

My name is Amy Demarest I'm interviewing
Wayne Therie my interview is on the Merice
store in Ishpeming Mich today's date is Dec. 30th
1987.

~~Where were you born?~~
what year were you born? 1928

How old are you now? 59

what year did this business start? well in Ishpeming
we've been in Ishpeming since 1968. But we started
(had to shut off.)

how old were you when you ~~2~~ started the business?

well you know my folks owned a dime store in
North Dakota then they sold. And when I was in
high school I worked in the store and then when I
was in college I managed their store so I've been
in it all my life. then in 1952 we went into me
and my brother I went into a store back in
~~North~~ South Dakota into a small dime store we were
partners and I managed the store. then in 1957
we sold the store and moved to Wiganee so we
opened over ~~Wiganee~~ Wiganee store in 1957. And then we
always wanted to get him in a store so in 1962 we
bought and got into the Marquette and then he
came up and managed that store we were always

partners and then in 1968 we opened the new
store in Ishpeming after the Woolworth store
burnt down. And then Wright after that we opened
that store then expanded into Swinn, Newberry,
Escanaba, so we had up to 7 stores at one time.
we all started back-up at one time. So I was really
in it all my life so there really wasn't any age
where I really started. I've always been in the store.
How did the business start? well the business
started because she always been in it and I wanted
to be in it so when we had the opportunity to get
into our own store we did it. we had a little bit
of money not much and we borrowed a little

bit And it was real little store I supose it was about As big as a little denky thing ²
~~kind~~ Kind of like the size of the Johnson drug store. So we didn't have much in it. But that's how it started.

Have you always lived here in Ishpeming?
IN Ishpeming well I don't live in Ishpeming I live in Negaunee. No like I say we moved to Negaunee in 1957. So we've been up in this area for 30 years about.

what was it like moving here And starting a new buisness? I loved it. I didn't really know their was a U.P. until I saw their was a store for sale, meanwhile I traveled alover Wisconsin

And ~~the~~ Minnesota cause we had sold over store in South Dakota, And ~~also~~ And so I traveled All over the mid west into find a store. And when I got up to the U.P. I thought it was beautiful. I absolutely loved it, I thought it was so beautiful. The Negaunee store was an old store it was not an expensive store. It was ~~peck~~ pretty well run down. It was one we could afford. So we came into Negaunee And I was impressed with all the trees And the lakes I thought it was beautiful.

Did you have Anyother jobs besides managing the store? well I went to collage And graduated from collage in 1950 So I taught school for three years I'm sorry I graduated in 1949 so then I taught until 1950 that's when I went into my own store, So taught school for three years And coached gym.

How many stores have you had at one time? (3)
Well the most were had was 7 at one time
And then there was alot of running around
and traveling up to Escanaba then that begins
to be a drag then you dont get anything done
any where. So we had rather just get rid of some
of them and get back home here where we
belong And just manage 3 or 7 stores is the most
here.

So now there's only 2 stores? Well now we have
closed Neguonne. So in 19 see my brother and I
were always partners so when ever kids grew up
then we only had the four stores in Escanaba,
Gurin, and Marquette and Neguonne and Ishpeming
Then we split the partnership and I wound
up with Neguonne and Ishpeming. And he wound
up with Marquette and Gurin. And now since
in the fall we've closed Neguonne so now
we only have the one store.
How many people in the family ever ran the
business? Well I guess, I would say that I guess
it would be just me and my brother ~~and~~ depend
on who helped use here oh yes and my son,
and he ran our warehouse he managed
some stores the mens in the Neguonne store,
so it would just be 2 of use in my family,
that would of been involved.

How long do you think the business will
run for? I hope forever.

Has it been good in the last few years?
yes I would say Ishpeming always been
good of all the stores were had the

4

We always kind of liked shopping the
best it seemed like whatever we did
it always seemed to work here and
the attitude is so good here. People seem
to like having us here well I guess
shopping always been my favorite
store for that reason.
Have there been any hard times in
the business? Yes many times. Sometimes
we have strikes, sometimes we have layoffs,
and when the competition comes in of course
there's new malls opening up new big
discount stores opening. And you notice it
everytime when you have a a real tough
year you really take losses a hell
But then you get your records together
and you start all over again to get your
records back in order again. And it seems
to get back in order. it seems to work you
now if you just by what you can sell, then
you know how its funny how your volume
will go back up again. So I say four or five
times ~~a year~~ over the years there's been times
where we've really been hit because of
competition. But it seems like we've always
come back, you know if you just play it
with well just like a shoe string I guess.
I think in our business ah of course
we're a vanity store we kind of you know
I can remember in

I think were in a good business cause
sometimes when things are really
good things are really booming like in 1976, (5)
1977, and 1978 we didn't notice didn't
notice any increases or losses any big
increases like in cars, furniture stores
sales and stuff like that, with people
making big money and homes their
a whole lot of homes, cottages and things
we didn't really know very big increases
but when it's tough we don't really notice
the decrease a lot of years afterwards
instead of running down to shops or
as ~~gets~~ gets they will probably just
come in here to get socks or whatever
So I would say if were probably more
depression prob because of over prices
then a lot of stores, and when their
a strike and so fourth we notice
it But I don't think we notice it
But I don't think we notice it to the
extent of a lot of other retail businesses
we try to get price ranges that are
everyday price ranges really.

