

Interview with Wayne Legrave

September 8th, 1997

Marquette, MI

Russel Magnaghi: "Okay, Wayne, we can just kind of roam around here to a point. We can't go too far, but tell us a little about your background. You were here at Northern in the 1950's?"

Wayne Legrave: "I enrolled at Northern fall of '56, graduated in 1960. Just as soon as I got to Northern, according to my memory, Spooner Hall had just been built, so us boys lived in Spooner Hall. I started working at the cafeteria here at 75 cents an hour. I can take you around on a tour as to where everything exactly was."

R.M.: "Let's just start here, since we are standing in the lobby of Lee Hall, could you comment on who used the office space and sort of what this area was like back in '56?"

W.L.: "Well, this office space here, that was occupied by Mr. Lawson, who was, I don't recall his exact position title, but he was our boss and all of the cooks in the cafeteria."

R.M.: "So was he maybe the director of Lee Hall, then?"

W.L. "I would guess that, yes."

R.M. "What was this lobby area, was it as it is now?"

W.L. "This lobby has not changed other than the paint. Same floor, same steps, same everything according to my memory."

R.M. "And then what went into those two doors there with the circular glass?"

W.L. "I don't recall; I do not recognize them."

R.M. "And then where the art gallery is now, that used to be what?"

W.L. "That used to be the public cafeteria. It was open on weekends to the public...during the weekdays also; it was open to the public. Of course, Spooner Hall had its own cafeteria for the boys and Carey Hall had its own cafeteria here for the girls."

R.M. "And what was in where the art and design offices are, what was in there, back then?"

W.L. "This section? This section, there was a large lounge with chairs and couches, this whole thing here. Am I right?"

Unknown Speaker: "Yes, because Judy Summers just said that, and there was a door to go into the girl's dining room."

W.L. "Yes, that is right."

R.M. "Okay, we will take a break now and move on."

R.M. "Okay, now we've moved into...what was this, the kitchen?"

W.L. "This was the kitchen; this was where all of the meals were made. Hanging on this wall was the time clock, and all of our time cards."

R.M. "Okay, so that is on the wall to the right of the doorway as we come into the kitchen."

W.L. "That is right. I remember very vividly starting out at 75 cents an hour and I thought that was really good pay, because I had just come from the farm in the Stevenson, Michigan area. I graduated from Stevenson High School in 1956."

R.M. "Okay."

W.L. "And, this is where the stoves were lined up."

R.M. "Where this, artwork area is now with the display case. There were stoves in this area?"

W.L. "All of this area was stoves and then here, in this area..."

R.M. "Where there is a wall now?"

W.L. "That is where the salad section was."

R.M. "So did it go beyond to what is now the dark room?"

W.L. "Yes, I was back in that area."

R.M. "Just that whole area there?"

W.L. "Yes, and then around behind this wall was all lined up with sinks. I don't remember what the sinks were used for. Under this large hood here, that was where the pots and pans were cleaned. I used to work in there all summer. I don't recall what...I think this is where they peeled the potatoes, etcetera and mashed them, but I am not sure. These are still the old brick walls that were here. Of course, in '56, it was relatively new."

R.M. "So then, everything that is here, is pretty much the way it was, in terms of the walls it's on and the space is divided up, except for the intrusion of the art equipment."

W.L. "Exactly, exactly."

R.M. "So the kitchen then, was this space that we are looking at right here. The entire operation was it here."

W.L. "This was the kitchen for Northern Michigan College. In those days it was a college yet."

R.M. "Now, what went through that door where the fellow is coming out?"

W.L. "I do not recall."

R.M. "Was that a freezer, maybe?"

W.L. "I have no idea. Now, around past that hood, on the end, there was a large walk-in cooler or freezer, but I do not recall this."

R.M. "In this complex, where did they wash the dishes...?"

W.L. "Over here; I spent four years in this corner."

R.M. "Okay, we will take a break here."

R.M. "Okay, so this corner area here was used as what?"

W.L. "This was where all of the big dish washers were. They started here and then you had to clean them. "

R.M. "So sort of in the west side of the room here...?"

W.L. "Yes, and then they had to shove the plates through some large machines here."

R.M. "Up against the window...?"

