

Interview with George Annala  
By Brandon Anderson

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B This is Brandon Anderson interviewing George Annala at the Mather nursing home.

B How old are you right now?

G 81

B When were you born?

G 1902

B Where were you born?

G Where was I born? ... National Mine ... I'm still near my home town.

B Did you live there all of your life?

G NO! NO I've gone to different places - I used to go to Ann Arbor cause we had some family members there and we visited them.

B Did you have a job during the depression?

G During the depression - sure I worked most of my life and I sometimes I would go to school in the summer to college but I worked mostly during the winter and spring... that part of the year.

B Did you teach?

G I didn't teach at that time. I wasn't teach then.

BP Do you remember what it was like during the depression. W

G What do you mean. You mean what life was like? A little bit. There were quite

G a bit of people not working during the depression. But being a school I usually had a job.

B Did you have a radio G what

G I didn't have a radio. No! But there was a radio at home.

B Did you listen to Roosevelt on the radio.

G Franklin D Roosevelt? Yes G I listened I guess to him a little bit.

B Was there a um; do you know what a WPA was?

G Ya! the WPA was the Works Progress Administration where people went to earn a living-money!

B Was there one here eh?

G Yeah?

B Was there one in National Mine

G Ya! Ya! There was one in National Mine

B Um was National Mine called Winthrop

G Yes Yes it's still called Winthrop by some people.

B Was that during the depression

G Yes that was during the depression Part of it

B Was there any railroad in town?

G Northwestern went through the town.

B Did any go through national mine?

G There was switching in that went to Nat. Mine

Only Nat Mine could go to the Hercules Powder Co. Bring boxcars to load powder into them bring the coal cars down to be unloaded.

B Was there any city bands or choirs?

G National Mine didn't have a city band I don't think. What I remember they might of had I think they had a choral group you know that they got together among themselves and they would go out and sing someplace and have a little program for entertainment for the citizens.

B Did many people have automobiles? cars?

G Not very many. If they had them they were Model T's Model T's or Model T's with a kind of a canvas top.

B Were they important?

G Yes of course they were a means of transportation other than a horse and wagon? Course we had to have a horse for the store to deliver material and to go down town and get groceries and get canned stuff to sell and that was way back in the non-transportation days Course Northwestern -

B did some people live in shacks?

G Shacks? B yes G. Well some of the people thought that quite a few houses were shacks by the looks of them. And ah. I don't know I guess they might of been a little bit cruel and had to heat because they used real wood in a heating stove and a kitchen stove to burn wood and to cook with.

B Did

G I don't remember anybody doing that.

G I don't remember anybody doing that. <sup>one</sup> <sup>west</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>principle</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>national</sup> <sup>service</sup> <sup>principles</sup> were in National Mire. Jobs were the years in there somewhat. I was a <sup>He</sup> <sup>(my</sup> <sup>father?)</sup> <sup>He</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>a</sup> <sup>tough</sup> <sup>lecturer</sup> <sup>wasn't</sup> <sup>he?</sup> I'd always thought that a I don't want to waste

<sup>time</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>my</sup> <sup>eyes</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>I</sup> <sup>don't</sup> <sup>want</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>waste</sup> <sup>my</sup> <sup>time</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>that</sup> <sup>class</sup>. <sup>So</sup> <sup>I</sup> <sup>advised</sup> <sup>by</sup> <sup>that</sup> <sup>philosophy</sup>.

B Did the schools have basketball

G National Mire didn't have basketball <sup>or anything like that</sup>. They didn't have much of sports except a little bit of baseball and that was my game. I like baseball because I played it I guess. I'm a little I was National mire team all these little towns and little teams and we used to go around and play games against these teams.

Q Were you a kid when the depression started?  
G I guess so because I was born in 1902  
so I was pretty much of a youngster in the  
depression.

Q That seems to be a long time ago 1902 hey?  
Its is 1881 <sup>now</sup> on 22 Feb 40 years ago

I dont know how or how it in that <sup>years</sup> <sup>ago</sup> spared  
me and let me live so long. I am happy to be  
able to be up and around and do things.

