

Interview with George Mahalic
Date Unknown
Location Unknown

Subject: Croatian Heritage

START OF INTERVIEW

Interviewer (I): Alright, so through the Croatian Society of Escanaba he heard about...

George Mahalic (GM): Yeah, the big sawmill in Escanaba.

(I): And what was that sawmill called?

(GM): I. Stephenson Company.

(I): I. Stephenson Company?

(GM): Yeah that was a hardwood flooring company and a pine mill.

(I): Okay.

(GM): Mhm. In 1926 when they put on a second shift, just for the second shift, they took 500 people. They employed 500 people for the second shift in 1926 – I think it was in November if I remember correctly. Looking back 50 years ____.

(I): Were they doing a lot of hardwood flooring in the area? Was there a big need for it?

(GM): Yes, that and cutting the pine logs and pine lumber.

(I): Okay. What traditions did he carry on from Yugoslavia? Did he...

(GM): Every one of them. You want an example?

(I): Yes.

(GM): For example, we dressed, we talked, we carried on just like we were in Yugoslavia, as you see Yugoslavia today and as Yugoslavia was then it was the Austrian-Hungarian empire at that time. ____
____ was the president of the whole thing, the whole empire.

(I): Okay. What was the dress that would be different from the dress that we wear today?

(GM): Really it would be ____ _____. You're talking about the way people dress today... we'd look back and as we dress today, all you'd have to do was look back 40 years and 40 years ahead. The dress wouldn't be any different. An American traditional dress, really.

(I): Did you have certain foods that you eat over here that...

(GM): Oh, definitely.

(I): What type of food would that be that you brought over with you?

(GM): That they brought over with them?

(I): Yes.

(GM): Saur kraut, polish sausage, kielbasas, and that's our main dish.

(I): Did you marry within the...?

(GM): Did I? No.

(I): Did your father or did they marry within the Yugoslavian...?

(GM): ____ yes my mother was Yugoslavian.

(I): Have you ever heard about the... In Northtown I've heard, Escanaba, that there were shacks down there where Yugoslavians lived. Was that...?

(GM): Very surely, yes. They kind of had ____, as all foreigners do I guess until they get totally on their own feet. There was Swedish, Norwegian, and also French. People of all kinds...

(I): Down in this area?

(GM): Down in the Northtown area.

(I): I've heard that a lot of bars were owned by Croatian people, is that true?

(GM): Only in north Escanaba.

(I): Only in north Escanaba?

(GM): Mhm.

(I): Was the reason they congregated or owned the bars down there because the Croatians...

(GM): That would be because of the work situation; all the work was down in that area.

(I): And do you like it here? Are you following any traditions of the Croatians?

(GM): Definitely, I love it here, yes. Yes, I still have relatives – we have relatives that live in Croatia – Yugoslavia and one of my main interests would be going over there and seeing where my parents really came from.

(I): Have you ever been there?

(GM): No, but I definitely will be going there.

(I): Do you or does anyone in your family ever send money to Yugoslavia?

(GM): Oh yes, I do, we do. My sister does.

(I): Do you subscribe to a Yugoslavian newspaper or a...?

(GM): The _____, mhm.

(I): Does that come monthly?

(GM): Weekly.

(I): Weekly?

(GM): Mhm.

(I): Well I want to thank you very much George.

(GM): Okay, thank you too.

(I): You have a good day.

(GM): Mhm.

END OF INTERVIEW