, well I'll tell you one night, it was a Friday night, back about...oh this was a good twelve years ago, maybe more...I was working on a Friday night. We used to work from eight o'clock or seven o'clock in the morning them days 'til nine o'clock at night I used to be on. And I was walking down on...I was on Fifth Street in the Village and there were three strangers in front of me walking; and they didn't know I was behind them and I heard 'em talking and I heard 'em say that there was a busy grocery store there but there were apartments upstairs and they could hear us. So right away I figured, "Un Huh! They're casing this joint." So, I sized up these three fellows and looked them all over and how they're dressed and everything and I was gonna follow them and see what kind of car they had and got into and get their license number and that; but in the mean time I had an accident up on the corner and someone hollered to me from down the street, "John, there's a wreck up here." So, I went up. And then these three guys they come around and they looked at me and they said, "Is there any barber shops open?" I said, "No, they're all union shops...too late for a barber shop." And I knew they were casing 'em, so I told the night police, I said, "Here's a description of these three guys, they're out to do no good tonight." I said, "Keep an eye on 'em...look around. I lost 'em." So I went
home and I told my wife, "I'm going back to work." I went out and I stayed out until about one o'clock in the morning trying to find those guys in the car and I never did run into them. And I told the other police departments about these three guys, "They're up to no good". Yeah, they were up to no good all right, that was on a Friday night. Monday morning when I got up, the sheriff had called me at the house and he said, "There was a robbery up at the Michigan Bell Telephone...they blew the safe." And I thought, "Man alive, my three buddies were there." The safe wasn't blown, the safe was drifted (?). And then we were up there and then we get another call from the Arms Hotel across the railroad tracks, and they safe was broke into. Well, we run down there to check that one and then we get a call from Peterman Brothers that there safe was broken into and when we're in Peterman Brothers we get another call from the Keller Printing Co. that their safe was broken into. Man alive, we had four safe jobs there over the weekend and they got quite a large sum of money from all of them and the only thing I had was a description of these three. And then pretty soon we had a few more...that same weekend they had some more calls about safe jobs being done in Houghton and I forget, Hancock or Houghton. But anyhow, there was about seven safes knocked off over the weekend and these three hadda be the three and I didn't know 'em from Adam and I was telling the newsman...he was in there getting a report on it, this wasn't Peterson, this was another guy called Pop Sercovitch used to work for the news them days, and he was in there getting a report on these safe jobs and everyone was right out of the village limits which, I said, "Thank God!" I was protecting the City...that wasn't our job to protect outside the City. And this newsman...when I give him a description of these lads, he said, "I know them two lads," he said, "they used to be my neighbor." He said, I thought I seen them around the other day." Well, we never had proof that they knocked off them safes, you know, but there was a bunch of telephone stock that was stolen from up in the telephone company and some woman was trying to pass it in Detroit. And that's where she was picked up in Detroit cashing these telephone stocks and they picked up these lads...but...how they did it, these officers went there with a search warrant and when they went into the house one of these supposed to be men threw a briefcase down in the basement and the guys didn't even use their search warrant to go in, they run in and got the brief case and start opening it checking and the arrested guys were thrown out of court that time; but they did get them shortly after that for possession of burglar tools and they brought 'em back here to Calumet to stand trial on possession of burglar tools and they had two in the Houghton County Jail and one in the Baraga County Jail and the one in the Baraga County Jail, he pertnear got away. He used a coat rack to pick the bricks out of his cell and he was pertnear out by the time they noticed it that time. But then the case, it went to Circuit Court...no, it was gonna go to Circuit Court here then they were picked up and brought back to Detroit on another case down there. So that was the end of it.

I: Can you tell us they guys name...the one that was involved there?

R: The two brothers were called the Sensage brothers. I believe one is back here retired now they tell me.

I: And the other Italian fellow?

