

Interview with George and Betey Tomasi
Marquette, MI
April 7, 2009

START OF INTERVIEW

Magnaghi, Russell M. (RMM): Interview with George and Betey Tomasi, Marquette, Michigan, April 7, 2009. Okay this afternoon we are going to be focusing on the Barracks Boys and life at Northern in the early 1950's and the first question I usually ask, so we can, the person listening to the interview can put it in the right perspective. I'd like to get your birth date George.

Tomasi, George (GT): I was born June, 12, 1942 in Hermansville.

RMM: Okay, Betey?

Tomasi, Betey (BT): February 27th, 1935 in Marquette.

RMM: Okay, could you tell us a little bit about, so we can get the foundation, the idea of the Barracks Boys in general, before you got involved; just kind of an overview of the whole idea.

GT: After World War II because of the G.I. bill barracks, Vet Ville was erected on a lot of college campuses to provide housing to the G.I.'s who were returning to go to school and that happened at Northern about where the University Center is now. There were tar paper shacks for the single guys and there were Quonset huts that accommodated the married veterans. I don't know the quite number but, it was quite a substantial number of veterans who used those facilities starting about 1945. Well, in about 1955 most of those G.I.'s had passed through northern and had gone on with a career and there were building that were vacant so, C.V. Money who was football coach, basketball coach, track coach, athletic director, etc, etc, at Northern at the time. Got the idea, that, that could provide some housing and the grant and aid scholarship program was just coming to the floor in many colleges. So, I got a letter the fall, the spring of 1952, just before I graduated from high school. Telling me that I had been selected as a grant and aid recipient at Northern Michigan University and that if I wanted to accept I would have to sign something and send it back. So, that was the first I heard of it. There were 16 of us that came to Northern that fall of 1952. Most were football players some were basketball players. Most were involved in two sports. It was quite of Spartan accommodations we had very small rooms with bunk beds. We had four people in a room and part of the deal was that we had to pay the university a dollar each per month as a rent. Because, apparently, it wasn't allowed to give us a gift. So we had to actually rent the place, so they collected 16 dollars a month from us in rent. Plus we had a big old oil heater in the outer room, which served as a study area and that had to be kept going during the winter months. So, we had to collect money from ourselves pool it and buy our own fuel. The other part of the deal was that we were guaranteed a part time job on campus, which at that time paid 75 cents an hour. So, we worked 15 hours a week part time, participated in sports, lived in the barracks for a meager amount and the paycheck at the end of two weeks would be sufficient, if we were careful, to buy our food. So, in effect we got almost a free ride. Tuition and fees at that time were \$37.50 a semester, so you could easily save that much money during the summer and it was a wonderful way to go to school. School was really not on my mind when I was a senior in high school. My family, none of my sisters or

brothers had gone to college. I had a brother in law who was sort of an older mentor and he encouraged me but, I was all caught up with sports and girls and I had interviewed with the FBI, they were hiring clerical types out of highschool and didn't really know what I was going to do that fall until, the letter came from C.V. Money and then that sort of made up my mind. I had been a pretty good athlete in high school and, of course, that's why I was chosen. So, we started with that first category of 16 and there was a _____, we all bought green jackets, emblazed with Barracks Boys on the back and I think it was Corny, one of our members, decided that we should all have white buck shoes. So, that became a trademark and we swaggered around campus as an unofficial, really, athletic fraternity and it was big stuff. The university at that time had only about 800 so we were big frogs in little ponds. C.V. Money was our mentor our house mother, we had weekly meetings, we had inspections, we had to keep the place clean. We voted in a president and a treasurer every semester and if we were lucky they didn't gamble it away. They bought our fuel oil. The barracks only lasted, I think, about five years. So, when we say Barracks Boys, we have to remember that we're only about 45 who ever lived in the barracks, over that course of five years. After three years, in my senior year, Spooner Hall opened and we were given the option of living in Spooner Hall at a reduced rate or staying in the Barracks. Well, I was fortunate enough to be selected as a floor monitor or some such thing. So, I got to live in Spooner Hall for free my senior year and man was that a step up. Sandy McLane was floor monitor on one floor, I was on the second floor and we had a good time. We still had to participate in sports and do all the other things. C.V. Money and his wife were the resident advisors in Spooner Hall, so it was sort of like staying in the family. That's fond memory for me back at Northern.

RMM: Now what year did you come to Northern?

GT: 1952.

RMM: '52, so they opened Spooner than or you moved in Spooner then in?

