

Jennifer Mangiat's Interview
With
Luella Marin

Me: Interviewing Luella Marin on December 10
at her house in Ishpeming.

Me: When and where were you born?

Mrs. M: I was born in Gwinn Michigan in 1928.

Me: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Mrs. M: Two Sisters.

Me: And what were their names?

Mrs. M: Norma and Karen

Me: What were your parent's names?

Mrs. M: Alice and John Latola.

Me: Um, when and where were your parents born?

Mrs. M: They were both born in Finland.

Me: And what did your parents do for a living?

Mrs. M: My father was a miner, and my
mother was a housewife.

Me: What country did your family come
from?

Mrs. M: From Finland.

Me: Do you know the town?

Mrs. M: Uh, my mother came from Ilievieska
Finland and my father came from

a small place by Ola.

Me: When did they come to America and the UP?

Mrs. M: They came to America when they were very young. They were just infants - both of them.

Me: And why did they come to America?

Mrs. M: Well, their parents came here to look for work, and so, they both found jobs in mining.

Me: Are you married?

Mrs. M: Yes

Me: And what's your husband's name?

Mrs. M: Martin.

Me: Did you have any children?

Mrs. M: Yes, four

Me: And what ~~were~~ there what are your children's names?

Mrs. M: Paul, Peter, Ann, and John.

Me: Um, what school did you attend when you were young?

Mrs. M: I attended the Gwinn High School.

Me: What were schools like when you were young?

(Thoughtfully)
Mrs. M: Well, I guess they're pretty much like what they are today, but we did not have all the ~~the~~ extra-curricular activities that seems to be so prevalent now.

Me: What were your teachers like?

Mrs. M: I liked all of my teachers! They came from other places in the Upper Peninsula.

Me: ~~Oh~~, oh, so they're like how our's are now?

Mrs. M: Oh yeah. I'm sure that - I had some very ^(loud) dedicated teachers - really took a great interest in what we were doing.

Me: What was - did you have a favorite subject?

Mrs. M: Yes. Um, English and history.

Me: How much schooling did you have?

Mrs. M: When I graduated from high school then I went to Northern and I got a, I went to school for four years and got a bachelors degree.

Me: H-how did you get to the high school then?

Mrs. M: I just walked.

Me: And it - how far was the - how far did you have to walk?

Mrs. M: Gee, I would say it be a mile at the most, on the other side of town from where I lived.

Me: Were your class sizes large?

Mrs. M: No, they were very small. There were 14 in my graduating class.

Me: Were they small ~~the~~ when you were in -

Mrs. M: Yes, yes very small

Me: Grade school?

Me: How were kids expected to act and behave?

Mrs. M: Well, I think that maybe they were generally a little bit more in the background especially if they were um, with adults I think they were expected to be courteous and polite.
(clears throat)

Me: Do you remember any humorous or interesting events in school?

Mrs. M: Well, I can't remember anything particular in school, but I do =>

Mrs. M: remember once going to a program
(smiles) in church and a woman got up
and sang a solo and all of us who
were sitting pretty close to the front
got the giggles and it was very hard
to stop and we could not.

Me: What chores or responsibilities did
you have as a child?

Mrs. M: I had to keep my room neat and
clean, and had to help with the dishes,
dusting furniture and light kind of
housework like that and we also
carried in wood. We had wood-burning
stoves, and we were expected to some-
times help with carrying the wood ~~to~~
in the house.

Me: What did you do for your fun and re-
creation as a child?

Mrs. M: Why, we made all our own fun and
recreation. There was movie, a
theater in town, but we didn't go
to the movies too often. But, we
would make fudge and popcorn in the
evenings. And, we would uh, liked

Mrs. M: sports. Gwinn is surrounded by the ESCO-~~the~~ River, the Escanaba River. It was around ~~the~~ Gwinn, so we were all very good at swimming. And then we would go skating in the winter time and skiing, things like that.

Me: What kind of church activities did you participate in?

Mrs. M: Well, I went through Sunday School, Confirmation, and I taught Sunday School, and I was the church organist at the age of twelve.

Me: What kind of special community events did you attend - holidays, celebrations,

Mrs. M: Gwinn had lots of celebrations.

(enthusiastic) We had mid-summer celebrations, 4th of July celebrations, in the park down town, and then we had a real fancy Christmas celebration where the whole town turned out. Um, in the um, clubhouse which

Mrs. M: also housed our gymnasium. Santa
(smiling) Claus came on Christmas Eve, and
gave candy and oranges to all the
children in the town. And in the back-
ground we had the high-school band
play, and then the chorus would sing
carols all evening. Everybody came. Not
only children, but the whole town
turned out so this was a very big
event.

