

①

Pam Waters's
interview with
Robert Waters

Intro: I am Pam Waters, Interviewing Robert Waters for Red Dust on February 21 1993.
At his home.

me: (Giggle) When and where were you born?

Dad: Born in Wegaunee, Ahh Twin City Hospital in 1942.

me: On?

Dad: May 7th

me: Ahh. What were your parent's names?

Dad: Bob and Dora Waters

me: Um, what were the names of your brothers and sisters?

Dad: Had one brother Brad, Two sisters Barb and Julie

me: When and where were you married?

Dad: Ah, Church out on 581, Faith Lutheran Church

me: When?

Dad: (Chuckles) 15 years ago

me: November 5th? (giggles). What is your, what is ^{your} spouse's name?

Dad: Kathy

me: What did your parents do for a living?

Dad: Well my dad was, worked in the theater, The Vista Theater in Negaunee, The Flooring Mill for 22 years, he worked at the electricians helper for a year and then he was janitor at the Westwood School

me: What about your mother

Dad: She just... mostly at home and then she got a job she cooked at a one of the first drive-in restaurants in town, and then she worked at the drug store

me: Really?

Dad: _____ Drugstore

me: I didn't know she worked at a drive-in. Where did you go to school?

Dad: I went kindergarden in Negaunee and 1-12 at National Mine High School

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

Dad: I don't know, just whatever (laughs) whatever memories kids have I guess

me: ~~Like~~ well. what...

9

Dad: Like the winters, the amount of snow we used to get, being off in the summer, when we moved out we always ~~lived~~ ~~on~~ a farm so do farm things I guess.

me: Chores?

Dad: Yes

me: What special features stand out in your mind about the cities of Ishpeming and Negaunee? When you were younger ~~you~~ know have they changed and what things are gone from

Dad: Well, a lot of the buildings, are gone that I remember.

me: Diff...

Dad: Well they

me: Different businesses

Dad: Different businesses come in and left and buildings burned down and

me: Or got torn down

Dad: Or got torn down, just riding around town, Friday and Saturday nights seeing what's happening

me: (Laughs) um, what kinds of things did you... did you and your friends do like you know where did you "hang-out" and

Dad: Well, we never really "hung-out" any place any one particular place the big thing was going to the Butler Theater and then over to the Brown Derby after the whatchicall, the show for a whatever, hamburger, fries, and that and then just that was about it, of course things at school, basketball, and the band.

me: And you were in... were in the basket ball team, and in (4)
the band. What did you play?

Dad: Sousaphone, the first sousaphone player the National
Mine band had.

me: Um, Do you have any interesting ^{or humorous} stories about growing
up?

Dad: Lots, but too many to mention.

me: anyone in particular! That you can think of? Not really?

Dad: Well I remember one memory is when the car
burned up in the school parking lot.

me: (Laugh) Oh gee, Um How old were you when
you got your first job?

Dad: Um, 16, 17, 16, no 17

me: Where was it?

Dad: I worked for my uncle in Negaunee.

me: Doing?

Dad: Electrician

me: What types of duties did you do like... you know?

Dad: Running.

me: (Laughing) Like a gopher?

Dad: A gopher. Watching and Learning.

me: What other jobs did you have?

Dad: Well I was, the one I remember when I got out
of school, I think I started cutting pulp. Then I
worked for construction company making black top

me: ~~Um~~ Um hm

Dad: Then I worked in the garage in town at the ~~Hebbard Rambler~~ garage in town oh I worked for Johnny Lyons first body shop then I worked at the ~~Hebbard Rambler~~ garage I was first a body man I was, I went, I quit and ~~I~~ went back as a mechanic, I quit I went back as a parts man. Then I worked for Perk, and ^{Then} Ronnie ~~Talabacka~~ they were in the excavating business, ready mix and Roy Anderson, and the Dump, and then the Hospital.

me: Were you ever in the ~~military~~ military?

Dad: Nope

me: Never?

Dad: Nope.

me: How many total years have you worked, then so since you were 17?

Dad: Since 1960.

me: During your lifetime, where were you employed the longest.

Dad: Where I am now

me: The hospital? As a maintenance mechanic.

Dad: Right

me: Were there any particular reasons why you chose this job?

Dad: (Chuckles) It was a job.

me: Making money

Dad: Right.

me: Like what, in detail, What are the main duties ^{that you do} at the hospital.

Dad: Making sure the hospital runs.
Basically

me: Fixing Lights.

Dad: Doing light bulbs, and anything that breaks

me: Painting

Dad: Try and fix it, and painting, remodeling
all them kinds of goodies

me: Did you require any training?

Dad: No

me: No? Any special equipment that you
used? (Laughingly)

Dad: No.

me: Anything that fixes stuff.

Dad: Handtools

me: Anything that fixes stuff

Dad: Right

me: Are there any special rules that you've
got

Dad: Nope

me: Except be to work on time

Dad: Well be to work on time ~~and~~

me: And leave on time

Dad: Right

me: What...

Dad: Half hour for dinner

me: What is the most rewarding of your
career?