GT: '55, the fall of '55. I graduated in '56 and President Harden came the following year. We met him at our commencement in the spring of '56, he had just come to town and was going to take over and of course after that he replaced _____. When I left in '56 there were about 750, 800, students, Betey and I moved back to Marquette and I joined the staff at northern in the fall of '67, so we had only been gone 11 years and enrollment was over 7000. So, it went from virtually 700 to 7000 in eleven years.

RMM: Did you know how C.V. Money identified you and the other 16?

GT: That I don't know. I don't know. He had many contact in the sports writers circle. I know he subscribed to the Menominee, the Escanaba paper, the Sault paper; he kept his fingers on U.P. sports pretty well. In some of the information I left you for instance, he would be the referee in the U.P. track meets in Escanaba. So, he had, and a lot of the people who were coaching at the time were graduates of his program. So, he had a lot of contacts with sports people. But, no I don't know and I mean all the Barracks Boys came from the Upper Peninsula, we had people from downstate and out of state, one fellow from Pennsylvania I don't know how C.V. Money found him, but he was in the program. So, I don't know.

RMM: Now, C.V. Money seemed to be a highly engaged individual in terms of being involved with the sports writers, being a referee, and getting the newspapers, and seemed to want to be engaged. He didn't just sit here at Northern and have things come to him. He seemed to go out and engage.

GT: He was totally engaged. We usually joke with his son _____, who we called Cash, who was still here in my freshman year about, you know, does your mom ever see your dad because he was here from early morning to late at night, writing articles, planning his trips, all of his down state basketball trips, football trips, he would do that, he would order, he had no assistants, so he would order all his own equipment and take inventory. I served as student manager for the football team one year, and he was on me all the time for not having the right colored socks paired for the team on Friday's game. I mean he was into it, right up to his eye balls. I don't know, the man was a one man dynamite and people loved him. People, who got to know him, really loved him.

RMM: Well let's get your background Betey, you were from Marquette?

BT: Yes, I was from Marquette and my background was in music. My mother was the premiere music teacher in the area and when I graduated from the high school I thought you went to college to study music, I didn't realize there were other possibilities, and I'm not sorry. So, I arrived in 53 and we met that fall and we both kind of knew that you know, it wasn't until after that New Years 54 that we started seriously dating, but getting back to it if I may, the Barracks Boys. It was a definite plus for the girl to be a townie or a town girl because he talked about buying there fuel oil. That was if they bought the fuel oil, if they didn't snow would come up through the boards and you would have a couple of guys with very bad colds at the very least, who needed mothering and nursing and a home to stay well they recuperated. Well sandy would get sick occasionally but he was my cousin so naturally he would come to our house to recuperate, that wasn't very exciting for me. But once he got sick and I brought him home and my mother had seen him on the basketball floor anyways, so I knew she would take him. So, it was kind of a conspiracy.

GT: I guess.

BT: But anyways, we also had Sunday night suppers to offer, in town and the dorms weren't served on Sunday night as you probably know. So you really had the advantage if you lived in town. I can think of several, Guildo married a town girl, Sam Bogaren married a town girl, he did and offhand I can't think of anymore, but you know what I'm saying. So, it worked out very nicely for us. And he graduated in 56 and I only had three years in but I didn't want to wait any longer to get married. Finished up my degree later after the kids were in school. So, I do have it. But, it just was a very workable thing, we both belonged to the Catholic Church, which in those days was important, not so much anymore but it was back then, so that worked well.

RMM: Now at that time you were what parish?

BT: Saint Michaels began in 1945 and my family were charter members that belonged to the cathedral before that. It was only what 7 or 8 years old?

GT: Saint Michaels didn't look like today's Saint Michaels.

BT: No it was an old dormitory.

GT: That used to be Northern's Women's Dorm.

BT: When it was the normal school. So that was the original Saint Michaels and that's the church we were married in the old thing. The dormitories and Barracks seemed to be a running thing in our lives.

RMM: Now that was the church there, Saint Michaels, that was the old, the old cafeteria on the ground floor on the basement floor of the building? No?

GT: It was always Saint Michaels as long as I was in Marquette. We just read an article in the paper recently that the church bought it from LongYear so LongYear must have owned it and though it was previously a women's dormitory I understand.

BT: He probably owned the land.

RMM: Yea, he owned the land then he had _____ build the dormitory so it was a private, it didn't belong to Northern and also the president Waldo and his family lived there.

