

Interview with G. Fortin
December 1, 2000
Interviewer: Karl Shunk
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GF: ...I was down at Kovinda one day. Nothing but ????. All the buildings were gone. The old house burnt.

KS: What was your Dad's name?

GF: John Batist Fortin.

KS: All this land in Calvin, was this all trees when he bought the property?

GF: No. Right now you're sitting on Sternville property. By the railway right there, on that side it's Calvin and on this side it's Sternville.

KS: So it's right on the border.

GF: We owned up to the woods over there and then back to the river that way. ??? I spent a lot of days clearing land. All this used to be open. That all grew up. I brought my dog over there one time and threw a snowball at a truck. My dog went after the snowball and the truck hit him.

KS: How many kids did you have in your family?

GF: 14

KS: What were all their names?

GF: Well there were two Williams. The oldest one was William. There were 8 boys and 6 girls. William, Joe, Fred, Willie, Victor, Edmond, Otto, and myself. The girls were Billie, Amanda, Anne, ??? Clare, and Alice. 14 of us.

KS: Your farm house, how was that constructed?

GF: The farm house was constructed, all but the shed, before I was born.

KS: What was it made out of?

GF: The one that stood there was wood. They had an old log house that they put up. It kept adding up.

KS: When did your Dad first come to Calvin here?

GF: Well he married my mother in 1901. He came here he was 16 years old. He came from Montreal. He came on a wood drive. They used to drive wood on the water. That's how he came over here.

KS: What did they do, cut the wood in Montreal and take it down the river?

GF: I really don't know. All I know is what I was told. I remember when he used to drive wood on the river. Just haul it up on the shore from the mouth of the river. What they did with it, I don't know.

KS: They took wood down the St. Mary River?

GF: Yes. Whether they went up or down, I don't know. All I remember is piling wood on the side. Them were the good old days.

KS: What did you do to keep your food cold?

GF: We used to cut ice on the ??? River just down the hill. We cut big blocks and put it on sleighs and took it home. We used to get saw dust and put the ice in a corner and covered it with about 3 feet of sawdust all around and on top and bottom. It kept all summer. Then we had an ice box in the house and we kept our food in there. It kept good.

KS: What did you do for food most of the time? What did you eat?

GF: Well I'll tell you we ate good. We had plenty of meat and vegetables. We picked berries during the summer and my mother would can them and the garden stuff for the winter. We never starved. Never were hungry.

KS: What kind of meat?

GF: Beef, pork, venison...

KS: Did you shoot a lot of deer around here?

GF: Not that many. Not any more than we could eat. The game warden always told us, we don't mind you killing deer because we know you eat them all. They were wonderful guys.

KS: Who did most of the hunting? Did the boys do it?

GF: Yes. Victor mostly. He was a good shot and a hard worker. He made sure we had meat. Every New Year he would kill one pig and one cow and during the spring he would butcher another cow. So we had plenty all summer. Hard worker.

KS: How old were you when you first started going to school?

GF: I think I was about 6 years old. We had to walk 2 miles to school. In the winter time we had no open roads. Then when I got to be older I would go in the wintertime too on a dog sled. We would pick up a couple neighbor kids on the way and take them to school with us.

KS: You took them on the dog sled?

GF: Yes. The dog sled was about...I would say 3 feet by 4 feet. We could put 4 or 5 kids on it.

KS: How many dogs did you have?

GF: 2

KS: What kind were they?

GF: One, my favorite, was part collie and part shepherd. He was a nice dog. Friendly. He would play with you all day long. I still remember that dog.

KS: When did you graduate?

GF: '41.

KS: How old were you?

GF: 19 or 20. I would say 20.

KS: And you were the only kid to go all the way through school?

GF: Yes. A couple of my brothers and sisters went through the 6th grade. I had a deaf sister that was younger than I was. She was the youngest in the family.

KS: That's Alice Fortin?

GF: Yes. She's deaf. The oldest, William, he was deaf too. The oldest was deaf and the youngest was deaf. Why, I don't know. That's the way it was.

KS: When did you go into the service?

GF: 1942.

KS: How many of the boys went into World War II?

GF: Two boys. William and I.

KS: Did you get drafted?

GF: Oh yes. We both got drafted. I went in '42 and came out in '45. I was wounded in Germany. We went in somewhere in France. I still go to the reunion for that because ????. But it got to the point where it was just too far to travel. My oldest sister took us one time. I thought that was very nice of her.

KS: Where was it when you first saw action in World War II?

GF: Somewhere in France. What the heck is the name of that big city...everybody goes there when they go to France...

KS: Paris?

GF: Yes. Paris. We passed that. It was just across the river.

KS: How did you get shot?

GF: We were caught in one of the cities and I walked in front of a window and got hit.

KS: Was it a sniper?

GF: I don't know. I just got hit. All I know is I felt it.

KS: What was it like...you fought a lot in the trenches right?

GF: Oh yes. Dig a hole, jump in. It was hell.

KS: What was your old school house like?

GF: It was a big building. The building itself is still on Pickford Road. Some people moved it out on Pickford Road and made a home out of it. It was a big open place. It had a stove that heated it in the winter time. If you were near the stove you would sweat to death and if you were away from the stove you would freeze. It was quite a building.

KS: How many kids were in the school house? Were they all different ages?

GF: Up to the 8th grade. Kindergarten through 8th grade. Maybe 60.

KS: How did they teach all of you? Did they just teach you individually?

GF: Each grade would go to the front of the school and the teacher would teach for a certain amount of time. Then they would bring another class up and teach them. They had their hands full.

KS: What about when you were in high school? Did you go to the same school?

