

Amy Saks  
Ruth Berquist

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BT  
(14k)

Me - Hello, I'm Amy Saks. I'm interviewing Ms. Ruth Berquist in her home ~~in~~ downtown<sup>in</sup> Ishpeming and I'm going to talk about her life and I'm going to start with some questions now.

Me - When and where were you born?

Ruth - I was born in this home, 723 Cleveland Avenue in 1901.

Me - Okay. Who was the first member in your family to come to America?

Ruth - Um, <sup>first family ah</sup> you mean mother or father? ☹

Me - Ya.

Ruth - Oh, <sup>ah</sup> my mother came first.

Me - Okay

Ruth - And ah to America and ah later <sup>From where?</sup> my dad came with his mother. My mother <sup>max mother</sup> and father were both gone and she, she was brought here through the help of her <sup>oldest</sup> sister. She paid her fare to Ishpeming cause she was a family of five children.

Me - Wa!

Ruth - And ah, so each one helped each other to come to America and ah, his oldest sister <sup>include</sup> Johanna Bankim was the first one.

Me - Okay. That's very interesting.

Me - Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Ruth<sup>aga</sup> (coughs) Not living now but I had a two brothers and three sisters living. (Thinks) Two sisters living. (Laughs a little) I should (clears throat) there were two that passed away at a child birth. So we were seven but then we were five and ah (clears throat) it was Arthur who was the oldest, and then it was <sup>ah</sup> Esther, <sup>and</sup> Lily and <sup>ah</sup> the two sisters. And then it was the two brothers ah Elmer was next ~~to~~ <sup>and</sup> myself.

Me - Okay. Um, Did you live in here in Michigan all your life or did you live in different areas and move around a lot?

Ruth - No, we lived in this home all our lives and ah from the time ~~of~~ my mother and dad were married ~~we~~ <sup>they</sup> lived in this home and ah (clears throat) they bought the home from her sister and ah so they I've always lived here and this is my <sup>family</sup> home.

include!

Me - Okay. What did you do for your living?

Ruth - Ah, I taught school which I was very happy about and I also <sup>ah</sup> worked at the <sup>at the</sup> dime store x on Saturdays and after school and before that. And also helped ~~an~~ elderly lady ah with her cleaning.

Me - Okay. Um, Did you enjoy working and doing?

Ruth - <sup>(Ruth starts to talk)</sup> Oh yes. I've also enjoyed doing the things that was given for me to do. It's always been a pleasure.

Me - Okay. Um, where did you go to school?

Ruth - I, I went to <sup>at first</sup> you mean in, <sup>m</sup> gradeschool?

Me - Well, ya.

Ruth - Well I first went to a <sup>we had</sup> a building (clears throat) <sup>←</sup> back of our church kind of a recreation building and they ~~they~~ rented out two, two rooms there during the week. And I had my kindergarden there and my first and second grade and <sup>then</sup> when it came to third grade ~~so~~ went to Central school. And ~~then~~ from there to the Grammar <sup>Not so Ridge!</sup> ~~Notridge~~ and then to the Grammar school <sup>check this</sup>

Me - Okay. Um, how many years did you go to school?

Ruth - (sort of chuckles) ~~am~~ Of course I, I went <sup>to</sup> school the thirteen years gradeschool and then I, I had <sup>a</sup> four years of college in Northern Michigan.

Me - Then, how many did, <sup>did</sup> you go to college like for how many years did you?

Ruth - <sup>ah, ah</sup> four years to get my diploma first two years to get my life certificate and then they demanded <sup>include</sup> that we have <sup>a</sup> degree. So I had to go two years ~~at~~ taking ah, ah well I took ah, ah ~~at~~ <sup>from northern</sup> classes at night <sup>besides</sup> besides summer school to make up my degree <sup>while</sup> ~~but~~ I was teaching. And I was <sup>ah</sup> real hardship because I had my mother's getting older and ah my brother was home to help me. But ah, it was <sup>really</sup> a a real hard time because ah I had to think about two things a home and work and, and, and <sup>ah</sup> college.

Me- Okay. Um, <sup>(pause)</sup> Where did you get your training for your job?

