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Erik Kauppila; Interview with Vanda Kauppila

This is Erik Kauppila I'm here with Vanda Kauppila.

With my Red Dust Interview, February 18 1992.

Me: When and where were you born?

Vanda: I was born May 14, 1944 in Ishpeming Michigan

Me: What were your parents names?

Vanda: Ruth and Edmond Nault

Me: What were the names of your brothers and sisters?

Vanda: I have three brothers Joey, Peter, Steven.

Me: When did you get married?

Vanda: July 13, 1963

Me: Where?

Vanda: At St. Josephs Church Ishpeming Mich. The old St. Josephs Church.



Mc: What is your spouses name?

Vanda: Raymond, Raymond Kauppila

Mc: What did your parents do for a living?

Vanda: My father was a construction worker for Kiehlins and son and Pajula and Maki.

My Mother worked for J.C. Penny Co. in Ishpeming

Mc: Where did you go to school?

Vanda: I went to North Lake school, West Ishpeming school St. Johns Catholic school and Ishpeming High School.

Mc: Was your schooling like todays standards, Was there like obsolete classes that were never in todays classes.

Vanda: No, it was the same as today, We had the same kind of classes, Science Biology Algebra Geometry.

Mc: What special memories do you have of growing up in this area?

Vanda: In the summer time I remember going out to our camp on the Dead River, I remember going to Champion Beach alot, It's called Von Ripper Park now. In the winter time we used to spend a lot of time at AL Quaal Skiing tobeggen riding cardboard sliding



Vanda: They don't even have the cardboard slide.  
(From page 2) anymore. We used to do alot of Ice skating  
at the Ishpeming playgrounds, and we use  
to Ice skate in a skating rink. Over by where  
the St. Josephs church is right now. That use  
to be our ice rink to.

ME: What special features stand out in your mind  
about the city of Ishpeming when you were  
younger?

These things that you just mentioned or something else?  
What?

Vanda: Well, I remember alot of stores in Ishpeming. They used  
to have at least two or three clothing stores.  
Several shoe stores. They had J.C. Penney store which was a  
department store, and they had Gately's store that was also  
a department store. They used to sell furniture, everything  
from furniture to clothing, in that store. They had several  
Men's stores downtown, where men could buy nice suits and  
anything from work clothes up to nice suits.

ME: Okay! Where did the kids like to hangout in town when you were  
a teenager



Vanda: We used to hang-out at the Congress the same as you do now. and we also used to have the American Cafe, which was on Division Street.

ME: Do you have any interesting or humorous stories to share about those early days in Ishpeming. Or some pranks you might have played on people?

Vanda: Well, I really should'nt say this, but we use to raid people's gardens. That was the big thing when we were kids. Raid there vegetable gardens and steal apples from their apple trees in the Fall.

ME: How old were you when you found your first job and where did you work?

Vanda: My first job? Could babysitting be included in it?

ME: It could be

Vanda: I use to babysit when I was a sophomore and Junior in High School.



Vanda: For my cousins children every summer. She had four boys, and then I believe when I started my Junior year in school I started working at the Mother Inn in Ishpeming. On a part time basis.

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Me: Why did you chose this profession?

Vanda: I didn't really chose it I kinda fell into it.

Me: What types of duties did you perform on this job?

Vanda: I did waitressing. We used to serve people breakfast lunch and dinner. We also used to have quite a few parties

Me: Anything else?

Vanda: Yes, we use to have to deliver room service to people. We had several elderly ladies and one elderly Gentleman that lived in the hotel at that time, and they were not able to come down to the dining room to eat so we used to have to bring their food up to their rooms

Me: Did this job require any special training, if so please describe the training?

Vanda: Well, you had to learn how to become a waitress. You just don't go right into it, you have to learn how to approach people, what to ask them



Mc: Who taught you this?

Vanda: The ladies who were working there before me and also the management

Mc: How many people a year would you say come through the restaurant or the Inn,

Vanda: Hundreds!

Mc: Was it the main attraction in Ishpeming?

Vanda: It was fairly main attraction. It was a beautiful Motel. In it's day it was just beautiful. They had fire places. Several rooms with fireplaces. They had a really nice, beautiful, dining room

Mc: Did this job have any rules or regulations to follow?

Vanda: No, you just had to make sure you took care of your customers, and made them happy. Make sure they had their experience dining at the Mother Inn.

Mc: What was the most rewarding part of your job.



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Vanda: Having people enjoy their dining experience at the Mathur Inn

Mc: What was the most challenging or difficult part of your job?

