

INTERVIEW WITH GERDA LARSON
PEQUAMING, MICHIGAN
FALL 1982

SUBJECT: Life in Pequaming, Michigan, during Hebard and Ford

START INTERVIEW

GERDA LARSON (GL): I played the organ and Mabel's organ there, too, were practically the [inaudible] dances. That's my sister's organ. [Inaudible] it's her organ. And she doesn't [inaudible].

P. BAKER (PB): Okay, now, let's see, we're talking about... Can you, alright, you had to pay more rent once Ford bought Pequaming? Can you remember any other changes? Did you have to get rid of your cows?

GL: Mm hm.

PB: How come?

GL: [inaudible] dirt piles in the back yard.

PB: What did you think about that?

GL: Well, lot of people didn't like it like the elderly people, you know, but you had a good income.

PB: And you had to go buy milk.

GL: Yeah.

PB: What else? Were there any other changes?

GL: Well, then, they wanted all the picket fences torn down, too, they didn't want any fences around town.

PB: Bummer.

GL: I know. It was cute.

PB: [inaudible] didn't like that.

GL: [inaudible]

PB: You made more money?

GL: Yeah, yeah. They make more money. But then they have to pay rent then, too.

PB: Yeah, and buy milk and eggs. Do you think you were better ahead before?

GL: Oh, yeah. A lot of people were probably better off.

PB: Before or after?

GL: Before Ford came in there.

PB: You think it was better?

GL: Yeah.

PB: Just money wise or?

GL: Yeah, well, because then they could pick up all the wood they wanted. And they used to have one big dance hall up there. Pequaming.

PB: This was before Ford?

GL: Before Ford, yeah.

PB: Remember the name of that?

GL: Oh, it was just the Pequaming Hall. And then the Odd Fellow had lots of rooms upstairs. Then up in Finn Town they had a pavilion in the summer. And they used to have music out there every Saturday and Sunday nights, you know, and everybody flocked out there and dance on this pavilion. And have a good time.

PB: That's what you could do on your day off.

GL: Yeah. There were a lot of polkas and waltzes and schottisches, you know.

PB: Local people played for it? Played the music?

GL: Yeah, yeah. Some of the Finnish people played, sometimes out there. And sometimes they played out [inaudible]

PB: Did it cost you anything to get in?

GL: No.

PB: Did they have anything to drink out there, or eat?

GL: Oh, yeah, you could go back in the bushes and find a bottle.

PB: To clean the bill.

[Laughing]

GL: Well, it was all orderly. Nobody got rambunctious.

PB: They ever have a sheriff out there?

GL: Oh, yeah, we used to have a sheriff.

PB: Did you have a jail?

GL: No.

PB: Any trouble makers?

GL: No.

PB: No? Sheriff must have been bored.

GL: Sometimes I wonder. Sheriff must have dropped them in there just to give him a place to sleep. Get drunk and [inaudible] anyway, so they'd pick him up and bring him up there and give him a bed for the night. They let him go in the morning.

PB: Like one big happy family.

GL: Yeah, yeah.

PB: Did you play out there? Piano for Mr. Ford?

GL: Yes. Oh yeah. When Mr. Ford came in he had a dancing school. And my dad and I played for the dancing school. My dad played violin and I played piano. For a dancing school.

PB: Before you were married?

GL: Oh, no. I was married then.

PB: Married by the time Ford came?

GL: Yeah. And, we had to go to this hall and play every Wednesday afternoon. The kids would march from their school to this dance hall.

PB: Did everybody have to do it?

GL: And the teacher'd go along with them, see that they all stayed in order. Tried to get away, you know, to run someplace else, to some other street, or,

PB: You were done with school?

GL: Oh yeah. I finished, right through the eighth grade.

PB: So it was, from the time you were done with school until you got married, kept right on doing it?

GL: Yep. And my dad and I we used to play for other dances in Pequaming.

PB: How did you learn to play the piano?

GL: My dad taught us. He taught me how to play the piano. He taught my oldest brother how to play the clarinet. And another brother how to play a coronet. And a sister how to play the cello, you know that big violin. [Inaudible] And my youngest brother, Verner, he played drums. [Inaudible]

PB: Your dad was a talented man, wasn't he?

GL: Of course, my dad wasn't as good about the drums, my brother picked that up on his own. My dad didn't get him drums. [Laughing] he had to get those himself when he got old enough.

PB: Where would you get instruments back then?

GL: Oh, I don't know. My dad, as far as I can remember he always had the violin. And then I can remember that when I was old enough they bought an organ for me. Then, finally, he got the cash to buy a piano. And then we had the piano. We bought that.

PB: You must have had a good size house.

GL: Yeah, we had a good size house in Pequaming. We had a lengthy kitchen and the dining room wasn't too big, but the living room was [inaudible] and a center table they used to, and a few chairs, you know. And there was no couch, no couch in the living room like they have now a days.