BT: Oh, okay that's new to me. I thought Northern may have rented it or something.

RMM: They rented the space out. Then the church bought it, the Catholic Church bought it. It was 1917 or something.

BT: Way back. Wasn't constructed and ready for use until 1945.

RMM: No but then they used; the church of Saint Michaels used the building. I think the old cafeteria was the church.

BT: That could be because in the beginning we had up through fourth grade. Kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade, in the building with the church and each year they added another until they had eighth grade in there. So I was able to go by, I went to John E. Pierce training school until second grade because that's when Saint Michaels opened, so each year I was lucky because they added another year and I could stay there until getting out of the eighth grade.

GT: When we were at Northern, the university did not use that building at all. It was totally a church.

BT: That was totally Saint Michaels Church.

GT: I can't say what happened to that building prior to that.

RMM: Well in the 1920's they housed sisters who would come, because of the cool weather and all, they had here cabins, they would come from around the Midwest and attend Northern and then live right across the street in the dorms. We won't get into the condition _____.

BT: But it was cooler.

RMM: But it was cooler for them.

BT: The teaching order at Saint Michaels was Saint Joseph _____ and they have their mother house in Saint Louis.

RMM: So you talked about your mother being a music teacher. What was the family name? What was her name?

BT: My family was Beyers and my dad was a building contractor until I was in high school and then the building folded so mother, luckily, had this super ability to teach and she gained quite a national reputation really she was so old and she's turned a lot of people to be here playing around here today. Bobby Butchgold, Linda Benzie Farrell, Don Bents, people that you might run into, they were all students of his and so we're very proud of her.

RMM: So She then picked up when your dad's business...?

BT: Well she had been teaching before that, so she just expanded.

RMM: Then did you play any particular instrument?

BT: Well, I was trained at home on the piano and this is a little aside but I had a younger brother and an older brother. The younger brother was a music genius kind of a prodigy or whatever you want to call it and I was just ordinary, and I knew that, I could tell and everything I tried to do, he could do better. It was one of those situations, if I played the clarinet, he could do it better. If I played the violin, he could do it better and I thought to myself when I was about in eighth grade, what can I do that he can't do? I'll become a soprano. At that point you could still do that, it was only in sixth grade but I thought he'll get over it and we still have to this day the closest friendship and he's in Baltimore he's a concert pianist and teacher, he still teaches. But, we had the best friendship, we performed together, it was just the most healthy, wonderful, fulfilling friendship. Which as I say, goes on today, we still have our weekly phone calls.

RMM: Now did he attend Northern?

BT: He did for a short time, but then he went east and went to the _____ and got his degree there. Degrees, I should say.

RMM: What is his name?

BT: Chad Beyers, John Foster Beyers. He has performed here on campus and three of his kids performed with him in, what is that?

RMM: Jamrich.

BT: Jamrich 102. He did a concert on Kaufman. So that's why I thought music was the only thing to study. I was just delighted to find there were other things in the world.

RMM: Now what did you major in George?

BT: When I came to Northern, because there was a scholarship available, I majored in elementary education, for one semester. Then I decided I really didn't want to do the teaching so I switched to business administration and got my degree there. I majored in accounting, minored in economics and math and that sort of _____ there.

BT: It was a good thing that he did that because with our nine children you need business. He has guided us through a lot of perils in the economic thing.

RMM: So then you graduated in?

GT: In the spring of '56.

RMM: You guys got married in?

BT: 1956.

RMM: '56.

GT: After I graduated. I Graduated in June of '56. I had an interview with Michigan Bell Telephone Company on campus. Which was considered the cream of the crop, as far as job opportunities and they selected four of us, three or four, three of us and offered us management training positions and so I was delighted and I set off in June of 1956 for the big city of Detroit. Can you imagine that? Except for basketball trips I don't think I'd been out of the U.P.

BT: Probably not.

GT: So, I went to find my fortune in the big city of Detroit, in the summer of '56. Bete and I set a wedding date for August of 56 and Michigan Bell was an interesting place. They had a management training program, that put you in different positions, different offices, and different responsibilities about every six months. Transferred, so we moved all over south east Michigan the first two years, three years, four years, whatever. Then they moved me out to Saginaw which was there Outstate District Headquarters and for the first time we were back in a smaller community atmosphere. Bete got involved in local theatre, did some singing. I got involved in local politics, you could walk down the street and recognize people, unlike Detroit and those suburbs, you could recognize the mayor if you saw him. So, all the sudden we realized we really missed the small town and really didn't care for suburban Detroit living. A couple of other things happened. Drugs were coming onto the scene in the Detroit area. One of our little kids was almost picked up by some pervert outside of our house. I mean we thought you know this is really going to hell in a hand basket. They had riots, we lived through that, we lived in Royal Oak when Detroit was burning down and that wasn't any place for kids from the U.P.