GF: I went to Pickford. We used to have a bus transport us over there. We had a regular car. There were two other guys. We had bicycles too. 6 miles to Pickford for the day. Morning and night. I rode the bicycle there until they started the bus system. I got picked up at 8:00 in the morning and was brought back about 4:30 at night.

KS: How would the bus make it in the wintertime?

GF: They cleaned the roads off. They were alright. But they never did before. We used to have a big plow and horsed dragged it. Maybe 15 times. That's how they cleared the roads then. But no cars were on the roads in the wintertime. Not until about '36 or '37.

KS: How did your Dad make most of his money back then?

GF: Cutting wood. He sold moonshine too. Had to eat somehow.

KS: Where did he make most of the moonshine at?

GF: Right in the house.

KS: Where did he have the still at?

GF: In the back shed. He would make the mash in the house. He got caught at it. He was young when that happened. But I do remember it.

KS: Where did he get caught at?

GF: Somebody squawked on him.

KS: Did the cops raid the place?

GF: Yes. They found a 60 gallon barrel and smashed it all up. ??? Good medicine.

KS: Good medicine. Was that the time he got arrested for making moonshine? Taken to jail?

GF: He never went to jail. He paid a fine.

KS: How much did they fine him?

GF: As I understand, it was about \$500. Somebody else paid it for him. Whether Dad paid it back I don't know.

KS: Did he know who paid the fine for him?

GF: Yes. A fellow by the name of Korger.

KS: Was he a local farmer?

GF: Yes, he lived up the road here a ways.

KS: That was quite a bit of money back then.

GF: It was a hell of a lot of money.

KS: Why did they fine him so much?

GF: I don't know. That was the law I guess.

KS: Korger, did he run moonshine too?

GF: Yes. Nobody ever knew he did. That's how careful he was. He would just say I'm going to work. You had to make it the best way you could. There was always somebody there to buy it. Pay maybe a dollar for a fifth of whiskey. Which wasn't bad.

KS: What was it like out here during the Depression?

GF: Well that's when this all happened. We used to have soldiers from the Soo come on marches and camp for quite a while. They would come over and get a jug of whiskey. We made a pretty penny on them.

KS: On the soldiers.

GF: Yes.

KS: Where would they march to from Fort Bradey that they were staying at farms?

GF: They marched all down through here and the Soo would be around too. In the trees.

KS: You sold to them too?

GF: Oh yes. We just sold it to the wrong guy once and that's what happened.

KS: When the soldiers stayed here, did they come to the farm and eat dinner or anything like that?

GF: Oh no. They had their own food. They came over to buy whiskey. They'd stay a couple days.

KS: Did you ever get to come over to their camp or anything like that?

GF: They were in the open field there. That's where they had their tents set up. It was right near our house. That's a long time ago.

KS: How old were you, do you remember?

GF: I was maybe 10. Then people planted trees in here.

KS: That was the Conservation Corps.

GF: Yes. Something like that.

KS: Did they come through here and plant all these trees?

GF: Yes. They planted a bunch of them. I was in high school then when they were here. The soldiers were way before that.

KS: When did they first have power out here?

GF: Back in the '40s. When I was in the service they didn't have power that I can remember. I remember going to the barn carrying a lantern. Doing the barn work with a lantern. That was back in the '30s I know. I think when I came back from the service they had it in the house. Lights and that. I remember they put the bathroom in.

KS: You always had an outhouse?

GF: Yes. It wasn't hot. It was cold.

KS: Who had the first car in your family?

GF: We had an old Model-T. I think my Dad had that. He never drove it. I think my brother Fred was the first one to have it. Then he went to a better Ford. There was a schoolteacher by the name of Kenneth Perry. He had a Ford and would come over all the time. Then he took my brother to town and that was the biggest thing that ever happened to him, riding in that car. He would go to town. Take a couple days. Go one day and come back the next.

KS: It would take a couple days to get to the Soo from here?

GF: Oh no. 5 hours. 5 or 6 hours.

KS: Did you have a wagon you took?

GF: Sleighs in the wintertime. A wagon in the summer. I think they called them buggies. But usually my mother would get on the mail truck for her butter and buttermilk and stuff like that in the late '30s.

KS: She took the butter and milk in town?

GF: Yes.

KS: To sell it?

GF: Yes.

KS: Who did she sell it to?

GF: ??? and a hardware there. I forget the name of the hardware stand. She would bring her stuff in and the people were waiting for her to buy buttermilk and butter. She never had any problem selling it. We cleared all this land. The whole family worked. I helped clear all back there.

KS: How did you clear the land? What did you use?

GF: Horses. Cut the stumps. Or put dynamite if they were too thick.

KS: Oh you blasted them out of there?

GF: We cut them away and then hooked the horses to them and got them loose.

KS: Where did you get the dynamite from?

GF: I don't know where they got it.

KS: You could just buy it over the counter?

GF: Oh yes. You just had to make sure the right people handled it. Uncle Victor worked on the locks with dynamite.

KS: What did he do for the locks?

GF: He worked with...I can't think of the guy's name, but they worked with dynamite.

KS: Blasting the rocks?

GF: A certain part of them.

KS: Was that when they were first constructing the locks or while they were building the locks?

GF: I really don't know. All I know is they were using dynamite. That was back in the '40s.

KS: And Uncle Victor Fortin did a lot of blasting for it.

GF: Yes.

KS: Would he ride out there from the farm?

GF: I imagine he did. He lived just up there.

KS: Just up the road there. What did you do for fun out here? Like when you were in your teens?