W.L. "Yes, and then they would come out over here and the machines went up above the window. And then from here, I forgot what happened with them. Anyway, I stood here for four years doing dishes, and that is how I worked myself through college. About my sophomore year, it went up to 85 cents per hour. It still was big money."

R.M. "Now, you were saying, as we were passing the dumbwaiter here."

W.L. "Yes and there was an elevator here, or a dumbwaiter here, as well as another one a little larger here. This is where food was shipped up to the ball room every night that there was a banquet. There was no climbing up and down these stairs. And the stuff to be cleaned came down here to be cleaned."

R.M. "Okay, so the two dumbwaiters had one sent with clean food and plates and the other one came from the other side."

W.L. "You're right."

R.M. "Okay."

W.L. "And, if I can interrupt doctor, and this here is the cook's office."

R.M. "Okay, the little office in the side door."

W.L. "Yes, I remember Mrs. Johnson, she was the head cook. What a lovely woman. She had two or three cooks under her. One was the gal who did nothing but prepare all of the salads in this area up here."

R.M. "So this area that you are talking about, just for the record, that was the salad area, is now closed off."

W.L. "That is right, you are correct."

R.M. "And then the Carey Hall dining room then was through that doorway here."

W.L. "And so that area that whole area now, there is a class going on at the end there, but at the time that whole area was open there, from where the class is right up to the door."

W.L. "It was all dining room."

R.M. "And then this was the...well, how did they serve the food? A buffet or a hot table?"

W.L. "I can't remember the name, the same set up as the high schools."

Unknown Speaker: "Cafeteria style, you go through a line."

R.M. "Okay, and that was out here then, in that room: the tables and the hot table."

W.L. "As well as the same setup in Spooner."

R.M. "Now, do you have anything else about the space, and if you don't can you tell us a little about the pranks and some of the humorous things that went on here as the students worked: either yourself or the other workers?"

W.L. "There wasn't that much, so much of it has faded away, so I wouldn't do justice if I explained it, but not much, nothing serious."

R.M. "Now, how many student employees do you think were working here when you were here?"

W.L. "Oh, I can't remember, I cannot remember..."

Unknown Speaker: "Well, we had 900 students at the college at that time..."

R.M. "That was about it, yeah. But you didn't have that many living on campus, because all you had was Carey Hall which I think had about 200, and Spooner was built in two parts, so I think when you were here in '56, only half of it was done, so there was only 250...well, I don't have the exact figure, but there were even a smaller number than there are today in that building, so the facility here didn't have that many to feed, except for the cafeteria. The cafeteria would bring students in. Now, where did they store the produce? You talked about the freezer, but did they have potatoes and onions?"

W.L. "Yes, but I cannot recall where it was stored now."

R.M. "You think it was down that...we can go down there..."

R.M. "Okay, now we are through the door now. This was the loading dock."

W.L. "I remember this very well, I used to help."

R.M. "And through there is an elevator, so they must have..."

W.L. "I don't recall the elevator."

R.M. "Okay."

Unknown Speaker: "Downstairs there was a storing area, yeah. They stored everything down there."

R.M. "Okay, so like the jars of mayonnaise and mustard and all of that. And what was just beyond there...but through these doors there is a little hallway...was that just the entry into the Spooner Hall dining room?"

W.L. "You're right, but just beyond the shelving there was a large walk-in cooler. I don't remember it being a freezer."

R.M. "Just a cooler. Okay. So do you think there were freezers then in the basement?"

W.L. "I don't recall any freezers in the basement."

R.M. "So maybe the food moved so quickly that they just had coolers then and it was in and out. And then this area with the hood then was where the pots and pans were cleaned...the heavy duty washing was done as opposed to the other area where it was just dishes."

W.L. "That is correct, yes."

R.M. "So did they have the hoods and the ducts to take the air out."

W.L. "I don't recall, I would assume they did."

R.M. "But it didn't look like this, with all of this heavy ventilation system and all?"

W.L. "No."

R.M. "Alright, any other things either of you want to comment on?"

W.L. "No, that is about it doc!"

R.M. "Okay, well I appreciate it, we get a little insight as to what was going on here a little while back in the beginning practically."

W.L. "It was very enjoyable explaining all of it."

R.M. "Well, thank you."

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