PB: Table and chairs?

GL: Yeah. In the living room there was the piano, and there was a center table like, well, a little bigger than that one. And I can remember when we just had kerosene lamps, too, before there was ever any

electricity in there. We all had to have kerosene lamps and that was my job to see that there was kerosene in the lamps and the chimneys washed.

PB: All the time?

GL: Yep. It was another job that was mine.

PB: Were they up on the wall, or sitting down?

GL: Yeah, they used to have, my mother used to have a rack on the wall for the dining room one. There was a rack and then you could take the lamp out of there, you've probably seen them, you could take the lamp out of there put the kerosene in them and put the lamp up in the rack. And then, she had another lamp on the table.

PB: Did you have a couple bedrooms, or? How many bedrooms for those eight kids?

GL: Oh, yeah. We had, we lived in an older house first, you know. And then, it's so long ago I can't, yeah we had an upstairs in that house, the old ore house. And then the house got so old, you know, and everything, so they built us a new house.

PB: Hebard did?

GL: Yeah, and my father could lay out the plans just the way he wanted them. And my father made a kitchen so big. Well, we used to all eat there, you know. The dining room wasn't too big, but nobody ate there.

PB: So who came in and built that? The men that lived in Pequaming, right? Your friends and neighbors?

GL: Yeah, I guess they all helped.

PB: It's your sisters,

GL: [inaudible]

PB: Feather bed?

GL: Feather bed? Feather mattresses you mean?

PB: Yeah.

GL: Oh, no!

PB: No? Cost too much?

GL: Oh, cost. There was no feather mattress in those days that I knew of.

PB: What were they?

GL: Well, I don't know what there was in those mattresses in those days.

PB: [inaudible]

GL: I can't remember, but I know that every time it was house cleaning time we had to take all those mattresses out and pound the Dickens out of them on both sides. [Laughing]

PB: Every Spring?

GL: You took every window out of the house and hauled them outside and washed them out there. And that was a job. Those windows must have been so leaky from taking them out a bunch of times. You know, the cold must have [laughing]

PB: Did you have screens?

GL: Oh, yeah, yeah.

PB: But you didn't have the black flies coming in.

GL: Oh yes, we had ours screened in windows. I remember our back porch was such a high porch, you know, and then you had to have steps, to go down that to carry the clothes baskets to go hang them on the clothes line. And then we had to empty the tubs, you know. Tubs to wash those clothes in. Tubs to rinse them. Two tubs to rinse them. Sometimes they had to go in clear water, then bluing, had to be bluing in the water.

PB: All kinds of tubs going. Do it outside in the summer?

GL: No, we washed them in a storm shed. We had a good size storm shed. Yeah, with a bench. A wooden bench for the tub. Oh yes, I rubbed a lot on the board. Rubbed a lot of diapers.

PB: And hung a lot of diapers.

GL: Yes, and hung a lot of them, yes. Taught to hang the men's shirt, course there was my father and two brothers. Hang them by the tail. Some people hang them by the shoulders. Flip the tail over.

PB: Did you have to iron them all?

GL: Oh, yes! That was my sister's job. I did the washing, my sister, she did the ironing. And, boy, I hated ironing. I never wanted to trade with her and she didn't care to trade with me either. [Laughing]

PB: Put it right on the wood stove? That how you heated it up?

GL: Yeah, that's another thing. Put the irons on the stove to heat them. You kids don't know how good you got it, really. [Laughing]

PB: I don't iron anything. So the boys had to haul the wood and keep the wood stove going,

GL: Oh, yes. They had to do the wood piles work on piling the wood and hauling it in. Wheelbarrows to haul it from the backyard up to the house.

PB: They didn't have to go out in the woods to get their lumber, or their wood to burn?

GL: Oh, no, Hebard, they had that on the farm there, you know. You could pick all you wanted or else if they hauled it they charged so much a load. And I don't think it was very much for a load of wood. I just can't remember. You could get a good sized load for maybe a dollar or two.

PB: Last you all winter.

GL: Yeah. Well, yeah, if they hauled enough of it.

PB: So, that wood stove heated the whole house?

GL: Yeah. Well, they had the kitchen stove going, and then the heater in the dining room.

PB: Another one?

GL: That heated the dining room and the living room. That was big enough for chunks. Chunks of wood. Chunks lasted..., We didn't have coal in those days to keep the fire all night.

PB: Cold when you got up in the morning. Remember any real bad years up there? Was there ever epidemics?

GL: Yeah, there was an epidemic. Epidemic of diphtheria one time. There was a family with diphtheria.

PB: Do you remember that was about?

GL: I can't what year when that was.

PB: Your family didn't get that?

GL: No, but they had to stay right by that house, watching, day and night that nobody went in or out of there. And they seen that they got their groceries alright and everything.

PB: So, it was just one family?

GL: Yeah?