(17)

Dad: It's just the knowledge that you pick up and the people that you meet

me: Some of the

Dad: Coming and going some of the people you work with and run into some patients in there you haven't seen in a long time

me: Yea, and you're taking care of the hospital

Dad: Right.

me: Is there anything that's challenging or hard about it at your job

Dad: Sometimes when there is problems with the heat ~~patterns~~ it takes sometimes it takes a while to analyze it and fix it ~~there's no big deal~~

me: How did the duties change as certain as you've gone farther into the years.

Dad: Well...

me: New technology.

Dad: More sophisticated equipment that you're working with it does more than just tell you it's broke tells you

me: What part of it is broke

Dad: What part with technology, it tells you a lot of stuff what's broke and how to fix it

me: Did your job put you in any dangerous situations?

Dad: No

me: What were your co-workers like?

Dad: Same as me

(8)

me: working for a living

Dad: That's all working people ~~like~~ ^{Like} everybody else

me: Did anything funny or interesting happen during any special thing that sticks out

Dad: No, not really, that I can think of

me: At any time, did you feel like changing your career like working for something else?

Dad: Oh, lots of times, just, sometimes you just got to stay where you are and things go bad for a while but they generally smooth out, it's a O.K.
~~place to work~~

me: What were your biggest responsibilities working at the hospital?

Dad: Well, your at a hospital there are so many rules you have to go by
cleanliness

me: Sanitary

Dad: Yea, sanitary, and confidentiality that kind of stuff.

me: Yea

Dad: But other than that, its a job

me: Did you receive any awards or like ⁹
awards for your performance on the job

Dad: No

me: During your days of employment and
beyond, what have been your favorite
hobbies or ~~leisure~~ leisure activities

Dad: Working on cars, mechanicing that
kind of stuff

me: kind of bumming with the buddies

Dad: That's all I never went out for any
sports kind of thing after I got out of
school

me: Do you have any special stories
that stick out

Dad: Not really got a million of them but
to numerous to ~~mention~~ mention

me: So many of them, have you ever been
envelved in any clubs, organizations,
sports leagues or anything

Dad: Well, Ya, when I got out of school I was
in the Peninsula Pistons was a car club
I belonged to the Negounee Male Chorus
for a couple of years and then that's
about it I was in the Ishpeming city

Dad: Band for a while
 me: what did you play

Dad: Sousaphone

me: You and your famous sousaphone

Dad: Yea

me: What special moments stand out about like being in the Neegaunee Male Chorus or

Dad: Well, its just you got a chance to go^{to} places and sing for people. In the Pistons we were one of the first, we were the first car club around here that actually went ahead and had the first big car show that they ever had around here that was put on by a club.

me: Where was it

Dad: The Ishpeming Armory, and all the cars from Texas, California, from all over

me: That people just come to look at

Dad: Came to look at, yup

me: Were you ever a member of a Union?

Dad: Yes, I was in the teamsters union and now I'm in the steelworkers union

Me: Overall, what are your fondest memories of your working days? And working in the many different careers you've had?

Dad: Fondest memories are hard to pick out of there but it is the experience you ~~pick up~~^{gain}, the knowledge you pick upon how to do different things, like the body shop, body work, mechanic work

me: And if you learn those things it can kinda save you money down in the long run

Dad: They kinda stick with you and how to run balancers and that all that kind of stuff I enjoy that

me: That way like if you've got experience from other things if you just need a job later you've already got experience from other things you've picked up

Dad: yes

me: If you had to do it all over again, would you choose some of the same careers?

Dad: No, I don't think so.

me: Why Not?

Dad: Well, a lot of it would have to do with the way time themselves are changing. When I was in school when you got out of high school you could get a good paying job, of course the wages weren't as high then, but you could get a job where you didn't have to be a road scholar or have four years of college to get a job you could get a pretty good job but now, everything you got to be more educated then we had to be then because jobs are more scarce

me: And not only that but the technology

Dad: And the technology is so different, its when I was in school, you could fix your own cars if something happend, now you got to get help because everything is so computerized and you just can't do it no more thats about it I would probably just pay a little more attention to everything in school than I did

me: So if had to do it over again, you would probably have to go to college?

Dad: Yes, more than likely

me: If you went to college, would there be any sort of career you would choose

Dad: I think I would be intrested in a career in electronics @ that kind of thing and I've always been intrested in fixing things

Dad: So I'd like to be _____ computers 13

Fixing things that kind of stuff

Seeing what makes them tick

Seeing how they work and how to fix them

me: In closing, do you have anything you'd like to add?

Dad: Well, the only thing is, ah stay in school get an education and for me, of course it didn't help me when I got out, like your extra curricular activities I enjoyed

me Basketball

Dad: Basket ball and band, I really enjoyed the band and that kind of stuff _____?

me: Like go back as far as grade school

Dad: Gradeschool yea, started sixth grade when I started playing the sousaphone, played that right through twelfth grade, I was in junior high, the B-team at basket ball at half-time go sit in the audience and play the sousaphone and go back and play more ball

me: Well, thank you and...

Dad: You're welcome