Me: Did you have any family gatherings or-or
reunions?

Mrs. M: We did not have reunions, um, the only
f-family gatherings we had were special um,
things like weddings, or holiday times, or
something like that. But we did not have
any relatives who lived very close. They were
farther away and it just seemed so hard
to get together.

Me: Yeah. Did you have a job before you were
an adult?

Mrs. M: Well, I did things like babysitting, and
um, then I got paid a little bit for
doing that church work. When I started
to play the organ. So I had some
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Mrs. M: a little bit of pin money there.

Me: What was your first job after you got out of school?

Mrs. M: Well that was after I graduated from Northern. I-I was a public school teacher.

Me: What subjects?

Mrs. M: Ah, I majored in music in school and ah, but the school that I taught in did not have a very big music program. I did have a girl's Glee Club, but I also taught English and history.

Me: So, your major in high school was music then?

Mrs. M: Not in high school.

Me: Oh, I mean in college.

Mrs. M: In college. Um, yes I majored in music.

Me: You did graduate then?

Mrs. M: Yes

Me: From Northern?

Mrs. M: From Northern, yes.

Me: When did you - how old were you when you started taking piano lessons?

Mrs. M: eight years old

Me: Did you ever play any instruments besides the piano?

Mrs. M: well, the organ. I have done lots of organ playing and I, to get my degree, I had to do a little bit of string work and participate in a band in college and, where I did percussion instruments.

Me: What made you choose the piano?

Mrs. M: I think it was my mother's idea. My mother was quite musical, but never had the chance to take lessons. And decided that now that she had three daughters, they would have a chance to take lessons, she said that I think it's time to start. So she enrolled me in with the teacher.

(smiles)

Me: Did anyone else play the piano at
the-that time too?

Mrs. M: Ah, in my family?

Me: Yeah

Mrs. M: My mother could play by ear and ah,
pick out melodies and tunes and my
sisters also took lessons, so they played
too.

Me: Who was your piano teacher?

Mrs. M: Ah, my first piano teacher was Virginia —
from Ishpeming. I took lessons from her
for my first ten years.

Me: She had to travel to Gwinn then?

Mrs. M: She, yes, she came to Gwinn and ah
would teach a-a whole day. She'd
come down on the Northwestern train
on Saturdays and would start early
in the morning and teach until the- it's
time for the train to go back to Ish-
peming. And then she did ^{God} where she
stopped doing that and I came to
Ishpeming to take lessons from her.

Me: Um, did she always, did she just teach at
your house?

Mrs. M: She did she, she took she came and ~~at~~ the
family's home in the town ~~page 10~~

Mrs. M: Students went to this house. She did not go from house to house as some teachers did. She did all her teaching in one home.

Me: Who, your teacher's name was - what's her name?

Mrs. M: Virginia ———. This was the first teacher I had.

Me: Did you have any recitals?

Mrs. M: Yes, lots and lots of recitals.

Me: Any recital in particular that you remember?

Mrs. M: The recital I remember, or ~~it~~ that I thought was the most unique was the one in which I played with my sister. And we did a two-a recital of two piano music. And that was really unusual to have two pianos, same + - at the same time.

Me: Where did, where did she hold her recitals?

Mrs. M: In the Gwinn high school. We had a most of our recitals.

Me: Like, everybody could come and watch?

Mrs. M: Yes, they were public recitals.

Me: How many hours did you practice a day?

Mrs. M: Goodness, it's hard to say but I would
(smiling) say that I practiced up to an hour a
day generally. It was a real privilege
to take lessons, and ah, I do not
remember that my mother had to nag
me to do it, but I do remember that
lessons were a-ah a real ~~thing~~ luxury
for us in our family. Since I was the
oldest ~~child~~ daughter, I was the first one
to have lessons, and they cost a princely
sum of fifty cents a half an hour,
which was a real sacrifice on the
part of my parents to let me take
these lessons.

Me: When you were playing when you were
younger, did you always have the dream
to be a teacher of the piano?

Mrs. M: Well I had always wanted to be a
teacher. I can't remember that I
specifically wanted to be a piano
teacher, but I remember I never
played with dolls or did other things
that kids did. When I get together with
my friends I would say well, why
(smiling) don't we play school and we let me be
the teacher and that was (laughs) one
of my favorite things.

Me: Did you love to practice?

Mrs. M: I'm sure that I didn't always
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Mrs. M: love to practice. I do not think that most people love to practice. They love to play, but a lot of times you - you don't feel like practicing and you go to the piano and say well, it's my time to practice. ~~Once~~ Once you get started, it does not seem like a chore.