If something ever happens to the
business what would you do?

6

Oh goodness I never thought about it
I really at my age theirs really
Not much else a person could do
I would say I would try to get
into the ~~business~~ always enjoyed the store
I enjoyed people I like waiting on
people I suppose if something did
happen I'd try to get involved with
something that chum you now a business
with people And around the type of work
I'm familiar with.
What started the business? well we
were raised in it And as long as
I remember Sue always wanted to be
in my own business And have my
own store its kind of like the kid
on the farm. yah might get away
for a couple of years. But yah
always liked it so. As long as I
can remember ~~Sue always~~ that
what Sue always wanted to do
is. And that was to run a store.

was it always been a family
business? well yah ever since
the beginning like I say I was raised 7
in the ~~store~~ store over families
been the Business like this yah.
How many kids do you have? well
weve got six kids and thats been
kind of nice cause you got to work
them all in the store. And I think
its good for them. So I think if
yah got your own business And you
have your own family and its Big
its kind of neat. Because whenever
they would say they didnt have anything
to do we would put them to work. So
Ive kind of enjoyed that And They
liked it All my kids have enjoyed
it But I only had one that really
wanted to get into it. But it seemed
like whenever they did the work
they liked it. So it was kind of
nice ~~to~~ Having a Big family and
running your own business
How many are in your family? five

of us, you know what else of course we wouldn't want that on top. But, But it was kind of interesting because when we sold you see over first stores were in south dakota. And that was a little one well then there was a store put up for sale in Minnesota it was kind of a store this size a big one for us and um so we went up and this was a district drug it was a corporation it held most of the stock in it so ~~we~~ we went up and the place had not made a profit but then he had managers and assistant managers and book keepers he really had a full staff. So we went up and figured out if we sold over store how much we could how much we could come up we went to the bank and they listed over store and they said they would finance us so we got the figures all together the thing is when we went in there see it was a corporation so you buy the stock and corporation over the assets and the liabilities.

In other words say you had \$2,000 in
the ~~bank~~ bank And you had \$5,000 in Bills you would get the Bank come
And the bills well in That case it was a
bigger store and he had about \$10,000 in
the bank And about \$30,000 out \$40,000
in Bills that were due and so we had to
take that into consideration And when
we went we had to be sure that we
were able to Bring everything up to date
But anyways it was just a ~~hand~~ verbal
agreement I thought it was kind of interesting
because we went through all the books
And found out what all his state was
his present financial state so we
went back And we were lucky we
sold our store in about three
weeks It was A pretty good little
store we got a Byer right away
Then we went back to their
River falls we got in their on a
Sunday night. Cause we only had
a month or 6 weeks in our oral
agreement we went back and we had
this money from the ~~sale~~ sales
stuff And we were ready to make
the deal

And so we went back to their river
falls. And well we wanted to look
at the books someone we had been
gone for over a month. And so we
wanted to take one more look books
And this was Sunday night. And he
we negotiated with us he ~~said~~ said
either you want it or you don't
we said we wouldn't buy it
with out looking at the books another
time. And to see what had happened
while I was gone well also meanwhile
well you could see that the place was
kind of hurting. And so I could
say everything was cool. And he
agreed not to take any access out of
the place or make any changes just
normal business. But we would
go up there. And what he did was
I don't know if he did it ~~or~~ but
somebody they had drained all
the cash. All the money that had
come in had drained out. Their
was nothing left in the bank. The
bills instead of being 20 or 30
they were like 70 or 80.

thousand everything that came
in their were old And they
And they All the cash so we
were not able to take it, we
didn't have the money to do it
But Anyway thats what happened
So this is like 2:00^{a.m.} Monday
morning And we had spent most
of the night looking at the books
And stubs so we went back to his
house he let us in. And we were
there By ourselves so we went
Back And told him it would be
impossible to purchase That's why
we had to look for another store
cause we thought we were going
in there So thats why I had to
look for A store so thats how we
ended up here in Meigs and
Ishpeming. It was kind of interesting
And this was a district juges too
So its funny how things always
seem to work out we were so
disappointed And so sorry we had
sold over other store

But then we got up in Negamie
we remember when we ~~were~~ (12)
Pulled into Ishpeming well we
came in the back route And At
that time yah now These back
routes looked terrible alot of old
buildings especially when yah got
into Negamie the old fire hall
And they were all run down
And they looked horrible And
when I'd come in I'd come
in the other way And I was
so impressed with the Ishpeming
And Negamie all when we came
in the back way my wife
started crying then we lived
down. By the old store which
was really an old run down
place And my wife I couldn't
stop her crying for two days
She was so upset with coming
up here But After A week she
liked it But we saw the worst
parts of the town as we came
then so we traveled around
All the rest of the area

then she loved it. yah see yah have ¹⁹³
to be firm with your ~~of~~ wives.