Ruth- at Northern. @ N ha.

Me- Okay, Who was your favorite teacher?

Ruth- (Starts to laugh as she is going to say it.) I can't tell you that, I ~~do~~ they

all, were. I always enjoyed my teachers and I think they were pleased with me because we always got along. Never had any trouble with my teachers in any way and I enjoyed going to school.

Me- Okay. Um, where were you when you heard about the Bombing of Pearl Harbor?

Ruth- I was home here and it was a worry for us because it was at the time <sup>that</sup> my brother was going over ~~to~~ seas <sup>to</sup> war. And they were afraid that it was his ship that was bombed. And ah so we were very, very worried and that, that happened around Christmas <sup>Dec 10</sup> time I think didn't it Christmas day I believe. And ah, word came to us that ~~he was probably~~ probably he was on that they weren't positive but later they sent us another telegram and said <sup>that</sup> he was on another boat. So we were very, very relieved.

Me- I would be too!

Ruth - Laughs.

Me - What types of things did you go without during the depression?

Ruth - Oh, all the fineries and we didn't have as much money although my dad worked but ah, you know things were you helped others there's so many people without work at that time. And ah, so many people <sup>that</sup> were in need so we tried to help those <sup>where</sup> in need so we didn't have as many things during that time. And the thing I remember most of it was we were suppose to have our June pay days when I was teaching and ah, (clears her throat) we didn't get it.

And they said <sup>well</sup> you can't, you can't get it because banks were closed. And so ah, they told us that we wouldn't get it until more money came in. And ah, so I wanted to go to the World's Fair so badly in Chicago that year. And I said "if I get that money that's what I'm going to spend it on!" (Laughs) And I did have a wonderful time. And ah went with my friends to Chicago for a whole week to see the fair." And (I interrupt)

Me - Sounds really fun!

Ruth - And (I interrupt)

Ruth - (Laughs) It was fun. Ah huh. So I've had so many wonderful experiences but really so ah, that was, that was oh I felt so badly to think that

Ruth - (continue) we didn't get ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> June pay day because that meant a great deal you know we had gotten our money right along but ah they had trouble with the banks and we had to wait. Which we did and we got it in July and then we were real happy. (Laughs)

Me - Is there one special thing or interesting story that you can remember during the Depression?

(thinks a little first)

Ruth - Ah, I can remember the thing about the church ah, we at the time, we had Rev. Mattson with us as our pastor. And ah, we <sup>were</sup> brought talk about bringing food to these people who needed it and even on Christmas Eve we went out and, and delivered food of all different kinds to every family who needed it in our congregation.

Me - Okay. Um, did you celebrate Christmas?

Ruth <sup>uh</sup> how did we celebrate? ~~Christmas?~~

Me - Did you celebrate Christmas?

Ruth - Oh yes! we always celebrated Christmas that was a great day for us. You wanna know how ~~we~~ celebrated?

Me - Yes.

Ruth - (clears her throat) <sup>well</sup> ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> father had a, a brother that was very, very dear to him and they lived in Ishpeming and, and of course they came over from Sweden at the same time with their mother.

Ruth - (continue) And ah, she lived ah, ah  
 their mother lived on, on the Kitty corner from ah,  
 ah, Bethel church in that big grey house. And ah, so  
 we use to exchange with her, with them always at  
 Christmas time not with my mother's sis. sisters she had  
 four sisters here but we never did it that way. And  
 but it <sup>was</sup> always ~~was~~ my broth. my uncles family and  
 we're all about the same, <sup>same</sup> age. And so we've always  
 enjoyed being with them and there's only one left now  
 of that family I'm the only one in my family. <sup>include</sup>

Me - Okay. Um. (Phone rings - continue in a few minutes.)  
 (Continue with interview now.)

Me - Okay um, did you get a lot of gifts and presents  
and stuff like that?

Ruth - No we never had a great deal of gifts we  
 had pro. probably one and usually that I always  
 got a doll and my two sisters got dolls. And my  
 mother had had ah had them all dressed in nice  
 clothes ~~and~~ and on the damenport so we saw them the  
 first thing in the morning. And ah, we were happy  
 to have dolls. Outside of that we didn't have  
 to many gifts. We didn't believe in it we  
 gave to others instead.