BT: By then we had seven children.

GT: We had seven children, so we decided, why don't we go up North on our vacation. This was the summer of '67. We had been down there 11 years. Why don't we go up to the U.P. and really look to see if there are job opportunities, because we had that on our minds. We'd love to live up there, but there are no jobs. Well, maybe there are maybe there aren't. So, we took a week and came up here and I interviewed at the University, the bank, Cliff and Cliffs, the hospital, _____, wherever if applied there might be a reasonable job. Filled out applications, left resumes, and said there were going back and if nothing happened at least we can say we tried. We have a good job, we have a nice home, you know, Bete was teaching part time with music students. So we were doing well and my _____ the Vice President for Public services, at that time they called the Continuing Ed division, called in September, we had only been up here in August. He called me in September and says, "We're very interested can you meet Don Jackson and me, we're gonna be over on the campus of the University of Michigan, for an interview." So I went over to Ann Arbor and meant with Don and Quad and they said, "We're prepared to make you a job offer, if you're really interested." And I said, "Well yea, we're interested." I went back

to work and told Betey we might have an opportunity and sure enough it all came through and they said, "how soon can you start?" and I said, "Well, let's talk about a few things like, how much can you pay me and so forth?" So, they made a reasonable offer and I decided I could be up here on October, the first. So, it all happened between August and October. Betey was pregnant with our twins, which we didn't know were twins at the time. Stayed behind flipped a car, had to sell the house, and I drove up here with my new boss and went to work. We had called Betey's dad and said, "Dad..."

BT: "We're coming home."

GT: And they said, "Whoopdeedoo, great." I said, "But we gotta find a house fast." And at that time of course Northern was expanding by leaps and bounds and real estate was pricey. He said, "Well, seven going on eight children, you're probably going to need four bedrooms. That's going to be expensive." And as luck would have it, and we say this often, the good lord was with us, he really was. I look back and say, "Where did I have the courage, where did I find the courage to come to Northern, to go and work in Detroit, to join a bunch of sophisticated executive types?" I had no idea how it would end or behave or what that future held. Planned to get married when all of that was pretty contingent, you know, and we were sort of on probation for a year and then we decided to give that all up when it was going rather well and move back to a job that I didn't know the first thing about, you know, and take a pretty substantial cut in pay and we said, "we don't know where we're going to live." Well the good lord, I think was really looking over us. Betey's mothers were bridge players, and they were playing bridge with a couple, the lady, the bridge player lady, was a former Spear girl. Spear, of course, is one of the premiere old families in this town and the Spear home on East Ridge Street, the old Victorian, that is now occupied by Dr. Mathews, had been sitting vacant for five years. She did not want it turned into a fraternity house nor did she want it turned into apartments. So, she just sat on it. No one had been upstairs for ten years. Old Mrs. Spear lived with her maid, or somebody who took care of her, only on the first floor. They went from the kitchen to the living room, where she had a bed and so he asked during this bridge game, "what are you gonna do about the big old house on East Ridge Street? And she said, "You know if the right family came a long, I think I'm ready to part with it now." He said, "I think I know just the family." So he said, "What would you want for it?" She did the price and he called and said I think I found a house for you, it's going to take a little work but I think it's a good deal. What house? Well its 455 East Ridge Street, it's a big Victorian. I had been down East Ridge Street as a student, but I didn't remember. So I said, "Betey do you remember the Old Spear home?" Well she remembered what it looked like from the outside and you called it the old haunted house.

BT: I don't know, whatever, it was pretty bad, it was in bad shape.

GT: We thought what the heck, if her dad says it's a good deal and it's big and it has a lot of rooms, a nice section of town, let's do it. So we sent him a deposit. He put the deposit down for us and we bought it sight unseen. So I came up a couple weeks later, and I got here late at night and I said, "We gotta go see the house we gotta go see the house." He said, "No, no you don't want to see the house, its cold."

BT: And you were running a fever.