GF: Well I'll tell you there wasn't too much fun on the farm. We would usually gather somewhere and play ball. I remember we used to go to Sternville. A fellow by the name of Mr. Sweden had a big truck and we'd get on the truck and go to play ball. He would drive us all over. They were very nice people.

KS: Where did you meet grandma at?

GF: I came home from the service and she was working at the Dime Store. She was a good friend of Kathleen ???, my niece. I got to know her there. Then I got my discharge so I asked her if I could go out with her and then we got married. Lucky woman. We raised three kids. One son, Wayne, your mother, Carol, and the oldest daughter Christine. I'm proud of every one of them.

KS: What was the first house you bought?

GF: We bought a house on ??? Street. We were there for a year.

KS: How much did you pay for your first house, do you remember?

GF: It wasn't very much. A couple thousand or so.

KS: What did you pay for the two houses on Superior Street?

GF: \$17,000

KS: For two houses.

GF: Yes. That was cheap.

KS: Your family is all French.

GF: Yes. Dad spoke very little English. My mother spoke pretty well. But my Dad wouldn't allow English in the house if the family was alone. We had to speak French.

KS: Because he couldn't understand English?

GF: No he couldn't speak it. He knew very little.

KS: He was originally from Montreal?

GF: Yes. As I understand it is Dad came from ??? with grandpa.

KS: You never met your grandfather?

GF: No. I met my mother's side, her dad.

KS: Where was he from?

GF: My mother was from Bark River on the other side of Escanaba there. So he must have come there and then they moved up here to Calvin.

KS: What did your mom's dad do? Did he work in Bark River at the time?

GF: I don't know. When I got to know him he was a very old man. He was blind. When he stayed with us he was blind.

KS: How did he go blind?

GF: I don't know either. For some reason he didn't seem interested in where they kept him. If I knew now, I would be sure to know everything about him.

KS: What was it like at your house around Christmas time?

GF: It wasn't that jumpy. But New Years we had a ball. All the kids would come home for a few days. We were sleeping all over. We danced on New Year's Eve. We had a big ball. We would go to Meridian Road and pick up people from the Soo. They would drive and leave their cars there. That was years ago. We would go get them with the horse and wagon and bring them to the farm.

KS: For a New Year's Eve party?

GF: Yes. My mother had a big kitchen. I would handle that darn table. It was anywhere from 20 to 30 feet long. We would fill that table more than once. Every year they would kill a cow or that kind of animal and have it.

KS: And you'd eat it all for New Years?

GF: Well we didn't eat it all. We would have some of it for New Year. My uncle lived about five miles away and we would go back and forth. It was a big deal. Then later in the week we would drive all those people back to their cars on Meridian Road.

KS: Did they stay at the farm for a few days?

GF: Yes.

KS: Did you have a big party for a few days?

GF: ??? played the violin. It ain't gonna rain no more. He'd play that song. He was a ball. All the relations would get together. Of course we had the drinks too.

KS: You made all your own drinks?

GF: Yes. We'd make a little wine once in a while.

KS: How did you make wine?

GF: My mother's dad knew how to do it. The older kids knew how to do it.

KS: Did you use stills the same way you did moonshine?

GF: No. They put it in the crock and let it work and then they bottled it. That's the way it went.

KS: What kind of berries did they use?

GF: I don't remember. Different types. ??? would just about blow your head up. That stuff was strong. Different types.

KS: Raspberries? Blueberries? What was the first job you had after you came back from World War II?

GF: I went to work at the tannery. I worked there for a year or two and got tired of it.

KS: What did you do at the tannery?

GF: ??? operator. A friend of mine ??? that's before he got married. He would get on that.

KS: Get on what?

GF: He made cars.

KS: Ford?

GF: No.

KS: Buick?

GF: Yes. He would take me home and I stayed there. Then I got married when I was working there.

KS: Working down in Flint?

GF: Yes. My first child was born in Flint.

KS: Oh, Aunt Christine was born in Flint.

GF: Yes. I had a good friend there from the Soo that was working there. After a couple years I got homesick and so did the wife so we moved back to the Soo.

KS: What did you do at the Buick plant?

GF: I was driving a cart to feed the line. I had a good job. I should have stayed.

KS: Feed the lines?

GF: Bring parts to the line where they build the motors. I would bring cart over. That was a good job. But I just got tired of it.

KS: What did you do when you came back to the Soo?

GF: Well I worked for the school system for a year or so. Then I quit that and went to work mostly on my own for floor covering. I had 40 years of that.

KS: Installing carpet?

GF: Installing carpet yes. Everything worked. Hard work.

KS: What did the kids do for work when they got older?

GF: Well the boys were all carpenters.

KS: Build houses?

GF: Well they worked construction.

KS: Did they build anything, work on anything big in the Soo?

GF: They worked on the Locks. My brother Fred used to work for Scott who was a big contractor. They were building a big bridge. Three of my brothers worked on the bridge.

KS: The Sault Canadian Bridge?

GF: No the big Mac.

KS: Oh the Mackinac Bridge.

GF: And they worked on all different jobs.

KS: How many years did they work on that?

GF: I don't know. Five, six years.

KS: They worked until it was done?

GF: Yeah.

KS: What brothers were those?

GF: Joe, Bill, Fred.

KS: So were they steel workers?

GF: Bill and Joe were both carpenters.

KS: Three of you kids lost fingers clearing this land right?

GF: I did. Two of my sisters lost their fingers. I think one lost the in the ringer on the washing machine. I don't know how the other one lost them.

KS: What happened the day you lost your finger? How'd it happen?

GF: We were clearing wood right back there. I was going backwards on the pile and I threw up. My brother came down with the ax. Took the hand right off. They never did find my finger until two weeks afterward. Then it was too late. It was all black.