PB: Must have picked it up someplace else, maybe. How about bad winter? Remember any bad winters?

GL: Oh, yeah. There was a snowbank so high, that when a sleigh would go through you know, there were well like had days when groceries in from the store, and that you know. The snowbank was so high that you couldn't see, you know.

PB: And that's without a plow making these piles?

GL: Yeah, yeah. Well, sometimes we had to walk before they even got a chance to even plow. You know, like I said, we walked in the snow up to our knees. We'd get to school and we'd be all wet, in our stockings, you know.

PB: Ever take you stockings off and dry them?

GL: Didn't have legging in those days, either.

PB: Would they let you take your stockings off and dry them?

GL: No, no. I never took mine off.

PB: Sit right there in wet socks?

GL: All day. Kept my rubbers on too, to keep them warm. Keep my feet warm.

PB: All day. Do you remember the camp meeting, at all, in the summer?

GL: Oh, yes. That's another thing too, the Indians used to all go out to the campgrounds, they'd move right out there for a couple of weeks. Then they'd have the preachers come in there, ministers, two preachers on Saturdays and Sundays. And people used to fill picnic baskets with sandwiches and cookies, and all that stuff and take coffee along and carry that out there. Find a place under a tree and sit and eat it. And spend the day there.

PB: So the Indians were the only ones that lived there during the week?

GL: Yeah, yeah, right out there.

PB: And the Finns and everybody else would come out on the weekends? Make a picnic and listen to the preacher?

GL: Yeah.

PB: What did the Indians do the rest of the time? Did they have powwows, or do you know what they were doing?

GL: When they were out there?

PB: Yeah.

GL: No, they didn't have any powwows. They just had their religious services.

PB: Was that moved from one place to another? When Ford...?

GL: Oh, yes, I don't think we had them anymore, not really.

PB: You didn't have it all after Ford?

GL: No.

PB: But Hebard let them do it?

GL: Yeah. I can remember how they'd just haul everything out there and then have to haul it all back to get Zeba where they lived.

PB: Is that about as close as they were to Zeba?

GL: Yeah. You know, I think some of them come from [inaudible] around there, too.

PB: Churches sponsored the preachers on the weekends, then?

GL: Oh, yes.

PB: Preachers came from all over? Were they all over?

GL: They did when they had a camping meeting.

PB: Come from all over,

GL: Yeah, they used to have to come from all over.

PB: Where did you go to church? I bet you did.

GL: In Pequaming?

PB: Yeah.

GL: I went to one church, that I, gee I can't even remember what the church was. We used to go to Sunday school there, well, we used to go to Sunday school when we were kids, after Sunday school was out, then we'd go home. But we didn't stay for church [inaudible] I don't remember where that church was, either.

PB: Was it just the Swedes? Or everybody would go?

GL: Yeah.

PB: Did the Finns have a separate church?

GL: No, I don't think they did. The people, they didn't seem to come too much. I don't know what they did for their religious services, if it was just done in their homes.

PB: What?

GL: [inaudible]

PB: People didn't keep apart, though? The Finns,

GL: Oh, no. The Finnish all came, too.

PB: Everybody got along?

GL: Yes.

PB: I know that one church, in the town here, the Methodist church. Was that called the Union Church?

GL: Yeah. Swedish, and Norwegian and they used to go to that church. [Inaudible]

PB: That church? Do you remember who was the preacher out there, at all?

GL: There was one Reverend Davey one time. [Inaudible]

PB: Reverend Hyckle [phonetically spelled]?

GL: Hyckle? I don't know.

PB: Maybe that was early.

GL: Oh, I'm trying to think of Reverend [inaudible]

PB: Oh, they make them work do they?

GL: Yeah. [Inaudible] they get, but that was a school teacher.

PB: Out there?

GL: No, I mean here. [Inaudible]

PB: You remember your school teacher at all?

GL: I can see her, but I can't remember her name.

PB: It was a lady?

GL: Yeah.

PB: Going too far back. After you and Copi [phonetically spelled], right, that was his name?

GL: Yeah.

PB: After you were married, then what? He was working in the mill, and the woods. Have children?

GL: We had one daughter. She lives in California.

PB: What's her name?

PB: Florence Clarke.

GL: Florence Clarke.

PB: She was born right there at home? You had her, right? In the back.

GL: Yeah.

PB: That was in?

GL: She's fifty, fifty two or something.

PB: That was about 1930.

GL: Yep.

PB: You were a housewife?

GL: Yep.

PB: You took care of her and your house. How long did you play the piano? How much did you do that?

GL: Like I said, my dad taught me to play when I was about twelve years old, you know. And, oh I guess I was about fourteen when we first started playing out for a dance, up at the town hall. They had thrown dances. And then when Ford come in, I played for the Ford school, the Ford dancing school.

PB: Did all the students have to go up there, march up there and learn to dance?