GT: "Tomorrow we'll go see the house." No, no, no the old house isn't sold yet and I got this house in Marquette. So he said, "okay." So we got in his car and we drove up to East Ridge Street, no power, no lights, no heat had a flash light, walk in and the door creeks. Okay, so we walked through the house and its echoing and its cold and it's full of cob webs and we went back to his house and I said, "Are we committed?" And he said, "I'm afraid so." So I went back the next day and looked at it.

BT: It didn't look nearly so bad.

GT: The ceilings weren't really forty feet tall and it looked like it had possibilities, but it needed a lot of work. So I would go to work at northern at five o'clock in the morning and at five o'clock, I didn't have a car, I would walk from campus to east ridge street, where I had my coveralls and my paint and my rollers and my brushes and my wallpaper cleaner and my buckets and my mop. I wanted to get the place livable before Bete moved up and as it turned out I had one month because I came up here October the first and she ended up coming up November the first; with seven plus kids and a moving van.

GT: I didn't come alone he came back to get us.

RMM: The House had to be prepared for not just you, but the family?

BT: I had to keep it showable with seven little kids running around. The oldest was about eight. So I had a piano teaching business so I had to close that down and we were expecting another baby, so it was a little hectic, but we were young, you do what you have to do.

GT: So, I would spend every evening on a step ladder at the old house and it was amazing I kept getting interrupted, because people who had been in that neighborhood for years had never been in that house and they were curious, so they would see a light and I would hear this knock on the door and I'm painting the closet or a ceiling and I would hear a knock on the door. "Hello anybody in there, can we come in?" "Sure come in." And they would just look around it because they were intrigued with the old place, but it was an interruption. Anyway, we got every closet painted, every ceiling painted, every wall washed, it was all wall paper, every floor scrubbed before she got here, so it wasn't all that bad, but it needed a lot of work. The plumbing had rusted out, so we got to know the _____ plumbers by their first names. It had no storm windows, so the curtains would blow when the wind blew. The old furnace was a steam boiler. Luckily they had converted from cold oil, we quickly converted to natural gas and that functioned rather well, I mean, but you would get all these funny noises in the night with the steam expanded and contracting, so the kids were sure it was a haunted house.

BT: We did very little to dispel that, they were having too much fun with it.

GT: Russ, the lord pushed us there and we made the most of it. Luckily we're both blessed with energy and health. But, we were in the house for 24 years. We never stopped fixing, there was always something to wallpaper, paint or fix, insulate and it turned out to be a great place to raise the kids. Big rooms, lots of rooms, it had six bedrooms on the second floor and for an old house it had six bathrooms, can you imagine that? A big kitchen, a big dining room, and the place really in a sense had been never abused, the woodwork was fantastic, the sliding doors between the living and the dining room.

BT: It had a ____ varnish _____.

GT: All the knobs and the poles were brass and had a special oriental design. Never varnished, never painted, just exquisite. There was cherry in one room and oak in another and walnut in the other room and if there was a door between them the door was half walnut and half oak. It was built in 1882 by a lumber baron and I couldn't Ferber, James _____, then he quickly sold it, his wife died and the second owner was Ferber and it was a magnificent place to raise the kids. We sold it in 1989 and moved out to the lake in 1990 but it was good.

RMM: Because then I remember later on, this kind of being a showplace house.

BT: We fixed it up so that it did become that, the Milwaukee Sentinel came up to interview us on some scuba business things and they saw the house and said we need to do a story on this too. He worked like a Trojan on it and the next summer it was pain the outside. It was not fun.

RMM: You did that yourself?

GT: Yes.

BT: He did most of it.

GT: It hadn't been painted it years, it was faded and the paint was peeling and the ____ boards were warped and cracked, so it was three days of scraping, nailing, and caulking and then one day of painting, so it was a very laborious job, but the details outside of those houses is just magnificent, _____. So I enjoyed it tremendously, but you needed a 40 foot ladder to reach the top, but one discouraging thing is that when we were doing that exterior paint job, which must have been like 68 or 69, the old coal dock was still down where Madison Park is and it took me all summer to scrape, caulk, paint the front. Just the front not the side and it looked magnificent, brilliant white with great trim and blue around the windows and I was so proud of it. We finished before it got too cold and then of course we went inside and didn't think about it until next spring. Spring I came out thinking I was going to start on the side and I looked at the paint, it was no longer white it was gray, because the coal dust had been blowing up the hill. Well you have to go back and change the color schemes, well as luck would have it, that coal dock went away, so you took about good fortune.

BT: Everything was working in our favor.

GT: That's a long way from barracks boys.