KS: What did they do to your finger to heal it?

GF: They just sewed it. Three of us got fingers cut off, and all three of us have birthdays in September, which is kind of weird.

KS: When you used to farm, did anyone get hurt really bad at the farm? Any of the kids?

GF: The fingers were the worst. Some of us got kicked by horses.

KS: But none of the kids ever got killed or anything?

GF: The oldest kid in the family, my older brother was deaf. And my youngest sister, the youngest kid in the family, is deaf, which is kind of rare.

KS: Do you remember any other local farm kids getting really sick or anything like that? Passing away?

GF: Not that bad.

KS: What happened back then when kids would get sick? When they got the flu?

GF: They'd get the old Indian remedies. Everybody knew something. There were fourteen kids, and the two youngest, me and my sister, are all living. The rest are dead.

KS: How'd all the other kids pass away.

GF: My dad and six of us had cancer. I've had cancer twice so far.

KS: How many of the kids smoked? How many of the cancers were due to smoking.

GF: Everyone smoked except one. My sister, Amanda. She never smoked, and she died of cancer. Why, I don't know. I quit smoking twenty years ago. I had throat cancer. The doctor told me it was from smoking all those years, and I quit smoking. So now I have prostate cancer about 5 years back. But I'm doing good. Still living.

KS: How many kids did you have?

GF: Three

KS: Three kids.

GF: Five grandchildren. Which I love very much. And I have one great-grandson. Poor little boy was one year old when they found out he had cancer. I forget the name of it.

KS: Leukemia.

GF: Yes. Poor little fellow. He's still with us. I pray that he comes through.

SKIP IN TAPE

GF: Up to State Park Road.

KS: When did they make that a State Park?

GF: It's always been since I've known it. My Dad used to work there all the time.

KS: What did he do? Clear the...

GF: No, haul gravel and load wagons. He used to work for the CC's. The CC's used to be in the cabins down there.

KS: This used to just be an old gravel road?

GF: Yes. That's why we never had any cars come down through here. It used to be bad.

KS: This was gravel, or was it all mud?

GF: Mud, gravel, whatever. It's slippery.

KS: Yeah, there's still ice. The CC's came through here and planted this all State Park?

GF: Yes. A fellow by the name of Dodge, that's why they call it Dodge ????. There used to be a great big motel and a bunch of cabins. The boats used to come in there. There was a fire tower about 8 feet up.

KS: A fire tower out through here?

GF: No, way up ahead. Way up by where the ??? They would go up there to see if there was a fire around.

KS: Before the CC's came through and planted this State Park down by Calvin Monoscon (Munusicong?), what was all this land like before that?

GF: It was all wood. The planting was more for the farm. Whether they put one in here or not, I don't know. It was always this way.

KS: So this was never farm fields or anything like that.

GF: No.

KS: Did you shoot a lot of deer back here?

GF: Oh yes. There used to be a lot of deer.

KS: How did you fellows hunt back in the olden days?

GF: Well the olden days, you could go on anybody's land. They wouldn't kick you off.

KS: So you could trespass as long as you didn't get caught.

GF: They'd let you hunt on their property. And we used to all drive. 90% of the hunting was done by driving the deer. Put guys in the woods maybe 20 yards apart. Depends on how many you have. And just drive. We'd come up here on the road. We would walk in there and drive all the way back to the

main road. Then a lot of times we'd turn right around and drive them over here. There would be guys on the line watching for the deer to come.

KS: Who did most of the driving and who did most of the shooting?

GF: I was in the younger part and I never missed a drive. We would drive here and all along the road, Pickford Road.

KS: So all the younger fellows would push the woods.

GF: I enjoyed the driving. You get to see the deer more. When you drive into a field it would be a war coming out.

KS: Oh, once the deer start coming out. Could you guys shoot pretty much anything back then?

GF: If you didn't get caught. You couldn't kill does. I don't even remember having a doe season when I was younger. It was all bucks. You could kill one buck.

KS: You could kill one buck. How long ago was that?

GF: That would be at least 50 or 55 years ago.

KS: How old were you when you first started hunting?

GF: Young. We all hunted. Small game with snares. But we didn't leave anything in the woods. Take it out.

KS: Someone shot a buck right there.

GF: They have some nice bucks. But when the Air Force moved in, that's when the deer went down.

KS: Oh, the Kinchelow Air Force Base.

GF: Yes. They'd be walking in the woods with ??? on and no boots on and snow up to their knees.

KS: When do you remember the Air Force Base moving in?

GF: Just before the Second World War I quit coming here a good 15 years ago.

KS: You quit coming here?

GF: Yes. It's just too dangerous. People line up along the road here and the deer come across. I don't know how it is now, but for a while there it was dangerous.

KS: What was the fishing like? Did you fish in the Munuscong River?

GF: Oh yes. Right past the farm. The creek came into the Munuscong River. We used to do the fishing right there. We would catch some beauties. A lot of walleye.

KS: What would you use for bait?

GF: A lot of time we used salt pork.

KS: Just a chunk of salt pork on a hook.

GF: Yes. Get a good long branch and tie a string on the end of it. That's how you fish. We used to catch some big fish there. They would come down the creek into the Munusicong. We would see who could throw them up the hill.

KS: Just throw them up the hill?

GF: Just see how far you could go before the string would break.

KS: What kind of hooks did you have?

GF: Just regular hooks.

KS: Where did you get those at?

GF: In town.

KS: So you guys never really had a regular fishing pole then.

GF: No. Just get a good branch. Then later on we started getting good fishing spots.

KS: Do you remember any whore houses in the Soo?