R: The other guy, I can't recall his name. Oh man, I just can't recall
his name now. I'll tell you another experience we had onetime on
a safe job. There was a young lad around town, he was a stranger,
and he used to come and every day I'd see him and he'd say, "Hi! How
many police you got working?" Well, I'd say, "We got a dozen working"
where we only had three guys working. He'd say, "How many police
cars you got?" I used to tell him, "We got four of 'em...they're
all plain cars, you wouldn't know 'em." "What kind are they?" I'd
say, "Oh, we got Fords and Chevs." "Um hum, what color are they?"
"Oh," I said, "we paint 'em every month different colors for the
people won't know what we're running around in." So he kept pum-ping
me with questions and I used to ask him his name and he'd tell me,
"Oh, you know me, I'm from Detroit." Well, I never knew who he was
from Adam and I couldn't get his name out of him. So, one day I
seen him and I said, "You want a ride home for dinner, it's about
dinner time?" He said, "Yeah," so that way I found out where he
lived, you know. So, I thought, "If something ever happens, I know
where this guy lives, he's asking too many questions." And, son-of-
a-gun, at Calumet Oil Company, that's just outside the village limits
up here on 203 just out of the village limits up there, the Calumet
Oil Company was Sinclair's Oil Company and Kaserio's Oil Company, they
named it all the three. Well, he'd come down and seen me and says,
"Boy," he says, "will you please check my door," he says, "in the
night I think the kids hitchhiking find my door open and go in there
for a drink of water and they take money from my safe." I said,
"Well, why don't you lock the safe?" He said, "The boys don't know
the combination when they go out in the morning with the oil, so they
just open the safe and take a bag." He said, "There's two bags, three
bags there, but there's one bag gone, was about fifty dollars in it."
Two days later he comes again and there's bags gone again. Then I
told him to lock the safe. So he says, "Okay," he's gonna lock
the safe. Then one morning he calls me, he says, "Hey, you told me to
lock the safe. You better come up here right away. You shouldn't of
told me to lock the safe, now my safe isn't working." He says, "Come
and see." I went up there and his safe was one of these heavy fire
vaults, you know, and hinges stuck in sort of on the outside and
they had sawed these hinges right off, you know, hacksawed them right
off and there layed the big door on the floor and the three bags of
money were gone this time. Well, seven hundred dollars in cash was
missing. So, he said to me, "You got any idea?" And I said, "I'll
have him in in a couple hours." I figured this lad right away. So,
I called the State Police in L'Anse and Francis Sanadi came there
came down and we was looking at the job and he said, "You got any
suspects?" I said, "Yeah, Fran," we were back in the City Hall,
I said, "Yeah, see that kid running down the sidewalk across the
road," I pointed out the window and there's that kid walking east on
Elm Street, I said, "There's my suspect...there's the guy that done
it." "What do you mean?" I said, "That's the kid that done it."
"Who is he?" I said, "His name is John Anderson and he's from
Detroit, Michigan." He said, "He's only a kid." I said, "He's
sixteen now," I said, "he's the boy who done it." So I me being new
at the game, he asked me, "Mind if I talk to him alone?" I says,
"Well, go ahead, you know what to ask him," and I said, "Where I've
never been in with anyone on a safe job...you talk to him." So
he was in there and he talked to this kid about three hours and he come out and he says, "You know any other suspects?" I said, "No, why?" He says, "He's not the one. This kid is innocent." I said, "Man!" He says, "Think of someone else." I said, "I quit right there. That's the guy." He said, "Well, let's go and look around." I said, "There's nothing to look for," I says. We go up to the place to see how they got in and we went up there again and we looked over the place and there was no place where they broke in, you know, we couldn't figure how they got into this place. So then way back on the barn we seen a ladder hanging and the ladder looked like it was roughed up on the rungs from climbing it, see. So, we check that ladder and we said, "Oht...oht! I bet they put that up on the roof and got in some way." So, we went up and put that ladder on the roof and climbed the roof. Well, there's a skylight up there but everything looked fine. So, we checked the skylight good and we found it. There was one plate of glass in the skylight that would slide right out. They had the bottom right out and they'd slide that right out and then slide that back in and drop down through there and they'd drop on the top of a oil truck and get down through that way. And that's when we figured out that's where those money bags are going the same way through there, you know. And I told the State Police that time, "That's gotta be the guy". And he says, "Nope!" So that night he went back and I told him, "By morning we'll have the guy." So I told the night police, I says, "Now, follow this guy whatever move he makes, follow him." And that night they called me, they says, "He went into a hock shop". I says, "Good!" I figured and I called the hock shop right away. I says, "This is Sullivan calling, the Chief of Police of Calumet." "Yes, Mr. Sullivan?" I says, "A young lad just come in there?" She says, "Yes", I says, "Keep talking to him, see what he wants to sell, raise the price tonight," I says, "because we figure he's a suspect in our B & E here." So she says, "Okay, I'll keep him talking." She kept...and the girl kept talking to him and then she come to the phone and then she told me, she said, "He said he paid fifty dollars to stay for a couple hours." "Fine and dandy," I says, "keep him right there." So then we walked down there...we drove over there and we went into the place there and I put him under arrest right there. He said he took the money out of his shoe and right there I pulled his shoes off and he had about four hundred dollars in his shoes. So I figured he got a (?) for him up there. And then he did admit...we had him in there and he admitted that him and another lad that used to work there...another lad knew the layout in there and the both of 'em we put under arrest. The kid was only sixteen, but they waived it here in the Circuit Court...
I: John, we appreciate you supplying us with this interview and we'd like to thank you very much.

R: You're welcome

II: It was not only informative but entertaining.

R: Well, some night when we got a tape, I'll make you the fight of the week.