RM: Yeah, yeah, but that's a result of being a Barracks Boys. Let's go back to the barracks boys in terms of some of those trips that you took. You were in basketball? Could you talk a little bit about how C.V. Money organized some of the basketball trips and the stories connected them?

GT: Well I don't know a whole lot. I hear some things from the other Barracks Boys, like sandy McLane and some of the other guys who seemed to know more about the inner workings than I did. All I know is that we never stayed in five star hotels; we were in a very low budget. He didn't give you a meal allowance, he ordered for you. They were not, you know, and we had a bus that was not a brand new air conditioned bus. It was a, I don't know, probably worn out Grey Hound that the university owned and one of the custodial crew was certified to do the driving for us, so Frank (Schwemen) did a lot of our driving, but if you didn't know any better it was fine, it don't mean that we were critical of it, but it was fine, you went on a trip, you went on a bus. If it was just the basketball team he often just took his car and one university car, I don't know if they had university cars or not, but we'd take like ten guys and go and we'd play basketball in two automobiles, that was it. But, the football squad of course needed the whole bus. The longest trip I was on was during spring break the winter of '54 or '53, when we met it in Chicago.

BT: Not '53 because I didn't get there...

GT: It was '54.

BT: Yes I think it was '54 in fact I know it was '54, yes because something very significant had happened.

GT: '54, he had planned a semester break trip down state. I forget exactly, but I think we stopped and played Albion in basketball and then went on to play Findlay, Ohio. I remember that one because he was from Findlay, so that was his home town and then we went on to play somebody else in Indiana and then we came back and played Aurora, Illinois and we stayed overnight in Chicago and as luck would have it, Betty's music...

BT: _____ was our _____ director.

GT: Had planned a trip to Chicago, so we were able to meet in Chicago.

BT: It was called the Collegiac Chorale, there were eight men and eight women in it and he decided to, that it would be a special treat for us to go to Chicago and see a musical, Anything Goes. When we found out we were going to meet in the city the same night, nothing could stop us from _____, and Sam Bogaran was in town with the basketball team and his girlfriend was also in the coral, so the four of us did the town of Chicago.

GT: Did the town? We went to a movie.

BT: Went to the movie King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table and don't ask me what it's about because we sat in the back row.

GT: So Russ, there weren't many overnight trips, because at that time our schedule was Michigan Tech, _____ College, Northland College, who else did we play? There may have been trips down state, Superior, and in a lot of cases you didn't even stay overnight, so staying overnight was something extraordinary, as I recall anyway. On that big trip, I remember, we stayed in hotel where there were a lot of comings and goings and Sandy McLane says it was a house of ill repute, but I don't really believe that, C.V. Money wouldn't put us in that situation, but we would have one room, a double bed, and two guys would sleep in it and think nothing of it. I remember I bunked one time on that Indiana trip with Spencer _____, boy from the Copper Country, he was a Barracks Boy. We were both freshman we were on the basketball team and during the night the bed broke. My side went down so I had a thirty degree list and he was on the upside down on the downside and we managed to sleep without getting up and fixing the bed, can you imagine that?

BT: But they weren't meant for two great big basketball players.

GT: But, the next morning I discovered that my shoe was under the bed and it was bent in an odd position all night so I had trouble getting it on. When I finally did get it on I couldn't walk very well, so I'm coming down to breakfast and the coach says, "Are you hurt?" and I said, "No, just my shoes is bent."

BT: Then in 1968 we started a whole new career called the scuba thing, but that can wait for another time, but it was a complete life change for us.

RMM: Yea we were kind of talking, you were talking about coming back to the U.P. and then the house, yea we have time.