Vanda: Having a humongous party. We use to have to cater to parties. Sometimes they use to have parties at the Army. I remember one time Richard Nixon came there and we had to serve him

Mc: In his presidency?

Vanda: When he was a Vice-President,

Mc: What were the hours like and did you enjoy them?

Vanda: Yes, we had strange hours though. We used to go real early in the morning for breakfast and then you would work and serve people there breakfast. Then the dining room would close for a hour and a half and then you had to come back and serve the lunch counter, which was maybe a two-hour shift. Then the dining room would close all afternoon and reopen at five o'clock in the afternoon for supper. We would then work from 5 to 9 o'clock at night.



Me: How did the duties of your Job change over the years?

Were there different duties that you got over the years?

When you were working there?

Vanda: Not really, The hotel ran the same all the time. As you got more experience in your job you were able to cater a party someplace else you were able to do that, A less experienced waitress would not have been able to do that, She would have had to stay at the hotel.

Me: Did any other family members work at the same place as you?

Vanda: No.

Me: Did you have any friends that helped you with the job? In getting a job or working through the job?

Vanda: Yes, one of my best girlfriends at the time. Helped me get the job. In fact it was her mother who got both off as the job.

Me: Who would that be?

Vanda: Dorothy Allen, Her daughters name was Susan Allen.

Me: I know there was famous guests like Richard Nixon but was there any other famous guests that came to the Mather Inn?



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Vanda: Yes, there was people that were starring in a  
"Anatomy of a Murder". They came to visit there.  
In fact, I think they stayed there.

Me: Like Jimmy Stewart and those people?

Vanda: Jimmy Stewart, Lee Remick.

Me: Could you describe some humorous events that happened  
during your job

Vanda: We were always fooling around. I don't remember anything  
specific but we use to always laugh.

Me: at any time did you feel like changing jobs?

Vanda: Of course everybody does.

Me: What would you rather do?

Vanda: Well, I suppose if I would have finished my schooling  
I would have liked to be a social worker of some  
kind.

Me: Were you working and going to school at the same time?



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Vanda: Yes.

Me: I know you worked at the Elks. What was the main occupation there?

Vanda: I was a bartender.

Me: Did you enjoy that job?

Vanda: Pretty much so.

Me: How long were you employed there for?

Vanda: Almost ten years.

Me: Was there any famous guests that came through there?

Vanda: Not that I remember?

Me: Is there anything that stands out with this job, like a break in or something?

Vanda: No, I don't think so I can't remember. It was pretty routine work.

Me: What were the hours for this job?

Vanda: I worked from seven at night till the bar closed.



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Me: Did you have weekends off?

Vanda: No, I used to work just about every weekend.  
I sometimes had Sunday's off.

Me: Did you like the Mather's job better, or the ELKS?

Vanda: I would definitely say the Mather Inn.

I was younger then, and I enjoyed doing new things.

It was kinda fun.

Me: Were you a member of the ELKS when you were working there?

Vanda: I wasn't a member at the ELKS but my husband was.  
The ELKS Club was or is a mens' club. Women do not become members.

Me: During your days of employment and beyond what have been your favorite hobbies or leisure activities?

Vanda: I enjoy Sewing, Knitting, Crocheting, camping. Going out to the camp. I enjoy snowballing when I get a chance. I enjoy watching sports. Not participating, watching.



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Mer: Do you have any special stories about any  
of your leisure activities?

Vanda: NO.

Mer: Did you use to live out the camp in the summer,  
Or just go out there often?

Vanda: Well we use to live out there on the weekends, we use  
to go there pretty often. At that time the camp  
didn't have electricity, and we didn't have running  
water. We use to have to cook our meals on a kamungoos  
wood burning stove, and we had carosene lanterns. We had an  
old Refrigerator in the porch area and we use to have to  
carry ice out there so our food would keep cold.

Mer: You work at the Country Kitchen now, Is this the same  
job that you had at the Country Inn, or I mean the  
Mather Inn?

Vanda: Very much similar. Only the hours aren't like they were  
at the Mather Inn. We do the same things. We serve  
people food and we also have parties there. We pride ourself  
on seeing that peoples dining experience is a happy one.



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Me: During your whole life have you been involved in any clubs organizations or sports leagues?

Vonda: No.

Me: If you had to do it all over again would you choose the same career? Why or why not?

Vonda: If I had to ~~do it all over again~~ I would probably go and finish college. Get a degree in something I enjoy doing, but waitressing is fun. It's very physical work which I enjoy. I could not sit at a desk all day.

Me: Your husband was in the military what things did you carry on without him?

Vonda: Well, I went to school, I worked

Me: Did you live by yourself?

Vonda: No, I lived with my parents