GL: Yeah, had to. Had to go home and they had to be in [inaudible] up there and march right to, not try to sneak off, of course the teachers watch that.

PB: What did they learn?

GL: Well, they learned waltzes, and quadrilles. Mr. Ford was great for quadrilles.

PB: Oh, was he?

GL: They learned quadrilles, waltzes, schottische, two step. And then there was the one step, too, at one time. You know.

PB: So, on Wednesday they had lessons, and on the weekends they could go out to the town hall and dance. You played for those? At the dances on the weekends?

GL: At the town hall? You mean when we went outside to Finn town? Outside on the pavilion?

PB: Yeah.

GL: No, no.

PB: No?

GL: No, a Finnish guy this guy used to play for them. Because that pavilion was out at Finn town.

PB: Finn town.

GL: And he played there.

PB: So, did you play for dances?

GL: Oh, yeah.

PB: But that was in town? At the town hall?

GL: Yes, we played for dances at the town hall, our family group.

PB: How much did you get paid for it?

GL: Oh, yeah. But I can't remember how much we got paid.

PB: Did you think it was a lot? Or don't remember?

GL: I think my dad handed us five dollars.

PB: That's a lot.

GL: In those days it was. It was a four or five, I can't remember. They used to use it to teach the kids how to dance, you know, the steps. The town hall,

PB: All what they are. Yeah, there're quadrilles and schottisches. When your dad taught you to play the piano, did you learn to read music right off the bat?

GL: No, he used to write music for us when we were kids. He'd write parts for the piano, coronet, clarinet. He used to write a lot of music.

PB: How'd he learn all of this?

GL: I don't know!

PB: Genius, wasn't he?

GL: Yeah.

PB: He really was.

GL: It'd just come natural to him, nobody taught him. He learned how to make his notes and everything. Is there anything there of his writing in the...

PB: So you learned to read music from him?

GL: Yeah. But now I don't use music at all, I play, I know them all by ear now.

PB: Yeah. You play the,

GL: There's the horn book. And here's one that's the music from my dad, the violin music.

PB: Oh.

GL: Here's some of his notes. Here, now, he called it Violander [phonetically spelled], that's the schottische. Violander [phonetically spelled] is a schottische.

PB: By O. G. Olson.

GL: Yeah. Oscar G. Olson.

PB: Piano.

GL: Here's a march that he made up himself, that's his own. From his own head.

PB: Waltz, is that Linnea?

GL: Yeah. He named them Linnea.

PB: Is that after somebody?

GL: No. Isn't that funny? My granddaughter has a friend lives up here, name is Linnea. Here's march,

PB: You've been very careful with his music.

GL: Yeah.

PB: Long, long,

GL: Brassy coronet, violin, coronet. Viola, that's what my sister used to play that, viola. And cello. Isn't that cello?

PB: That's baritone.

GL: Oh, baritone. Trombone, ain't it?

PB: Nope, baritone.

GL: Baritone? Oh,

PB: B flat.

GL: Here's coronet. [Inaudible] he plays for me. He's in the hospital right now.
[Inaudible]

GL: What's this? Clarinet?

PB: Sax.

GL: Saxophone? Oh yeah, my oldest brother played saxophone.

PB: There's cello.

GL: There cello. That's what my sister played.

PB: And your dad wrote all those different parts?

GL: And the cello is as big as she was. There's flute, too. My oldest brother played flute. He played flute and clarinet, both.

PB: Whole family troupe down and played for the dance? After you were married, you still did it?

GL: Oh, my dad wrote all this for me when we were kids.

PB: Did you all play together? After you were married?

GL: Oh, no. My dad was too old by the time I got married.

PB: So you did it mostly before,

GL: We all got married and lived here and there, you know. We didn't get together or..., My other, I always had a piano, but the others didn't have their instruments. Didn't bother with them, I guess.

PB: They didn't play them so much?

GL: No. That's my dad's writing too. He's got a good hand, didn't he?

PB: Beautiful, beautiful. I can't believe its music.

GL: One of these rolls is one he made up himself.

PB: All these that are written out he made them up himself? And all the different parts?

GL: Yeah. [Inaudible] Here. Then when my oldest brother got old enough, then he got us all together and called us his orchestra, Speck's orchestra. You see, they called him Speck.

PB: That's your older brother?

GL: Because he was lumber inspector and they called him Speck all the time. Yeah, Rowdy Dow,

PB: Rowdy Dow Dance.

GL: He put out posters all over, you know, to let them know where we'd be playing.

PB: Gerda, there's no woman in that picture.

GL: There's no woman there?

PB: On the piano.

[Laughing]

PB: I protest. 'It' the music of Speck Olson and his Huron Mountain Club Orchestra. Alston town hall, Saturday Night, September Fifth.' There's no year on that. 'Hot and sweet. Seventy-five cents per couple. Extra lady, twenty five cents.'

[Laughing]

PB: You mean if a guy brought two women he had to pay extra for her?

