

C. = This is Cindy Biptrom getting your name: Cindy Biptrom  
Grace Bentons impressions on the  
Great Depression and we are now  
in her house in Ishpeming, and the date  
is December 28, 1983

C = OK, I'll begin asking you by ~~where~~ where  
and when where you born?

M.B. = I was born in National Mine, April  
the 4th, 1898

C = OK, and do you remember the stock  
market crashing?

M.B. = I remember, ya... some <sup>about</sup> it, but not  
much

C = How did it hurt you and your family?

M.B. = well <sup>said</sup> <sup>little</sup> <sup>what</sup> ~~can~~ I say

C = Well, um, did it cut back on anything?

M.B. = Well, ... my husband was out of work

C = OK

M.B. = That's during the depression isn't it

C = mmhu

M.B. = he worked on W.P.A.

C = mmhm

~~not~~ C = OK, how many children were in your family

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interview with =  
Grace  
Bentone  
by Cindy  
Bytown

G.B. = in my immediate family?

C. = yah

G.B. = I had 3 brothers and 3 sisters

C. = OK, you were a parent during the depression right? <sup>(and repeated)</sup> were you an adult during the depression? right?

M.B. = yes, I was married

C. = How many children did you have?

M.B. = I had two

C. = OK, <sup>(mumble - wrong question)</sup> and did you play, where did you live at that time?

M.B. = Well, in the the beginning we lived in Salsberry, and then I lived in National Mine of course, until I was married, and then we lived in, ahh, Salsberry, and after Rosemary was born, I had to have another bedroom (laugh) so we, ahh... went back to National Mine and lived

C. = mmhmm

C. = Do you blame Hoover for the Depression or the stock market crashing?

M.B. = ahh, I don't, ... I didn't follow politics

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M.B. very much, (laughter), I didn't blame anybody

C = were you working at that time?

M.B. = now what? (said uncertainly)

C = were you working at that time... during the stock market and the depression?

M.B. = aahh, I started to work, ... well before I was married I ~~started to~~ worked at the bazaar, ~~and~~ and after Rosemary was born I quit, ~~or~~ I didn't exactly quit I had to have time off, then I went back to work, and I don't know what year

C = OK, well um... Do you remember anything about the "New Deal"

M.B. = the New Deal? that was... Roosevelt had something to do about that

C = yah

M.B. = well isn't he the one who started the <sup>(said wrong word)</sup> the Depression, ... the W.P.A.

C = yah

M.B. = well yes I remember lot about that

C = what do you remember about it?

M.B. = well, I had to find a nursemaid for Bob and Rosemary and they lived right in, they were live ins, and da, uh, my husband got a job on the W.P.A., look at it now

C = oh yah

M.B. that's when I, that wasn't enough to keep the family going and I got a job back at the Gizzard, and as soon as before I got my first paycheck, he was laid off <sup>of</sup> the W.P.A. but we had cows, pigs, chickens and gummy ~~backs~~.

C = what did you think about the W.P.A.?

M.B. = well, ahh. it was a godsend till I got a job, so it helped alot.

C = ummm, what did your husband do while he was working in it?

M.B. = he was night watchmen, at different locations (and <sup>← said softly</sup> that's what he did)

C = Did he take part in the CCC

M.B. = no   
 M.B. parden   
 C = repeated

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C = Was he a farmer?

M.B = well we had cows and the different animals, but ah, not really a farmer

C = Did you, ah, grow crops?

M.B = we made our own hay and ah had a big garden all of the time, vegetables

C = well, ah, did you go AAA and take subsidy - (repeated then)

M.B = no

C = were you familiar with Huey Long in Louisiana, Father Coughlin or Francis Townsend? remember any of them

M.B = what was it? (said quietly)

C = Francis Townsend?

M.B = no

C = Did your family take part in The Share the Wealth or Social Security Acts? were you in any of these?

M.B = Social Security Acts?

C = or the Share the Wealth plan

M.B = I don't know (mumbled)

C = Okay!

C = what type of food items were hard <sup>to come</sup> by?

M.B. = sugar and butter

C. = were there any help in your area to get the food - (repeated) like any lines or anything?

M.B. = I don't know, I don't think so.

C. = Okay, Did your family have an radio

M.B. = long silence no.

C. = What kind of education did your children have?

M.B. = high school and Bob my son was drafted, but he was aloud to finish school because his grades were such that they allowed him to finish high school and graduate, and then at 19 he entered the service

C. = where did they go to school do you remember?

M.B. = National Mine

C. = Well do you remember what the name of the school was?

M.B. = Well, National Mine High School

C. = Did they have any basketball team or chorus in the school?

G.B. = yes my son played in the basketball team.  
 But the I went to, had no indoor plumbing, the janitor had to haul all of the water from a well down in the bottom of the school yard, we all drank out of the same dipper, and whatever water we drew from this well we had to drink, we weren't aloud to drink part of it and throw the rest away because he had to haul of a job to haul it, and I used to take two 10-guent water ~~barrels~~ <sup>pails</sup> to school with me, morning and night, and haul water from the well, drinking water for home.