Me - That's very, very nice

Me - Um, (thinks for a couple of seconds) did you <sup>like</sup> enjoying

Me - (continue) playing with your dolls and...  
(She starts to talk.)

Ruth - Oh yes! I just loved dolls. I use to play school with dolls and my brother worked at a big ah store (clears throat) and ah, it's called <sup>the way</sup> Mrs Store and ah he use to pick up the boxes there and he built me a, ah little house out there and then at Christmas time he, he bought me a little stove ~~which I~~ <sup>that I</sup> ~~could~~ ~~actually~~ ~~put~~ ~~wood~~ ~~in~~ ~~and~~ ~~cook~~ ~~on~~.

(She laughs)

Me - (I laugh)

Ruth - It was made out of iron and even had the little lids on it and everything you know. oh the fun I had! And the neighbors used to love to go behind the bushes and listen to me teaching school to, to <sup>(I chuckle a little)</sup> my dolls not to people and ah, so I've always been a teacher I guess.

! Buried  
Excellent

Me - Okay um, we're you pleased on what you got even if it was just one....

(Ruth interrupts)

Ruth - Oh yes! We we're always pleased with what we got. We never ~~expected~~ <sup>expected</sup> anything. Are, are parents weren't that kind of people. They never ~~expected~~ <sup>expected</sup> anything and when it was given to them why they were thrilled.



Ruth - (continue) And of course we grew up in that wonderful environment.

Me - Okay um, what has made Ishpeming so special to you and why?

Ruth - Oh I've always loved Ishpeming I (clears throat) I ah, of course I grew up in Ishpeming and have had friends here and graduated and always we always <sup>ah</sup> had ah reunions of ah classmates ~~at~~ <sup>from</sup> the time we were ten years old. ~~Ten~~ <sup>ten</sup> I mean ten years ah, after graduation. We had the tenth the ten year, ~~the~~ and fifteen year, and, and then it was twenty-five, and fifty and, and ah if we were going to have it now it would be a big number. I graduated from high school in 1919 so figure that out!

Me - (I chuckle)

Ruth - (She chuckles)

me - Well, um that's all the questions I have for you and um I thank you very much.

Ruth - Oh you're so welcome honey! It ah was nice to think that you came and did that I appreciate that!

me - Um, so I guess I'll turn the tape off.

Ruth - (She laughs)

me - (I chuckle a little)

The End

She ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> remembered as a fine teacher! I'd like you to get more info about her teaching years.

Childhood - blue

School year - yellow

Depression - green

Teenage experiences - red

Christmas - brown

Teaching career - purple

Church - Black

Amy Saha 87 now  
88 yrs.  
old  
next  
year.

March 6, 1901 is Ruth's birthday  
Lily's birthday Ruth was born.  
Lily was 9 yrs. old on Ruth birthday.  
They celebrated together.

Ruth's 85<sup>th</sup> birthday cake <sup>they</sup> put money  
in ~~the~~ <sup>jar, next to the cake.</sup> They sang, "We wish you a  
happy birthday with happiness and cheer  
with God's dear care about you all through  
the happy year." The money <sup>was sent to</sup> missionary ports.



The church (Bethany Lutheran  
Church, Evangelical) was  
where gymnasium was.  
The church was really a  
missionary church.  
Mrs. Tunem got a floor  
lamp for Ruth and she had  
taken care of the altar.  
Ruth was the director  
of the choir in Bethany and

Ruby became the organist.

Ruth taught <sup>school</sup> in Manitowish for 3 yrs.

She made \$100.00 a month and a

\$1,000 a year.

She taught Sunday School all the way in high school. First primary then

the whole Sunday School.

She had done missionary work.

She taught school for 50 years.

In between she had been superintendant.

Everyone had lived through  
poor times.

Ruth is thankful everyday

what God has given her.

1914 she was confirmed

for confirmation

1919 graduated from high school.

Only class in <sup>middle of</sup> July 19 or 20 they graduated.

6 weeks they had the flu that's why  
they had to make it up for 2 months.