GL: Yeah. He has to pay for the extra lady.

PB: Now let's see what it says on the back. 'Meet your friends at the carnival dance, the high school gym, Trout Creek, Saturday night October 31st, dance to the music of Speck Olson and his Huron Mountain Club Orchestra.'

GL: Yep.

PB: 'There will be serpentine, confetti, balloons.' What's serpentine?

GL: I don't know. Something you throw around, I guess.

PB: 'And walkers galore. Fun for everyone. Music for young and old. One step, two step, quadrilles, fox trots, and waltzes. Anyone caught destroying these posters will be prosecuted.' There's no date on that one either. Printed by the Baraga County Herald, in L'Anse.

GL: This was put off by Ford, too, they had us [inaudible]

PB: Would this have been before Ford, then?

GL: Oh, yeah, that was before Ford.

PB: So this was before '23. The Roaring Twenties. That's pretty good, cheap.

[Inaudible]

PB: Now this book was printed in 1943, Gerda. So you would not have used this one. Did you use one like this when you played before?

GL: Yes, Ford gave us all a book like that when I was playing for the Ford dancing school.

PB: How long did you

SIDE B

PB: Did you go to school out there? Did Fords go to school out there at one of Ford's schools?

GL: Oh, yes. Yeah. She went to the dancing school. Let me look in the, wait a second.

[BREAK IN TAPE]

GL: Still was an electrician.

PB: For Ford?

GL: Yeah, and after he did his day's work, then he used to go out wiring houses for people that were building all over.

PB: Extra money.

GL: Yeah, Extra money. He used to wire houses.

MABEL LARSON (ML): I put them in the bottom drawer of that little thing. Don't touch them. I know where they are.

GL: Well, I'll have to if I need a stamp.

ML: You don't write.

GL: Not much.

PB: I'll say I bet you moved in town,

GL: But sometimes Jodi and [inaudible] write for me and I got to find a stamp. Cindy might write for me and I have to find a stamp.

ML: In the bottom of that thing there. Bottom drawer.

GL: What did you say?

PB: I said I'll bet you moved into town, because Ford closed down in the forties, around the Second World War. Would that be right?

GL: You mean he closed down the?

ML: Closed down the plants,

PB: Pequaming, and Sterns and Colder.

ML: And everybody came to work for L'Anse.

GL: Oh yeah, that's right.

PB: Is that when you moved in?

GL: That's when we moved here. About the war.

ML: Yeah.

PB: And your husband still worked for Ford? Here? In L'Anse?

ML: He worked for Ford in L'Anse, and then when the L'Anse plant closed down he went back home.

GL: Yeah, and then he come home on the weekends. Worked for Ford in Iron Mountain. Gabe was a [inaudible] down there. Well, that's where he got sick down there

ML: Well, yeah, he got gas

GL: Yeah, he got gas down there. He had to work and then he had to fix some lights. Something went wrong someplace where, he had to go and fix some lights, and he said the place was all filled up with gas.

PB: In Iron Mountain?

GL: Yeah, and he said he went to a window to get some air and then he collapsed, they took him to a hospital and he died there.

PB: Right after he got gas?

ML: He lived about a week.

PB: Lived a week in the hospital?

ML: They claimed it was a heart attack, of course it was company doctor, so naturally they wouldn't admit,

GL: He told me, you know, I suppose he knew he was going to die, he said it was no heart attack, he says 'I was gassed.'

ML: Well, so did the [inaudible] say that. That they found him like that.

PB: So he was working on the lights?

ML: Yeah.

PB: What did that factory do down there?

ML: Briquette lights. Briquette.

PB: Briquettes?

ML: You know, coal is gassy. It explodes well. It really, they say they had [inaudible]

PB: Anybody else die from that?

GL: No.

ML: He was the only one in that place. The man that came to work in the morning found him laying there.

GL: He says he went to the window to get air, and they said that was the worst thing he could do was to go, and when that air hit him, that was it.

PB: Did they have, I heard that Ford had good benefits, so as far as insurance,

ML: I didn't fight it. Oh, some of them, you know, they were after me to fight it, you know, and get something. I says I couldn't take it. I just won't take it. To talk to them. Go to court over everything. I says no.

GL: You were going and then they dropped it? Did you remember you was ready to go to Iron Mountain and then you called me and said it was called off? But they had wanted her to have an autopsy.

ML: Yeah, oh, that, and I said no.

PB: No, it wasn't worth it.

GL: It wouldn't have proven anything.

ML: No, I just, couldn't take all that.

PB: Yeah, alright. Did you ever meet Mr. Ford?

GL: Oh, yes.

PB: What kind of a man was he?

GL: Very nice man.

PB: Very nice.

GL: Yeah, he come up and shook hands with us when he stayed up there in Pequaming. They used to come in by boat.

PB: In the summer? And stay at The Bungalow.