B Oh um Did people have gardens.

G Yes Pretty everybody had some kind of a garden.  
In National Mine.

B Was there a VFW or another G. PWA was called  
I believed was Public Works Administration.

B Ya but the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

G Ya I think that there was Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Organization.

B ANY EIKS? G EIKS? clubs yes B Moose lodges? G Ye  
Moose lodges.

B Did teachers work for free G Ha B. Did teachers  
work for free

G I taught I only taught 12 classes a day down  
in the college when I first went out I was  
Principle of the 10 grade school. It happened to be  
a newly built school. I had 18 classes a day so  
they wouldn't think of that today.  
B Was that during the depression G Who?

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Powder Co. Bring boxcars to load powder into

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Yes of course they were a means of transportation had to  
other than a horse and wagon. <sup>transportation had to</sup>  
have a horse for the store to deliver material and  
to go down town and get groceries and get canned  
stuff to sell and that was way back in the  
non-transportation days course Northwestern -

used to bring a carload of hay every one  
in a while. And sink it by the hay left  
had had built in addition to the hay left  
to keep hay to load hay and wed ~~with those~~  
bails up from one to the other and to way  
way up, pretty high. Those piles of hay.

Those were primitive days if you know.

B Did you think president Hoover was the  
cause of the depression?

G NO! I dont think so. I think Pres. Hoover  
got blamed for lots of things he shouldnt have  
been for. It ~~was~~ just happened to be his time

B to be president. Not because he caused it. I dont  
think.

B Was there Marathon dances around?

G Not that I remember we have a dance every  
once in a while in the town hall. And sometimes

It would be a local band or orchestra that would  
play. We wouldnt have a large number band

There'd be just a few who get together and  
entertain citizens with music playing instruments  
and singing. But that wasnt me I couldnt play  
anything. The only thing I could play was a

bandsaw that would make noise. ~~Never before~~  
what a bandsaw is dont you. ~~Never before~~  
use a bandsaw to saw boards.

B. Did immigrants live in one part of town?  
 G. Ah there was some immigrants that lived in National mine. I don't remember exactly where they lived I think some of them lived in a place called little hobbit; Part of Nat. Mine was down cross from the powder mill in that area.

Old Hobbit

B. Did a lot of people get married?

G. I don't recall, I guess they did sure its the same as they do any other time.

B. Did workers get laid off?

G. No they hired more WPA workers. They had WPA. They hired them to work on the roads mostly and do that kind of work. It was a good thing we had those to hire people so they could earn a little bit of money. Course there was always woods work lumberjacks work.

B. Did people steal food or anything?

G. I don't recall that they stole anymore than they usually do. You said steal things like take things? I think there was a little bit of that cause there was people didn't have much money and if they wanted something they'd have to steal it from somebody. But not that. But far as I know there wasn't too much of it.

B. Did people go hungry?

G. Get hungry? I don't think ~~that~~ there were many peo



- There was always something, eh, for them to eat. from  
somewhere, from W.P.A. maybe from the Government or  
something like that. And they could always go in the woods  
and kill some game. Rabbits or partridge, pheasants and  
so on. I used to do some trapping when I was a lad.

I remember I was walking ~~off~~ <sup>along</sup> the creek that goes past our  
home in Nat. Mine one day and I found some fresh graves  
on the bottom of the creek and I sat there it ~~didn't~~ <sup>didn't</sup> ~~long~~ <sup>long</sup> and  
I found the muskrats had dug burrows here and ~~buried~~ <sup>buried</sup> ~~them~~ <sup>them</sup> and  
out. But I'm glad I had a chance to have that country  
experience that I had. And that somebody longed for hills  
in Boslo's built camps by the Escanaba River and one of them was  
built in a little hole in a swamp but Paul's was on the edge of the  
swamp on this side the Escanaba River and I had a chance to  
go to these places and stay there occasionally when I wanted to be  
out the woods.

B Did you feel poor during the Depression?

G No it didn't bother me that way.

B That's the end!

Thank  
You!