BT: Well it was kind of interesting I had just had the twins, we celebrated Mothers Day by having twins, in spring of 68 and George had hired a new man to work in his office, his staff was expanding a little bit in the conference and so I met the new man and he told us that he was a scuba instructor, Scott Hollman and he was _____ at Northern, anyway. He said I'm starting a class tonight in scuba diving why don't you and George get into it? Well it's a good thing we didn't have any notice because I thought I really could use the exercise after having the twins, so in October we both went to the scuba class and once was enough for me I quit irrevocably, I thought he was trying to drown us and all the rest of it. Well, they came over for coffee the next morning and talked me into giving it another try. So, I go over on Sunday nights to practice being more comfortable in the water and eventually after quitting two or three more times we finished the course and eventually we became instructors and then we built it into a mom, pop, and kids business. We had a little retail outlet, our kids were getting older, and could help, at this point. We needed a college education fund because his salary was fine, just to live on, but it wasn't going to get the kids through college. So, we built this little empire almost and I did most of the teaching over here, he had a charter shipwreck operation down in Munising in the weekends in the warmer months and we had a retail outlet on 3rd street and the older boys would leave high school, comeback to the shop and run that until dinner time, they would take turn for dinner and then go back and run it in the evening and so this worked out real well and we decided we could do better with our charters if we became instructor trainers, so we had all the facilities, campus was here and that's what we were using anyway to do the training, Hedgecock, the pool was still in Hedgecock at that time. We decided to get those credentials, so we started the instructor training course as a summer camp on campus, so those instructors would come in from all over the Midwest: Chicago, Minneapolis, Detroit, all that. Then they would go back and train their students and bring them back the following summer to dive on his charter, so we had this kind of a thing going, you know, I taught, they left with their credentials. They taught and brought back students and they could organize any kind of a class, if you will, on his boat. They could have an advanced diver class, a wreck diving class, whatever they wanted to do and get there students more comfortable and certified beyond, you know, and that could always be a good feeling. So anyway, it worked out really well for us and it did get our kids through college. They worked, they all had to work, not all of them in the scuba business but the older girls wanted to do girl type work, like work in a fashion store or something like that, but they all had to contribute and it really was a workable thing you know. I was a music teacher, what am I doing teaching people how to teach scuba diving and yet on spring break we would take groups down into the Caribbean Islands and we could go for free because we did the organizing. We actually were able to take every one of the kids at least once to some exotic spot either Mexico or an island, so it was another gift from above and we just kind of changed our thinking and okay it's here, let's take advantage of it. So, it was real nice.

RMM: This came out of nowhere?

BT: Out of nowhere. Except we know where it came from.

GT: The reason we got it was after Scott worked for me for a year we were going through one of our _____ programs on campus and I was told that I had to let the assistant go and so I had to tell Scott that he was no longer employed at Northern and because he went off and ended up working at the Foundry in Iron Mountain we took over the scuba operation. So it really was Scott who started the program, we took over and expanded it. The scuba thing had a lot of other facets to it for us, we called it John Boy's college fund, remember the Waltons? John Boy was there college fund and they were always robbing it

for some sort of crisis, well we decided we need a John Boy's college fund, so at the end of the year after all the bills had been paid and they had their wages and so forth, if there was a profit it could go Pain Webber, Betey's cousin was the broker at that time Wally Bruce, and we talked to Wally, the kids would go with us and Wally would say, "Well how much do you have to invest." I'd say well, "I only got three thousand dollars." "Well what stocks do you want to buy?" And the kids would pick out the stocks.

BT: Pepsi, Dominos, Pepsi, everything...

GT: "Well I think we ought to buy Pizza Hut," one kid would say, and Wally would say, "Well why do you think that's a good investment." And he treated them like adults it was great. "Well because they make the best pizza," well that's probably as good of rationale as any for investing. So we would end up owning stocks and the kids would actually look at the financial before the comic section in the Sunday paper and they want to know how come my pizza stock went down last week. So it became a lesson in economics but we never gave our kids an allowance but they always had a job. They could sell t-shirts off the end of the van after the dives in Munising, everybody would have a Wreck Diving t-shirt, they could dry and take home, or they would get an hourly wage for working at the store and it worked out just fine they learned how to manage their own money, much better than if I had given them.

BT: Our philosophy was and this goes back to my parents, you don't give a kid money just because they live in the house. We always had the option of asking for chores each of which had a price tag on how much money we needed that week. My regular job, because mother taught piano until six o'clock, was to get the dinners. One time I was eleven years old for a family of five, so I was able to make enough to go to the movie on Saturday and maybe buy a pop. So that was there way, my dad didn't believe in welfare, he said in welfare we just hand them money for nothing. He had the same experience where we didn't call it those names, but the opportunity was there to get money if you wanted to but not for nothing, so we lived by that philosophy.

RMM: So you used the scuba diving operation to have jobs for your kids, but then you're also making money from that to send them to school?

BT: Oh yeah.

RMM: That came to you just about...

BT: About the time we needed.

GT: And we kept that going that was really a time taker because it was every evening, every weekend, whether she was teaching and had two of the kids with her, and there were a couple of kids watching the store, or I was out on the boat every Saturday and Sunday, so that went on year after year after year all summer. From about Memorial Day to the middle of September and then it slowed down. She did most of the teaching in the winter and the store. We did a lot of work at the store. We got rid of it when the last child left home. That was enough already.