ML: I think he stayed there.

PB: Did his wife come?

GL: No.

ML: She come up a few times with him, didn't she?

GL: I met her once, but that wasn't up here, was it?

ML: Maybe when you went to Greenfield Village.

GL: I think when I went to further down to Iron Mountain or something she was there.

ML: I think when you went to Greenfield Village and played.

GL: We never went to Greenfield Village.

ML: But you did!

GL: No, not to Greenfield Village. We went to Iron Mountain. That's the furthest we went.

ML: Well, I know you would, because all of the kids from here went,

GL: Some of the kids went, but Pa and I didn't go.

ML: How come?

GL: They had their own fiddler and music down there.

ML: Oh, I thought you went.

GL: No, no. Didn't go.

PB: The boys did?

ML: They had their own fiddler.

GL: They took the kids that we taught to dance, you know, and played for,

PB: All the way to the train?

GL: Yeah, well they took just so many, they couldn't take all of them. They had dances, you know.

PB: Put on a show, down there. Do you remember any of the teams? I've heard that some of their teams from Pequaming were really good. You remember? Football or basketball,

GL: Well, I never attended any basketball or baseball games. Nope, that didn't interest me.

PB: They had them out there? Hockey?

ML: I wouldn't know because I was all through high school by the time they built the high school there. I had to go L'Anse school from the eighth grade up.

GL: Well, I wouldn't stand out in the street to watch a hockey game either because it was all outside rinks then.

PB: How about roller skating? Did you have any of that out there?

ML: Oh, yeah, they used to have some roller skating up in the town hall they'd give us some roller skates and boots.

PB: This was after Ford came in?

GL: Yeah.

PB: I've also heard that Mr. Ford didn't like drinking. He prohibit any alcohol?

GL: There wasn't anything he said about watching anybody drinking, did he? Was he?

PB: Really?

GL: But they knew better to drink on the job or anything, you know, those that worked for Ford.

PB: Yeah.

ML: Don't drink on any job.

GL: Well no.

ML: We're starting [inaudible] there I was hoping,

GL: Oh, yeah.

ML: Jonathon knocked on the front door and wanted [inaudible]. He had gone to this door, I was the first one who started. He wanted to come in and have him play, what kind of music he played, and everything.

GL: Wanted to listen to us play, anyways.

PB: Jonathon? The superintendent?

GL: No, Mr. Ford himself.

PB: Oh, Mr. Ford, then?

ML: He was the superintendent.

GL: He want to hear us play, you know, he came in [inaudible] one time,

ML: [inaudible]

GL: He came right to our living room.

ML: In here.

GL: He got up and they danced the schottische and the waltz, and we played it,

PB: Did he? He must have really liked to dance.

ML: Yeah. Just a little old man.

GL: And there were kids outside peeking in the windows you know, everybody knew Ford was in there and they were peeking on the Fords.

PB: That's a big deal.

GL: Yeah.

PB: So then he hired you. Payed you to play once a week for the school. And you played on the weekends for the dances.

GL: [inaudible] places on our own

PB: Did you?

ML: You're favorite actor when you were about fourteen, sixteen.

PB: Where around here, where did you go?

GL: In the town hall, they played different,

PB: In L'Anse?

GL: Oh, they used to, well in L'Anse and Pequaming, we used to play,

ML: Baraga,

GL: Baraga.

ML: Grange Hall.

GL: And Grange Hall,

ML: Hiawatha Hall.

GL: We played for wedding dances and,

ML: I don't think there's any place you haven't been.

GL: No, I've been all over. Well,

ML: And still playing.

GL: Yeah. And still playing. But there isn't as many dances any more to, now we're going to play for dance, aren't we?

ML: Yeah.

GL: She can play the accordion and I can play the piano.

PB: You play the accordion, too?

ML: Oh, a little bit, but not much. I used to play more, but now I haven't kept it up much.

GL: The stamina, oh, my arms get tired.

PB: Mostly piano and organ?

GL: Oh, yeah.

ML: A pity you don't have a piano up here. You could take the organ.

GL: Yeah, play a tune for her.

ML: Oh.

GL: Well, I mean you play the accordion with me.

PB: Oh yeah, I got to get some of that on my tape.

GL: Well, you'll have to take my accordion.

ML: Mine [inaudible] to your accordion

PB: I've got to get,

GL: Her accordion is a lot bigger than mine. See, that little thing, she's,

ML: It makes a difference, you know.

PB: Well, I've got to get this on tape, Gerda playing the piano.

[Piano and accordion music plays]

ML: This key sticks up, that bothers me.

[Piano and accordion music plays]

ML: Dang, this accordion is out of tune.

[BREAK IN TAPE]

ML: Judy Edith.

PB: But you don't like it?

ML: It's Edith Mabel, but I always went by Mabel because my mother's Edith, too. So there wouldn't be any confusion.

PB: You were born in Pequaming, fifteen?