GF: Yes.

KS: It's okay. I'd like to know about that stuff.

GF: The west end.

KS: The west end of the Soo had them? What did they look like?

GF: Just a regular house.

KS: So how would you know if it was a whore house or not?

GF: You just knew where they were at. This used to be a good spot. Oh, they got that open. Way back in there, that was good hunting. When we come back we'll go that way. This is where the Dodge house used to be.

KS: The Dodge house, who owned that?

GF: That was a government...as far as I know it was. My mother used to work in the building.

KS: In the Dodge house? What did she do there?

GF: Clean. Stuff like that. That's what she told me.

KS: She used to cook for them?

GF: I really don't remember. It seems to me that she did cook too. A few years back a guy bought a big house and building and moved it across the river, going toward the ?.

KS: Did they move it across the river onto the island there?

GF: Yeah.

KS: What is that Sugar Island?

GF: They moved it to Rocky point or something. It's still over there now.

KS: And it's that guy's house now?

GF: Yeah. I think it's still got rooms in it. It was big.

KS: Was that the Dodge boys hunting lodge there?

GF: A well house was here.

KS: A well house?

GF: We used to sit here all the time and watch for deer. This is where the fire tower used to be.

KS: Right here in the middle of the turn around? Over there on that little rock?

GF: Yeah. There was a big house right in here, and down along there used to be cabins where the CC's used to stay in.

KS: All down through there used to be cabins down in the swamp?

GF: That big building right here. There used to be a big boat house where boats come in. Right there. I thought that thing was still here.

KS: They used to have cabins all down through there?

GF: Oh yes. But they got rid of it. I haven't been down here, down where the dike is. That all used to be water.

KS: All down through there?

GF: Yes.

KS: I can't believe I broke the power steering in my truck.

GF: That's where the boat house was.

KS: By that little inlet. It's cool out today.

GF: That's right.

KS: What did you insulate the farmhouse with?

GF: I don't think the place was insulated. It was cold I know that. That's when the mother's used to make all those heavy quilts and sew everything. She even made my pants when I was going to high school.

KS: Oh, they made all their own clothes.

GF: Yes. And she'd knit.

KS: What kind of material were your pants made out of?

GF: Wool.

KS: So she'd just buy the wool at a store somewhere in sheets.

GF: Yes. Or use old wool pants. There used to be a big garden down here.

KS: For the people at the CC Camp?

GF: It must have been. We used to watch that garden all the time.

KS: Hunt out of their garden?

GF: Yes. Just park the stuff along here. You used to be able to see down there. Down in there, that looks like it.

KS: In that little opening.

GF: It was a good sized garden in there. My mother used to make all those nice quilts. She used to knit everything. Nice warm mitts, socks. I've still got some socks that she knit.

KS: How did they get the lumber out of here back in the day?

GF: Horses. Or ??? would bring home sleighs and a neighbor had a big saw and three or four guys would handle big stuff while the other guy was by the saw. That was a lot of fun. All work. I remember Dad used to send quite a few times. We had 40 acres two miles from us full of wood. That's where we cut all our stoke wood. When we got it cut we would pull it out with horses and break the road with the sleighs. It was so hard on the horses. Yeah, I imagine they chased everything out of here.

KS: The guys that hunt in there?

GF: They can't hunt in there?

KS: Why not?

GF: I think this is the part you can't hunt. There is a place you can't hunt.

KS: A refuge or something?

GF: That's what it was. They used to fight to see who would get here first. At 5:00 in the morning the guys were sitting there.

KS: To park the trucks or watch the road?

GF: Watch the road. ??? and my brother used to fight to see who would get here first in the morning. Once they got here nobody else could hunt here.

KS: Is that how you guys used to hunt down here? Just sit here and watch the road?

GF: Most of it. You could go back in there. There are runaways. That's a nice spot down there.

KS: Down here to the left?

GF: Yes. Why don't you turn down here Karl. You're not worried are you?

KS: No.

GF: I don't like that noise. That don't sound good.

KS: The power steering is shot.

GF: Is it getting hard to drive?

KS: No. It's not any different than it was yesterday when it broke.

GF: This get's to be just a trail here.

KS: This does? A walking trail?

GF: Yes. Then they put a dock in down at the end. So you could dock your boats.

KS: I imagine there's a lot of road hunters down this road.

GF: It's a swamp down here. You always see deer. There used to be a telephone line too. Maybe they tore that down. They've got places to park your trailer in here. All over. I suppose, going to Marquette, once you get on 28 you don't have to do any turning at all. It's all straight ahead. Then you have to turn right and go into Newberry.

KS: Just as long as the steering doesn't go out on one of those big curves. 70 miles an hour I could end up 700 yards back in the sticks.

GF: You still have your brakes. Just watch out for the cops.

KS: I'll take that one road on the way back and go behind the farm. I have to check the old meat house for the hanging rack.

GF: Where's that?

KS: The Shunk farm? The old meat house, they used to hook the cows up and slide them down the rail system. Some buddies of mine butcher deer and need that to hang up some deer for next year.

GF: You going to pick that up today?

KS: I don't know if I will pick it up today. I'll see what it takes to get it down and I'll probably come back in the spring and take it out.

GF: This one here goes way back to the river. I'll be able to show you where we used to hunt and drive the deer. There ain't many tracks here Karl.

KS: There were a lot more down that other road. There's some going through there. No deer standing in them though.

GF: See they go right back there and down to Goggamine Swamp.

KS: That's where Jerome shot that big buck.

GF: Where?

KS: The Goggamine...

GF: Oh. That's down here a ways. 4 miles and then you turn left.

