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Dave Baird's
Interview with
George Baird

ME - When and where were you born?

George - I was born in Marquette, 1942

ME - What were your parents' names?

George - Francis and Eleanor Baird.

ME - What are the names of your brothers and sisters?

George - my brother Mike and my sisters Mary and Pat.

ME - Are you married?

George - yes

ME - When and where?

George - about 25 years ago in Marquette.

ME - What is your spouse's name?

George - Donna Baird

ME - What did your parents do for a living?

George - my mother was a hairdresser, my father was a carpenter.

ME - Where did you go to school?

George - Marquette, mostly at Graveret.

ME - O.K. What special memories do you have of growing up in this area?

George - well, I don't think anything was special, life was harder than it is now. We didn't have time to play a lot. Did a lot of fishing, there's something I don't have time to do now.

ME - Do you have any interesting or humorous stories to share about these early days in Eshtpening or Negaunee?

George - Well, I was born in Marquette. I didn't move to Eshtpening until I was around 20 years old or so. A lot of funny things happened in Marquette, probably nothing extraordinary.

ME - How old were you when you found your first job?

George - Oh, I think I was about 7 years old, I started shoveling sidewalks for people with a dustpan.

ME - Were you ever in the military?

George - No.

ME - How many total years have you worked in your lifetime?

George - Well, I guess I'd have to first start in the 10th grade high school I had a full time job. Last few years then I was 16 years old then and I'm 50 now that would be 34 years and I had different occupations.

ME - How or why did you choose your career?

George - Well, I think I looked for a job to make a little money to start out with, then when I saw better job I got that. I had a chance to get on as an apprentice painter to begin with, that was a better paying job better than what I had working as a second cook in the school. Eventually what that did it proved to be enough to make a living at and started working as a contractor on my own. I've been doing that ever since, that's well over 25 years.

ME - Did your job require any special training?

George - Oh, yes it did you have to get a college education or ~~special~~ ^{apprenticeship} training at any job you take.

Me - What do think was the most rewarding part of your job?

George - Oh, I think I think of all the jobs I had, I probably enjoyed working for myself, as a contractor. You're using your own ability to make a living, you didn't work hard, you found out you didn't do very well. So it was a financial incentive to do the best you could and try to do better than other people.

Me. What was the most challenging or difficult part of your career?

George - I really don't know, started out doing things I knew how to do and gradually kept learning new parts of the trade and how to do it efficiently and just kept to be a growing thing you know so, none of these things are average person can do without training and a lot of practice.

Me - Did any other family members work for you?

George - Yes, I had two sisters working for me and one brother

Me - Ok. Did your job put you in any dangerous situations?

George - Well, some of the work I did was dangerous, working high up in the air painting steel, and other work. Painting a water tower one time, it was over 100 feet high and I think the most dangerous thing was working out of town doing a lot of driving on the roads in slippery conditions just like we have around here, dangerous getting up early and driving to work trying to get home before it's too late at night. Often ^{times} we don't recognize where the danger is in life.

Me - Can you describe what your co-workers were like?

George - Well, there were a lot of people working for me, a couple of them were real hard and energetic workers. Do things a lot better than I could do. Other people needed constant attention and training and hope you can get them to keep

moving, so.. Some of em' were an encouragement to me and others were a discouragement. Just a natural variety in life that you run into.

Me - OK. Were you involved in any accidents, driving to work?

George - Yeah. several of em'. In one of them four people got killed in one accident. Some drunk people come across the center line and run into a couple of my trucks as we were coming home from work. I was pretty seriously injured too.

Me - at any time did you feel like changing careers?

George - No. I never regretted the type of work I done. Sometimes I think maybe when I was younger I should of had a little different attitude and thought more of studies, and going on to college and choosing a type of a career that was less strenuous even to this day, I don't know for positive which way I would have ended up if I went to college and pursued a higher education. It is quite possible that I might have got into construction work anyhow. I really don't know...

Me - you own the Mather soon, don't you?

George - Yes

Me - when did you purchase the Mather soon?

George - about 5 years ago in '88

Me - why did you buy it?

George - well, the reason I bought it is because when I was reading the newspaper at the time it didn't seem that anybody else had any interest in the building. I thought I would go and take a look at it with my brother-in-law, we through and looked at the building, saw that there was definitely a possibility for fixing it up and making it into apartments. Also what I seen there and went to auction, a bankruptcy auction right away I noticed there wasn't to many people interested in it. We got into the bidding process I was the low bidder after that I had to figure out what I was going to do with it.

Me - what do you plan to do with it?

George - Right now the plans are to renovate the top 3 floors into apartments.

There's going to be 17 apartments there for elderly persons. The bar is operating on a part time schedule in the winter, in summer it's open 7 days a week, after the apartments are operating and income is coming out of it. ~~the part of~~ Right now we're renovating the first floor, then the restaurant

Me - ok. Have you ever been involved in any clubs or organizations or stuff like that?

George - Not really

Me - If you could do your life all over again would you do the same career?

George - Oh, I think we'd all like to change things for the better. I don't know, it's hard to tell how things would be different. We'd have to live our life again.

Me - In closing, do have anything else you would like to add?

George - I guess probably the only thing I would like to add is oftentimes you see young people nowadays without much ambition. Their outlook on life is pretty grim. It's just a sad thing they don't get a little more enthusiastic spirit, trying to work a little harder and actually accomplishing and making something of their lives. It really doesn't _____ of the effort they put forth. Whether they have the ability to do a lot or to do a little or nothing.

Me - OK. THANK YOU.