ML: Sixteen.

PB: At home? Was there ever a hospital out there?

ML: No. Never.

PB: Anybody who needed to come in, they came in to L'Anse?

ML: There was no hospital in L'Anse then, either.

PB: Where'd you go?

ML: You had to go to Hancock. The hospital has been here thirty years.

PB: There was Dr. Delint [phonetically spelled] out there? In Pequaming?

ML: Oh, there was a doctor, they always had a company doctor.

PB: Did you have to pay him, too.

ML: Oh, yes. We had to, Hebard's have a company doctor before, they had a company doctor.

PB: You remember who delivered you?

ML: Dr. Marshall.

PB: Marshall. But that was still Hebard, then?

ML: Yeah. Right.

PB: Did your husband, did you met your husband out there?

ML: Yeah. No, he was [inaudible] there. He lived in, he came from Lower Michigan, but he had live in L'Anse for quite a few years.

PB: Did he go to work out there?

ML: Yeah,

PB: That's how you met him?

ML: Yeah, he was a crane operator out there. On a coal boat.

PB: Oh, at the dock.

ML: And an electric blade grain. And they'd get logs with that other crane. They used to have logs [inaudible] all up and down the tracks. Wood to mill for lumber. And logging trucks hauled them in and they picked them off. Packed them up.

PB: Load them off the boat. Then load tem on the car?

ML: They used to come in by railway. Years ago, but then they started using logging trucks. And there was a logging truck coming in, I think about every half hour. Over there, after they started that.

PB: Was this after Ford came in?

ML: Oh, yeah, yeah.

PB: Before they had trucks?

ML: Yeah. Hebard's always came in by train. Which I think was a lot safer. There was so many killed when they first started with them logging trucks. Logs would roll around when they would go to release them, you know, to chains and that. Didn't seem that I'd ever heard of anybody getting killed from the train.

PB: You lived right in the village of Pequaming?

ML: Oh, yeah.

PB: Of course not in Finn Town?

ML: No.

PB: No.

[Laughing]

PB: What was your married name?

ML: It was Dan

PB: Dan?

ML: And now it's Will.

PB: What was Dan, what nationality?

ML: Scotch and English.

PB: So you lived right in Pequaming itself?

ML: Yeah.

PB: Can you remember life as a little girl?

ML: Oh, yeah. I can think of all the good times we had over there. I don't even like to go over there anymore.

PB: Don't you?

ML: No. It's so old. Think of all the good times we had there.

PB: The dances, and,

ML: Yeah,

PB: And your family?

ML: Yeah, you know, we always found a lot of things to do. Created our own entertainment. We didn't have to have cars like the young ones do now. If you haven't got a car, well, they just can't have any fun.

PB: What did you do on your date?

ML: [laughing]

PB: Well, I don't want to, [laughing] Went to dances, went for walks?

ML: Yeah, but we [inaudible]

PB: Buggies or cars? Were there cars out there at all?

ML: Oh, yeah.

PB: A lot of them?

ML: There were cars. When I was growing up, oh when she was young there wasn't very many cars. When Gerdi was young. Well, the Hebard's had cars.

PB: Did they?

ML: Yeah. May used to get picnics for the families in the summer and they'd come and get the families up and out to the picnic grounds and bring them home. They were real nice people, Hebards.

PB: They sure were.

ML: They had these great big seven passenger Studebakers. [Laughing] I bet they were as long as this room. They were long in the first place and then they had these extra seats that fold out of the back.

GL: In fact, one of the Studebakers was up for sale one time, my dad bought them.

PB: From the Hebards?

ML: Yeah. And then their orchestra travelled all over in that. And my brother had an orchestra, after my dad gave up with them. Well, of course, he didn't,

GL: She's seen that there Speck.

PB: Yeah, on the poster, I was looking at it.

ML: He didn't go for the jazz music.

PB: There's no date on this. Can you,

ML: Uh, no, I don't think, I got one of these too, and I don't think there's,

PB: No? There's a poster written on the back too, and there's no date on that one. That's for Halloween.

ML: Funny that they never put dates.

PB: You weren't supposed to look at those, sixty years later.

ML: That's October 31st, but they never put the year.

PB: Yep, no year. Did you like life before Ford better than after? Can you tell?

ML: See, I was quite young when Ford bought,

PB: Yeah,

ML: So, I can remember it, but too small to get out and around and have fun or get into mischief or anything.

PB: Yeah. Did people grumbled a lot though that 'it used to be better when Hebard was here' or did they like it better, do you remember?

ML: Yeah, they liked it better when Hebard was there. Yeah, the old timer's did. Because he never bothered anybody. Rent was a dollar a year. Just so you wouldn't get squatters rights.

PB: Yeah.

ML: And no light bills. Never had to pay a light bill. Big load of wood for three dollars. The people got along I think better then,

PB: then, before,

ML: Because smaller wages.

