

AUNTIE - AUNTIE - I- OVER

"But they have so much more than we did. They don't realize, you know, how lucky they are, and how much more they have than we ever had." These were the thoughts of Sigrid Rinne when I asked her opinion of youth today.

Sigrid lives in the Humboldt location, located near Highway U.S. 41 west of Ishpeming. She has vivid memories of the Depression and how she lived back then. She lives in a house that was built in 1900 by her grandfather. Her home has a cozy, warm atmosphere although the kitchen is not equipped with all the modern conveniences. The stove is old, but shiny, and looked like it has been well cared for. I do think Sigrid is right. We are very fortunate to have all the things we have, but many of us young kids are used to having more.

Although other people may have reproached him, Sigrid didn't blame Hoover for the Depression. She felt that regardless who would have been President, the Depression would have occurred. Their family lost some money in the bank failures. However, they got some of it back after about a year. There were people they knew who lost quite a bit of money when the banks closed in Ishpeming. "There was a lot of anger when the banks closed, but I guess that they realized later on that it had to be done," Sigrid remembered when I asked her about her view on it. Her husband thought that Roosevelt was a great guy, and they listened to him every time they knew he was going to be on the radio, listening to many of his fireside chats.

Since her babies were small and she was busy, Sigrid never really paid attention to businesses closing. She remembers that she could go in a grocery store and for a couple of dollars buy plenty of meat, milk, butter, and eggs. On Saturdays she could get three pounds of hamburger for a quarter! She commented that grocery stores extended credit to their customers. They allowed many people hundreds of dollars in grocery bills. The customers that received extended credit eventually paid them back as soon as they "got back on their feet." One of the grocery stores was Rosbergs which was right across from where Joseph's grocery is now located.

Sigrid recalled her dad having a job at the Michigamme Mine where he made about \$6.00 per day. Sigrid's husband worked for the WPA program; he also had moved away, and worked in Cleveland and Kentucky and for Western Electric.

Reflecting back to her years in school, Sigrid told me about her two room school houses and she explained that they went from first to the fourth grades and from fifth grade to the eighth grade. The schools got money from taxes and the states had to give money to schools. The teachers' salaries were not very high, and she thought they were about sixty to seventy dollars a month. To cut living expenses, teachers often lived with families in the area. Her family had two teachers boarding with them when she was in the seventh grade.

Sigrid remembered the railroads having quite a bit of business then. She went to school by train and the township paid her fare. Sometimes she saved her money and walked, although she usually got a ride from someone along the way. She even bought a coat with the money she saved in train fares. During her freshman and sophomore years she went to school by train.

As a young girl, Sigrid had lots of fun. She mentioned that she went ice skating, played hardball and horseshoes. She said that they played games that kids nowadays have not even heard of. For example, pom-pom pullaway and auntie-auntie-I-over were played like this: you chose sides with one team on one side of the house and the other on the other side. A ball was thrown over the roof and the person who caught it would try to hit the other people. The person you "hit" had to join your side so pretty soon there was not anybody left on the other side. Sigrid also recalled skiing at Suicide, but not until after she was married and her kids were bigger. She went cross country skiing too.

There were a couple of good bands in this area. The men who were good musicians organized bands. They had movies too. "When the voice came into movies that must have been about in '24 or '25, so that up until then the movies were silent. When the voice came in they called them talkies," Sigrid recalled.

Some people may have the idea that people would be concerned only with their own needs during the trying times of the Depression. Sigrid felt that the Depression seemed to bring people together, and they helped each other when they had to fix a barn or build some other project.

Sigrid does not think that young people are selfish, but she said that they have a lot more than she ever had. As I left Sigrid's home, I thought how lucky kids are today. We have so much and we do not have to work very hard to get it.

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