KS: It took him three hours to drag that buck out of the swamp to where he could get to it with his 4-wheeler. That's how far back in he was.

GF: Wayne used to hunt down there. I'd quit and he'd take off. He snuck back there one day and scared the shit out of me.

KS: Caught you sleeping?

GF: No. He just was... Wayne was a good hunter. There used to be a gravel pit right here.

KS: What did they use the gravel for? The road?

GF: I think that's where they got it to fill the roads up and everything. What the hell is down there in the gravel pit?

KS: I imagine during deer season you have a lot of guys bring up campers in here.

GF: They do that in the summer time. It's beautiful here in the summer.

KS: That's right across from Uncle Spencer's old camp.

GF: Yes.

KS: He had that camp for a long time. Once Wayne Carley died they kind of gave it up though. Do you remember Wayne Carley? Grandpa Shunk's friend? Slip?

GF: Oh yes.

KS: He died a few years back when he got cancer. He got really sick and couldn't come to camp too much. Once he passed away, then Kenny Park started hunting over on Neebish so he started going over there hunting.

GF: This is all picnic area. Camping fee.

KS: \$6 per day.

GF: I wonder how they collect that. The dock is right ahead of us here.

KS: What is this road here to the left?

GF: It follows up the river to the point.

KS: Alright. We'll take that one.

GF: That's nice back in there.

KS: See if that don't scare the deer away.

GF: It goes up right across there.

KS: That goes up to Uncle Spencer's?

GF: Yes.

KS: Nice little place built up there.

GF: Oh yes. In the summer time it's nice.

KS: A lot of boats come through here hey?

GF: Yes. For walleyes.

KS: Was this always a State Park when you were a kid? People would come in here and camp?

GF: Yes. Turn left here.

KS: Did you have to walk back in here then?

GF: They just put this road in. It never used to be here. They just put this road in maybe 10 or 15 years ago. They have a place to back your trailer in. In the summertime the boats are pretty well filled.

KS: It would be pretty tough to get one of those big trailers in here. I wonder if you can see Uncle Spencer's camp from here? The old hunting camp. There's that trailer. He's just down from that. I don't know why they ever sold that.

GF: Shunk's?

KS: Yes. Uncle Spencer and Kenny.

GF: They sold that place?

KS: They sold it to two guys from downstate. Down around Mackinaw or something. As far as that goes, they could have just gotten a boat and come right across the river here.

GF: It's easy to get to. I wonder what he did with that pontoon he had in there. I should have gotten that from him.

KS: There were a lot of family parties in that yard there. A lot of games of horse shoes.

GF: I got to the point I was just can't throw anymore.

KS: Why not?

GF: I'm not strong enough.

KS: You can bring the peg closer.

GF: We do that too. Anybody over 70 can shoot closer. If I have to do that I have to quit. I used to love it. I'm too old.

KS: Can't get lighter shoes?

GF: No. Well you have a partner. Sometimes I get out there and I can throw it. Is that thing on?

KS: No.

GF: You wouldn't have a hard time backing in there.

KS: No, it wouldn't be bad to bring a trailer down in there. There's a nice camp there too.

GF: You mean on the other side?

KS: Yes.

GF: I think there's one on this side to your left that the Shunk's used for camp. You'd think they would come in and back in bigger trailers.

KS: Yes, but they probably don't want to do that because it takes away from the beauty of it too you know.

GF: All the way down there, the road where the camp is, we used to drive that all the way to the marsh.

KS: All the way to the point?

GF: Have you been back there?

KS: Quite a number of years ago. The last time I came hunting down here I was 12. We used to come down here and the deer would migrate. We'd come sit along the river edge here and wait for them to cross the river.

GF: A beer would taste good right now Karl.

KS: We'll stop somewhere. Do you know any restaurants here in Calvin? There's that one bar in ???

GF: That's the closest one.

KS: We can sit in there and grab a burger or something.

GF: We can go back along the river.

KS: And go up and check along the farms and see if there are any deer standing at the edge of the field.

GF: Well I might call Gary.

KS: You and Uncle Wayne are going hunting tomorrow right?

GF: I might go myself in the morning.

KS: Aint Uncle Wayne gonna go?

GF: He said he couldn't go Saturday.

KS: Why not?

GF: I don't know. He gets hooked up with people calling to help them with something. He's the kind of guy that won't say no.

KS: Tell him you need some help getting a deer. There's a deer coming across there. Holy cow grandpa, look at the deer coming across there. Look at the tracks through here. You can see where the tracks go right to the river where it opens up and in they must go.

GF: We used to cross here with the horses. At the mouth of the river there, we used to cut hay in that field.

KS: Did that hay just grow wild or did you guys plant it?

GF: Wild hay. We would bring that home in the wintertime and then we'd throw some salt on it.

KS: Why would you throw salt on the hay?

GF: Because the cows love it.

KS: oh, and just let the salt soak into it?

GF: Yeah. They used to love it, and that stuff was slippery. It'd slide off your wagon.

KS: After it had salt on it?

GF: no no. Before. After you cut it. We used to make big hay stacks all through here. We'd unload it from the wagon to the hay stack, and we'd leave it there for a while until the fall came. That's what it was. We'd leave it there stacked until the winter come, and then we could go right across there with the

horses. We 'd load the sleighs, and haul it back to the farm. I forgot about that. My uncle Jean used come here and they'd cut it.

KS: And it was all wild hay that grew here all these big marsh fields? That's where the hay used to grow.

GF: Go there in the morning with the horses, cut it. Let it set a few days. Come back and rake it. Put it on the wagons and put it in the pile.