PB: Did you think those supervisors that Ford hired had anything to do with it?

ML: Yeah, some of them were pretty,

PB: John, can you think of any of them?

ML: Pretty, you know, snotty. They'd watch every little thing so they could get somebody a ten day layoff, or any little thing they done. Until union bought in, of course then they couldn't be like that anymore.

PB: When was that? Do you remember?

ML: I don't remember when they got the union. But they were quite a few years before they had any union. I know they were fighting, fighting for it.

PB: Did they have any trouble with the union coming in? Did it get violent at all?

ML: No.

PB: Like they did in Calumet?

ML: No.

PB: Nothing like that.

ML: They got violent up there.

PB: Oh, yeah, big strike. Thirteen. That was Wobblies.

ML: Yeah.

PB: Remember the Italian disaster? It was the same year.

ML: Yeah.

PB: They had a lot of trouble.

ML: [inaudible] didn't want it.

PB: No, the company.

ML: The Company didn't want it.

PB: They hired scabs up there. But you didn't have any trouble like that in Pequaming?

ML: No. Uh-uh. [Inaudible]

[BREAK IN TAPE]

ML: school, you got the high school, and then, I don't think there was very many classes graduated because when they shut down. It was a shame that they didn't build one there sooner. So the kids wouldn't have to go all the way to L'Anse.

PB: You got bussed in to L'Anse?

ML: We had to start in eighth grade. It went just up to the eighth grade in Pequaming and then we had to finish in L'Anse.

PB: Was there just the one school building then, when you were there?

ML: Yup. Just one school for all the grades.

PB: It must have been hard to take a bus all the way in here and back.

ML: Yeah, we had to get up pretty early. Bus used to get in there at seven thirty in the morning and we didn't get home until about 4:30 at night.

PB: That's a long day.

ML: Yeah.

PB: So you graduated from high school.

ML: In L'Anse. Yeah.

[Inaudible]

ML: Oh, yeah.

PB: I think you graduated about, 1933?

ML: Yeah.

PB: And the high school was built right after that.

ML: Yeah. Only, there wasn't very many classes graduated from Pequaming before it shut down. It was a bit of a shame that they didn't think of building that high school sooner.

PB: Then he pulled out, and nothing happened after that?

ML: No. He just shut it down.

PB: People moved away right away,

ML: Yeah, they had to. Get out, get work. Well, it was a lot of the older ones stayed. My dad stayed too. Oh, he lived there quite a few years after they shut down.

PB: Oh, did he?

ML: Yeah. Then only about three families left there, there was Westins, my dad, and then there was Delorie. They lived right there until they died, both of them. They said they'd never move out of there.

PB: They never moved. They never did.

ML: They never did.

PB: There's a cemetery out there? I wish it were nicer weather, I'd,

ML: This was when I was a young, young,

PB: Beautiful.

[Inaudible]

ML: Yeah.

PB: Do you remember the, did you ever go to the camp meetings?

ML: Yes.

PB: What did you do out there? Get into trouble?

ML: No, that was a lot of fun because [inaudible] tents out there, stayed right there, meeting people, and they camped right there. And we used to, oh, camp meeting at least a week for that.

PB: When was it?

ML: In August.

Gerda: Usually in August.

PB: Couple weeks?

ML: Um hm. Everybody went out there. Everybody.

PB: After the flies were gone, I suppose.

ML: Yeah. They all mingled and, never had any troubles or anything. Everybody mixed good. Yeah, that was a nice place, the camp meeting grounds.

PB: After Ford came in there were no more?

ML: Well, yeah, they have them now. I don't know if they still have them. They say they have them down there by, just past the bingo building now. You go down the road a ways and then turn in,

PB: Oh, yeah?

ML: I was there once. But I don't know if they have them anymore or not.

PB: Did Ford didn't like them, or what?

ML: Well, I don't know. I guess, all the older Indians died. I guess the younger ones didn't keep it up.

PB: Yeah. Maybe it got phased out. He didn't say 'no more.'

ML: No, oh, he never stopped them.

GL: Here's our band here.

PB: Who's on the banjo?

ML: That's the one that died.

GL: Oh, he died.

PB: Oh.

GL: [inaudible], his name was.

PB: Oh. I see, not your family.

GL: No, this is a,

PB: These are too young.

ML: That's my son in law. He can play the guitar.

GL: Here's our brothers and sister here, but my mother and dad,

ML: A friend of ours, Mark Marland [phonetically spelled] and he had the bar, Mat, and he sold it just recently. Had one ruse going and then he sold that and bought one of Mats, now Mill eats the picnic [inaudible]. And not getting any more of our... Here's the one, let's see. No, that's my youngest brother.

PB: [inaudible]

ML: Yep. Well, there's one sister in Canada. She's [inaudible]

PB: Gerda, you used to have all those books, like weren't they yearbooks of Pequaming?