BT: Well we did enjoy but it was very strenuous.

GT: I kept the boat one year after the last child left and well it was always fun to load up the cooler with lunch stuff and then drive down to Munising early Saturday morning to gas up the boat and get ____ for the day and take the people out diving, ____ were with a couple of the kids it was an adventure, but I

found that after they left and I had to do that alone it wasn't the same and then I sold the boat and they asked me to run it for another year and that was even worse because then it wasn't even my boat, so it lost its flavor when the kids were gone.

BT: Well it was time anyway.

GT: We said well that was a nice chapter, now let's move on.

BT: It had served its purpose but we continued to dive in Hawaii and different places. In fact our last dive was in 2003 on Fuji. Anyway we have taken enough of your time.

RMM: Well no this has been fine this has been a solid amount. Okay well that kind of puts some form to the Barracks Boys and then also the two of you and your story, and sort of what happened. Because, a lot of times we'll get the early part of the story and then we never know what happened which is always successful and so on. You have to bring it to a conclusion.

GT: Well I would like to finish by saying that the group of guys who had lived in the Barracks got to be very close physically and emotionally and even though we don't see each other for years at a time when you get back together it's like family.

BT: You probably sense that when you saw them and big Ed____ he was about 6'6" he couldn't make it, he's in Pennsylvania, we don't know if he's ill or not he didn't explain why.

RMM: So, the Barracks Boys were the only group that was like that? I mean there weren't any other groups that formed.

GT: Well there was the ____ Fraternity, you know a couple of fraternity on campus at the time but this was not a fraternity, even though we got a picture in the year book as The Barracks Boy's we were not official.

BT: It was a kind of an elite club.

GT: And you had to participate in two sports and you had to be accepted by C.V. Money, so it was an elite group.

RMM: Now do you have pictures or are there, maybe Pangrazzi has them, of this outfit that you had the jacket and the?

GT: I think we're wearing them here but you can't see the back, but those are the _____.

RMM: And the shoes?

GT: No, I think the shoes came later. Maybe, I don't know.

RMM: Oh you're saying this is the first year?

GT: This was the first year; C.V. took that and gave us each a copy, that's right.

RMM: Even there he had it together in taking a historic picture.

GT: How did he find these people I Don't know _____ from Detroit, _____ Houghton, _____ from Iron River, Sam _____ from Wyendotte, Tiny _____ from Iron Wood, Me, Anderson from Menominee, I don't know where he as from, _____ from Iron Mountain. Bill Barnes from downstate somewhere, Iron Mountain, Norway, Jerry Pangrazzi from Crystal Falls, Corny from Nahma, Wakefield. So a lot of them were from the U.P. but not all and then the second year we got a different crew in.

RMM: It wasn't like everybody was from Marquette, its like spread out across the U.P. interesting, interesting.

BT: I would just like to add one kind of ending to our family's story because ties back into when _____. We had a daughter Julie who graduated with a music degree and at age 24 she was killed in a car accident, so we have a scholarship in her name.

RMM: Wasn't she training in music?

BT: Well, actually wanted to be a performer, she was a performer and she had been in Miss Michigan twice, once she was in the final five, once she was in the final ten, I think. But, she had won talent, two different things, piano and voice. And she had won bathing suit, was not important to me at all, but the talent was. So, she was a beautiful girl but it just happened, so that was how we chose to honor her.

RMM: And that's still there...

BT: It worked for me very well too because I'm happy to help out the music development. It is still going strong and this is now more than twenty five years ago.

RMM: Well thank you. We do have here two forms, what you can do is, read them over, one is just going to ask for your address and so on and it's basically saying it's okay that we put this in the archives and people can listen to it and this one is a government consent to act as human subjects. Somebody got the idea that doing interviews put you in the categories of a guinea pig.

BT: This isn't anything medical, I trust.

RMM: No it basically says, if you read through here, it basically says that I didn't coheres you to do the interview and its highly controversial, should we sign it, so on and so on? I said, "Let's not get into it because then you will get government officials coming and stopping our funds because we didn't fill out a form." And I said, "Let's fill out the form."

GT: Can't fight city hall.

BT: Did you want us to do that right now?

RMM: Yes, and if you want you can fill out the whole thing or just you can sign it and I can fill in the details.

END OF INTERVIEW