Me: Was ~~was~~ anyone else in your family musically inclined?

Mrs. M: I think that both of my parents are musically inclined. They did not have any formal training. My father and mother both were good singers, and my grandfather had an organ in his home. And I remember that he picked out tunes and sang.

Me: How many years did you get lessons?

Mrs. M: Oh, that's been an off and on thing all my life. Ah, after I ah, graduated from high school, of course I had lessons in college and I have gone back every now and then had lessons, and the organ lessons that I have had I also took when I was older.

Me: Did you always have that one same teacher?

Mrs. M: No, I've had many different teachers.

Mrs. M: Several teachers, different teachers when I was in college and then when I was out of college and ah, even when I was young, I had a couple of other teachers besides Mrs. _____.

Me: Did you ever play the piano at school for plays or pageants?

Mrs. M: Well I don't remember for plays or pageants particularly, but I did - when I was in high school I did all the accompanying for the vocal and choral programs. And PTA meetings we had programs or whatever.

Me: Do you remember anything that ever happened?

Mrs. M: (Smiles) Oh, something always happens! If you play quite often, things are bound to happen. I remember - ~~remember~~ remember playing for two girls who were singing a duet and they ~~lost~~ lost their place in their music and it's kind of fun to try ~~to~~ to figure out where they were. But, before we finished the piece, we were together again. And one time I remember when I was playing for a wedding, ah the window was open by ah, the organ and the music blew off the music rack. →

~~Me:~~
Me: Oh, did you—I hope you had that memorized!

Mrs. M: (laughs) I can't remember what happened but, I don't think it was quite the catastrophe it could have been.

Me: How many instruments can you play and have tried to play?

Mrs. M: Well, I do think that I—the instruments that I can play are piano and organ. I have tried to play strings—um, as I said, when ~~at~~ ~~was~~ in college I had to ~~take~~ ~~the~~ I was string instruction so many months of bit of instruction. And learn a little instruments, but I certainly have not proficient playing them.

Me: What other arts besides music and are done in your family?

Mrs. M: Well I am not an artist by any means, but my children—I have two who are very artistic. One is making his living as a graph—
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Mrs. M: graphic arts. Um, he is an art director with a national firm in Chicago and um, my daughter is very artistic. Um, has done a lot with art and her career is in architecture and drawing.

Me: Who inspired ^{you} to become a piano teacher?

Mrs. M: I did have one teacher, when I was in college, who inspired me in many ways. Not only to become a teacher, but I really looked up to her as to be somebody really special. And she encouraged me very much. And always gave me the feeling that I could do anything I wanted to do if I put my mind to it. And I really looked up to her. I thought she was an excellent teacher. Not ~~the~~ only was she a teacher, but she was a friend.

Me: How many days a week do you give lessons now?

Mrs. M: I only teach two days a week now.
But when I was, (smiles) I'm sort of
retired-my husband is retired and I
do not want to oh, feel like I have
to be here every day of the week, but
when I was um, really teaching I
taught five days a week.

Me: Yeah. IS it easier to teach someone to
sing than to play the piano?

Mrs. M: Gee, I don't know. I have had voice
training because I had to also have
voice to get a-

Me: choir director

Mrs. M: yes and I have been a choir director.
I think voice would be harder to
teach because it's more intangible
I do think that um, the keyboard
is there in front of you and you
don't have to worry about pitch-
whatever comes out is the fault of
the piano- ~~the piano~~ it isn't yours,
And, ah, and so I think that ah,
but when you talk →

Mrs. M: about producing tone and head tone and how to use your tongue and throat and so forth, I do think that voice - I've never taught it but I imagine it would be much more difficult.

Me: Oh, um, how long have you played the organ?

Mrs. M: Oh, ^{from the time} I was twelve (pause) until I was about (pause) twenty-four and then I played (pause) then when I had my family I did not play all the time but I've been playing again for about (pause) seventeen years.

Me: Yeah. Have you always played the organ at the same church or ever played at different churches?

Mrs. M: No, I've been ^{at different} churches. Um, but primarily I've been as a full-time organist I've been at two churches but I have played at page eighteen other churches.

Mrs. M: to fill in as a substitute or for
weddings or funerals and so on.

Me: What church do you mostly-

Mrs. M: I play at the Bethel Lutheran
Church in Ishpeming right now.

Me: Um. How long have you been the choir
director there?