C = Did they have a hot lunch program?

G.B. = Oh no

C = ok, did they have buses?

G.B. = no

C = How did the schools get money to pay off everything if ~~all the people~~ <sup>all the people were</sup> unemployed?

G.B. = that I don't know

C = what were Christmas's like for you, like what were the meals like, and the presents, do you remember

G.B. = the meals?

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C = ~~the~~ the Christmases

G.B = the meals that we had?

C = for Christmas

G.B = Oh, for Christmas, we always had goose

C = what was <sup>um</sup> like, Christmas morning like for you guys?

G.B = pardon

C = What was Christmas morning like?

G.B = well there weren't too many gifts under the tree, but <sup>I</sup> we had two cows, and I would scald the milk and sell the cream, the scalded cream, and da, we'd buy something to eat to with the money, cause I sold to the A.P. store.

C = Did the teachers go to school, did they go for nothing or a low salary, since everybody was out of work <sup>did they</sup> did the teachers go to school for a low salary or <sup>did go for</sup> something

G.B = at that time they could teach with 3 months school from the northern, what was it called? (thinking) the normal at that it was called then they were aloud to teach, but wages were very low



G.B. = and da one of my sisters had to walk five or six miles to school and da light her own fire ~~and~~ haul in her own wood at school, so that the rooms would be warm for the kids, and there were 8 grades in this one school room.

C. = Did you or your children every go to the movies

G.B. = very few

C. = um, you said you did, you did have a garden in your back yard

G.B. = Oh yes, we used to have a big, we, we, planted potatoes, beans, peas, and da pumpkins

C. = Did you ever go pick berries?

G.B. = Oh yes, we used to pick berries and walk three miles to town to sell them

C. = For recreation did you ~~used~~ to go ice skating or rollerskating

G.B. = no

C. = Did they ever participate in <sup>any</sup> marathon dances?

G.B. = no

C. = What was the role of churches to you what did it mean to you, the churches

G.B. = what did the church mean

C = yah

G.B = well, I wasn't, I always went to the method-  
ist church, at that time, there was a church  
a Methodist church ~~in~~ at National mine,  
so.

C = Did you notice an increase in crime  
during the Depression

G.B = Somebody killed our cow (laughter)

C = Do you remember anything about  
prohibition? ← repeated word

G.B = prohibition, yes I remember when  
that came in, so many people turned to  
making moonshine

C = Were there any blind pigs in this  
area, National mine?

G.B = no I don't think so

C = did you or any of your family belong  
to the temperates, ~~repeated that word 3x~~  
repeat question

G.B = no

C = Okay, Did they have any railroads?

G.B = well yes, there was the, I think it was the  
C.S. and I, that used to come out to National  
Mine

C = Did the depression affect the railroads?  
(repeated question)

G.B. = As far as I know, there were very few people ~~and~~ <sup>that could afford</sup> to go on the train

C = were funerals any different then?

G.B. = were the what?

C = <sup>were the</sup> funerals any different then than they are now?

G.B. = a little, to some, from some, they to, had, they'd take the body to the methodist church for the service, but we would always walk, the children, would always walk from the house of the deceased, and da headdress the hearse down to the church

C = How about the wedding were they any different than they are now

G.B. = well, we, I was never allowed to go to a shivvy but everybody who ~~got~~ <sup>that</sup> married and the rest of <sup>the</sup> kids and the young people all shivered on whatever you call it.

C = Did any of the businesses <sup>have to</sup> close from the stock market or the depression

G.B. = I didn't get that (said quietly)

C. = <sup>okay</sup> Did any of the businesses have to close

G.B. = the bases?

C. = the businesses, the businesses

G.B. = ah, well there were very few, ~~and~~ there was only Annalas story and there was a little candy store and that had to close

C. = mm, did the mines have to close up during the Depression?

G.B. = Lets see, yes

C. = Do you remember which one, (repeated)

G.B. = well National mine, there was a, hm, my dad worked in the mine, but he died of silicosis, I forget.

C. = well, thats OK. um, were there any strikes during the Depression

G.B. = I can't remember whether that one strike they had was during the Depression or not, but they didn't win the first strike they had.

C = well if everybody was unemployed how did they get there money to buy there

G.B. = W.P.A.

C = Did you have an automobile?

G.B. = no

C = Did you think people were more helpful to each other during the Depression ← after those words

G.B. = Yes, but they were also envious of ~~each~~ other, think one would get more privileges than they had - (laughter)

C = Did anyone really lose faith in the American way? of life

G.B. = I don't know

C = Did you learn anything from the Depression - repeated

G.B. = well, we had to conserve a lot,

C = hmmm

G.B. = (short little laugh) I don't know if I'm much help to you or not

C = well, ya, thats all, that was good

Cindy Bystrom