KS: And you used to take the horses right across the mouth of the Munusicong.

GF: Yeah right in here. The water was only that deep. Right here is where we used to cross. It's grown up a lot now Karl.

KS: You used to cross right here.

GF: Right on the edge of the woods.

****SKIP IN TAPE****

GF: They're the ones that did that. You had to go face to face with them. The machine gun stood back a little bit, but not that bad.

KS: They were right in close?

GF: Oh yes. The ??? was ??? combat. You were right face to face with them. It wasn't fun.

KS: A lot of night fights?

GF: Night and day time both.

KS: Did they use their knives?

GF: Bayonets or knives, whatever. Usually they had bayonets on the rifle. That was dirty work. Even shooting them, it wasn't a happy day. See the poor bugger fall in front of you. Then you had to shoot.

KS: It was either them or you.

GF: That's right. Kill or be killed. That's awful low when you stop and think about it. A guy pops up in front of you and you shoot him. It's rough thinking. Think of the poor Japanese. There's no swamp in that. It was rough. I'm glad I didn't go there. I was going. I was sent home for 30 days I think it was and about 10 days I got a notice get back to the company we're going to Japan. One of the regiments had already gone over when the war ended. Then they were hauled back home. But we were just about to go over.

KS: Was that after you had been shot?

GF: Oh yes. The German war ended before the Japanese war. The guys were still fighting in Japan. The war ended with the Germans and when we came back home they were going to send us over to Japan to fight over there. Then it ended. That's when Truman put that bomb out.

KS: Oh, on Hiroshima?

GF: Yes. That's what stopped it right there. They wanted no part in that.

KS: What did you do when you came home on leave for those 30 days?

GF: I wasn't home 30 days.

KS: Or 10 days?

GF: Get drunk. Made the poor girls suffer. My brother Fred and I...holy shit. I saved every penny I had.

KS: Spent it all when you got home?

GF: Just about. Then I met Flora. That's when I was going back. I just met her before that. She used to be...her and Catalina ???, my sister's daughter, they're still the best of friends. I came back sooner than I thought. I was jumpy for quite a while yet when I got home. Somebody hits something you know...I jumped over the bar at the Belvedere. I don't know what the hell they did, but I just jumped. I told them don't ever do that again. I was so nervous of the shooting. My brother was fighting because he was jumpy

KS: What was it like when you first flew on a plane to go over there.

GF: We never flew.

KS: How did they take you guys over?

GF: Boats. The ??? When we came back they didn't tell us what boat it was going to be and then there's the ??? right in front of us. Big, big ship. There was only two ships that were bigger than the one we were on. That was a ship. You didn't have to worry. 20 foot waves and she still took it.

KS: How long did it take for you guys to get over there by boat?

GF: A week I think it was. We landed in England.

KS: That was safe territory?

GF: It wasn't safe. Submarines were all around us. Then we stayed in England for a couple weeks. Then we were shipped over to France. We were about half way across and the alarm comes. Up to the top. They had hit a mine. I can't swim at all.

KS: Did you have life jackets?

GF: Oh yes. They made us all put them on. But we got across.

KS: Did the mine blow a hole in the boat?

GF: No. It wasn't a mine. I forget what we hit. But they thought it was a mine. It could have been a small one. It scares the shit out of you. That's why I never wanted to go to the Coast Guard.

KS: Didn't like the water?

GF: No. I still don't like the water. Even when I go out with your dad it scares the shit out of me. I'm afraid that boat he has, what's the name of that?

KS: His walleye boat?

GF: Yes. He was going 65 miles an hour one night. But it didn't bother me. Is that a car up there?

KS: Yes.

GF: He drives fast. The way I look at it, what is the sense of going for a boat ride to see the view at 65 miles an hour? That's why your grandmother doesn't like to go in the boat. I like those pontoons. You can enjoy them and watch the shore. If I ever got a boat it would be a pontoon. They're nice to fish out of. You can enjoy it and put your beer down. You don't have to worry about your beer spilling. But boats are made to be in the fishing tournaments.

KS: I think we're going to come down next spring and fish in that big walleye tournament that's down here. They have a pretty good pay out for that. First place is \$100,000.

GF: You gotta find out where they're at though.

****SKIP IN TAPE****

KS: You used to own this property here?

GF: Yes. Pasture for the cows.

KS: Now it's all grown up

GF: We used to drive the 40 here. We used to pull a lot of deer out.

KS: D&D Hunt Club.

GF: It makes me feel bad that we can't go through these places. I was born and raised here.

KS: Who did your Dad sell all this land to?

GF: We didn't own that. We owned this.

KS: And that used to be all farm field?

GF: That's always been woods. We pastured our cows in there. This is the old farm here. This used to be good hunting land. Small game here. The deer used to come across right by the river and come down through here. There was an old fellow by the name of Jim Ralph and he used to grow strawberries. For a quarter you could pick a crate. Do you know what a crate is? 16 quarts. That's what he paid us. If you pick four crates a day you'd get a dollar. Isn't that something? Then you go home and give your dollar to your mother. I remember when I graduated. My brother Dick gave me \$5. I was rich. That's the only time anybody gave me anything. Now, cripes. \$100 bills. I took a nice 8 pointer coming out of here. And the dog stole rack. I had it in the garage and they stole it. That was a beautiful rack. I've been so darn unlucky. I don't know why. I never see a deer. I never shoot at a deer. I saw two the other day

with Wayne. They were running in the woods. This all used to be all open. I can't get over it how much it grew up.

KS: This was always open field?

GF: Yes. Farmers worked it. We always hunted this road. I can't believe the people. There used to be an old log house. Old man Ralph, I'd come back in the early 30s and used to come pick strawberries.