Mrs. M: I do not direct the choir anymore either. I
gave that up a couple of years ago, but
I did do choir work for a long time. I-I
can't say off hand without thinking about
it but um, that too I would say maybe
could be fifteen years. I did have choirs
before I came here too. So I've had youth
choirs and a four part mixed choir and um-
but I have never had a children's choir.
(laughs)

Me: (laughs) Where are most of your recitals held-
held?

Mrs. M: Um, I have at least two recitals a year.
Ah, one - the Christmas recital is more
like a piano party that I hold at my
home just for students, and it gives a
chance for new students who have
started in the fall =>

Mrs. H: to see what a recital is like, an informal setting. Then I have a public recital that I hold at our church in the spring. And once in while I've had some private recitals um, also where one student gives the whole recital. I had one of those a few years ago and I've had some previous to that.

Me: Do you remember anything humorous or intere-unusual about one of those particular recitals?

Mrs. H: Oh yes. (clears throat) Lots of things happen in recitals. You never know what's going to happen no matter how well-trained your student is or yourself for that matter. Ah, but I remember an amusing incident when I first started teaching. I had a young girl and ah, she had noticed that other people were using the pedal on the piano. So she of course was so small, couldn't even reach the pedal, but she decided when she got up there, well why not? So she stood up, put her feet on the pedals and played away. (laughs)

Me: Oh. How long have you been giving lessons?

Mrs. M: Oh, I gave lessons for ages and ages. I started when I was in high school because in our town, there were - there was no one else. That really ah, played. And this how I ended up doing all that church work too. Um, oh goodness, I've taught most of my adult life with the exception of some years when my children were very small.

Me: Oh. How many days a week did you or do you practice at church?

Mrs. M: I do at least once a week, and there have been periods when I have gone more than that and several hours at a time. Playing the organ is really fascinating and the time just slips away from you. Lots of times I say well I've got about a half an hour I'll run down there. And I'm just amazed to see that I've (laughs) put in a lot more than that.

Me: How many -

Mrs. M: I do wish I could practice ~~more~~ more than that, however

Me: How many - how many days do you usually play there do you play at the Sunday school -

Mrs. M: No, I just play for 2 Sunday services every Sunday morning

Mrs. M: and oh, I also serve ^{as} a substitute for Saturday evening services and occasionally for a Finnish service and for funerals and very seldom weddings.

Me: Um, are you Bethel's only organ player?

Mrs. M: No I am not, but I am, would consider myself the principle player there.

Me when you were playing the organ, do you remember anything that happened that you remember?

Mrs. M: Oh yes. Overtime I played and spoke started to spiral around in front of me. And ah, I could smell it and see it and I wondered what on earth ~~was~~ had happened. So, I turned the organ off and I sent a note down to the pastor with an usher saying that I was afraid to play it any longer so there was a piano with the ~~organ~~ ~~service~~ ~~comment~~ after the service was that I must've played a lot of hot music to have it - (laughs) smoke coming out of it, but what really happened was there was dust had ~~contacts~~ ~~and~~ ~~was~~ ~~belonging~~ ~~to~~ ~~me~~.

Me: How do you compare students 20 years ago to students now?

Mrs. M: I'd say basically they're pretty much the same, some students are very dedicated and others are not. However, I do think that they do not seem to have the time to put in on practice as maybe we did when we were younger, but we did not have all the diversions as you have. I do think it'd be very difficult to be a student today because there are so many new things open and so many new inventions in television and everything that we just never had.

Me: What was the most memorable event in your life?

Mrs. M: There have been many. The day I got married, when my children were born, my first trip overseas. It's hard to say, but I think there has been many high-

lights.

Me: What was your trip overseas for?

Mrs. M: We went to Scandinavia because we had relatives there that we had heard so much about, and wanted to meet. My parents had corresponded with people there and I had seen pictures and they talked about them all the time. So when we had the opportunity to go, we had the 23 decided that's where we wanted to travel.

ME: What event had the greatest impact on your life?

MRS. M: mm. I don't know if there's any special event, but I will say the opportunity to take these piano lessons when I was young did shape my future because I would say outside my family, my life revolved around music.

ME: ~~What~~ what event - ops. what do you consider to be the most important things in life ~~for~~ for anybody?

MRS. M: For anybody. I think some kind of goal and a purpose in life, a sense of right and wrong, a sense of discipline to accomplish the things that you really want to do.

ME: What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

MRS. M: I think to be a teacher is very rewarding. To see the potential in a student & be able to ~~be~~ it out and be able to have them learn something. I think that is very very rewarding. It's working with people in general whether it's piano student or choir or whatever the ultimate outcome is very exciting when you think that you had a part in shaping whatever's happened.

ME: Thanks.