KS: They had the strawberry farm here?

GF: Yes. Look at that. Those two trees never were there. There used to be an old log house right there.

KS: Right on the corner.

GF: This field is open a little bit.

KS: D&D Hunt Club now.

GF: Can you get in there and go back out?

KS: What goes down here?

GF: That goes back to the other end 2 miles that way.

KS: We can go back this way here take left and go by the old farm.

GF: That comes out on Sternville Road.

KS: Why don't we drive down it. I've never been down it.

GF: This was never here. Look at that.

KS: It was never grown up like that?

GF: No. Never those big trees. There used to be a farm there, and Ray's was up there. This is really something. We had a hell of a time to get through here. There used to be somebody that lived here. Who was it? Jake Grader. Right on. Jake Grader used to live right here. There used to be a house here.

KS: What was his last name?

GF: Gray Cemetery.

KS: See those two partridges right there? One over there? If you had a shotgun now you'd get them. Do you want to drive into that old Gray Cemetery?

GF: No. Jake Grader, he was married to a Gray girl and they lived up here. They had a girl my age. She married Frank Moletta. Is that a hunter back there? See that red?

KS: Piece of ribbon.

GF: I'm going to start driving these roads. That brings back old memories I tell you.

KS: What kinds of farms were these?

GF: Just small farms.

KS: What did they use to farm?

GF: Grain, hay, stuff to feed your cows. Then they sell a few bushel, oats, barley, flax. There used to be a house right down there. I'm talking about 70 years ago.

KS: To me, you'd never know there was an old farm house over there.

GF: I remember them all.

KS: But now, you'd never know that.

GF: God no.

KS: Not too bad for an old tractor trail.

GF: You couldn't drive through this before. Not this way. The ruts were a foot deep. Boy that makes me happy that we came through here. Happy and sad you know. Drive by the farm. When you go by the farm the old memories come through. Now it's just all grown up, trees all over the place. It doesn't even pay to talk about it. I don't want that farm for nothing. This used to be called the Old Jim Ralph Road.

KS: Why did they call it that?

GF: Because Jim Ralph Lived on the corner.

KS: That makes sense.

GF: Wait, they called this one Gray Road. The other one that came through was called Ralph Road.

KS: That was the first house you came to.

GF: Yes. The game warden used to live...

KS: This is still called Gray Road.

GF: The game warden used to live here. He had a cousin that lived there. There's still a house there. His boy and I graduated school together. He'd always stop at home and talk to my mother. Mother would cook him venison. He'd get a big kick out of it. He would say you know that I know you're cooking venison. And I know Victor shot it. Then he'd say I also know when Victor kills a deer none of it will spoil. You cook the whole thing. He'd laugh at her. Maybe I'll have some with you. He was a hell of a good guy. He knew what it was. He was a farmer around here. Don't ever say to him that the insurance man has been there.

KS: At that broken down farm there?

GF: That house is a hundred years old at least. One night we were shining in a field, right in front of where Victor ??? and pretty soon a ??? well Leo what did you tell me? I couldn't even talk. He said I got

you now. He snuck up on him. But he was a hell of a nice guy. I graduated with Jim. ??? was going to school. Now the game wardens wouldn't give you a break if you if you had one.

KS: Heck no.

GF: You can be a nice guy and still do your job. But these son of a bitches are ??? I can't believe them. I know quite a few of them. One lives on Shunk Road. I can never think of his name, but every time he sees me he comes over and talks to me.

KS: Was that his hunting camp?

GF: Yes. Yes, they'd go hunting and come over in the morning. Drink beer and play poker until about 3:00. Then the guys would start disappearing. ???

KS: That's Uncle Victor's old house there.

GF: Then his one daughter Loraine, her husband was the biggest violator in the business. He went to jail. I remember there was a house there. I'll tell you those kids ??? We used to have a 40 right back past that old brick...that last mile in there. That was where we got all our stoke wood.

SKIP IN TAPE

KS: Did you get it back to the house on carriage?

GF: Sleighs. We'd tow it out. It used to be good hunting. But it's all grown up. All grown up. The hunters here ??? what the hell happened. My brother Joe just ???Right in there he had a hunting camp. Right in there.

KS: So all the hunting camps are pretty close to the old farm.

GF: Yes. Down here a little way is another one.

KS: That guy's got enough ornaments in his yard to start his own business.

GF: That must be a trailer...??? Used to have a store.

KS: They used to have a store there?

GF: Yes. A gas station and store. ??? built that house. My brother Bill...I don't think you remember Bill do you. He worked for him. Another cousin of mine used to be ??? for my aunt. That was the first one of that mine. There's a little mountain back there. There's still hunting to be had back there. There used to be nice cougars in there. Does that vibrate?

KS: No the steering isn't bad as long as I'm driving straight. It just makes that noise when I turn left or right. From here up you can shoot anything.

GF: So many people have trucks. Over 50%. Trucks and vans. Or cars like your mother's. I think I'll always have a van. I like my van.

KS: That sounds bad.

GF: You be careful going home because it could all go at once.

KS: I'd be just like a bullet in the trees.

GF: You better get a phone number.

KS: It's funny we don't see any deer standing out in the edges of these fields right now.

GF: They get shot at.

KS: I suppose.

GF: ??? It's big enough that two people can sit in there with all kinds of room. It's nice to have things like that. ??? I put the floors in there. Linoleum. Built that garage there. Helped with that. Some days you never know. It's nice to help people. Wayne ??? Is there nobody here? Want to have a beer or something?

KS: You hungry?

GF: How about you?

KS: Yes I could eat.