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Amy Perrault's Interview with her grandpa Joe Perrault

Today February 20, 1993, I Amy Perrault
am interviewing my grandfather
Joe Perrault for Red Dust at my house.

me: Where and when were you born?

grandpa: I was born in 1923 Dec. 3 in
Green Bay, Wis.

me: What were the names of your parents?

grandpa: My father's name was Joseph
Perrault and my mother was

me: Where were your parents born?

grandpa: They were both born in Ishpeming.

me: Did they live in Ishpeming
all their lives?

grandpa: Yes, all their lives.

me: What did they do for a living?

grandpa: My dad was an underground
miner and during the depression

(con)

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Grandpa: he worked on the county road,
and he spend his time in
the mines.

me: Did your mother have a job?

Grandpa: She use to work at the Wood-
worth store in Ishpening.

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

Grandpa: I was the oldest one, my
brother Clifford was next
but his past on now. Then I
had a sister Adel, who's married
to Ken Harnnet, and my younger
brother Ray who's married to
Juchemich girl from Regaunee.

me: When and where were you married?

Grandpa: I was married in May the 7th
1949 in Ashland, Wi.

me: To whom were you married to?

Grandpa: My wife's name was Barbara.

me: Where were you married?

Grandpa: She was from Ashland, Wi.
That's why we were married
up there.

me : How did you meet your wife?

grandpa : It was odd because I was playing with a softball team and one of our players had gotten hurt.

grandma : She had come to Ishpeming as a x-ray and lab technician and Ralph Biella and I both worked at the Cliff shaft mine and going home from work one day we stopped at the hospital to see Mrs. Melvin Johnson who had been hurt. Then she had come up there to take some x-rays. When we left Ralph had mentioned how nice a girl it was so we asked her if she wanted to go to the ball games and she did. So we went to the ball games and I ended up marrying her.

me : How many children do you have and what are their names?

grandpa : I have three children the oldest is Mary Jo and second daughter is Kathy and the third one was my son Paul.

me : How many grandchildren do you have and what are their names?

grandpa : Now I got to stop and think I have six grandchildren I know of. Did you want them in the -7

(con)

grandpa: older of age?

me: It doesn't matter.

grandpa: I can't tell them by age but I'll tell you them. The oldest daughter has one daughter Kristen. My second daughter has three children, the oldest being Scott, the second one is Brad and then Kimberly. My son has two daughters Amy and Sarah.

me: What schools did you attend as a child?

grandpa: When I was going to the grade schools we had to travel quite a bit and we use to walk. I went down the Central School for kindergarten thru fourth grade. Then we had to go to Ridge Street school for fifth and sixth grade. Then we had to the grammar school which burnt down now we went there for 7th and 8th grade. Then we came back to the high school for 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th grades.

me: Did you participate in any school sports?

(Con)

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grandpa: I uh, we didn't have much in the way of grade school sports. But when I got into high school as a freshman I tried out for the football team, being I was a little small, but I tried out for the team and I wasn't allowed to compete because I had won a prize ski jumping, and at that time the high school athletic association ruling stated that you could not win a prize valued over a dollar and I won a pair of socks and a ski pole, which is sort of comical because the ~~ski~~ pole consisted of a pair of ski poles, they were for the longest standing jump and two of us tied, so rather than give ~~two~~ they gave us each one ski pole.

me

• What special memories do you have of this area?

grandpa: Memories, oh - there's no place like home, I guess. Altho I was born in Greenbay, I was only there for a short while. I don't remember any of it and I was as raised here in Ishpeming and as far as a

(con)

grandpa : special memory ~~to~~ except
for being able to live in
this country I love living
up here, that's why I don't
go away in the winter time.

me : what kinds of things did you
and your friends do for fun?

grandp : we played ball, I mean we
had the old and younger kids. We
had the games in the alley
where we used to play with cans
and the bat you put a two
cans down and put a bat in
front of it and then someone
would roll a ball from the
other way and you had to
hit it and if you didn't and
missed it and they knocked
the cans over you were penalized.
It was games like that, that
we played as youngsters. A lot
we played a lot of sand lot
baseball and that who ever
happend to have a ball and not

Grandpa: To often there was gloves, but who ever had anything you used them and if you got mad someone got mad at you and they would go home if they had the ball and the game was over with.

me: Where did the kids like to "hang-out" when you were a teenager?

Grandpa: One of the places I remember I didn't hang-out much because I was working at the theater, I used to work 7 days a week at the theater, even when I was in high-school. But most of the kids in high school used to hang-out at a place called "The Cream Land" It was a soda fountain I don't remember boths even, I think it was a long counter and the it was run

grandpa: by a local Dairy that Northern Dairy at the time and most of the children hung out, it was on Main Street, I'd say about the second or third building south of the peninsula bank.

me: What was your first job?

grandpa: I think the first job I had was peddling the Mining Journals and I must of been 12 yrs. old and I'm sure I was about 12.

me: What were your duties on this job?

grandpa: Well the duties were of course were you got up early in the morning and got our papers and I used to peddle out at the Barium location in Ishpeming and one odd thing about it was my neighbor was a couple years older

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granapa: than I was and he'd go
down in the morning and
ob course he being older he
was able to he was out
longer at night and I use to
have to peddle half my route
and then walk back and wake
him up because he'd be
sound asleep in the hall where
we use to get our papers, but
leaving from that job I went
into the butler theater as
an usher and I went from
the butler theater to the
Ishpeming theater, I was a
doorman, ticket taker then I
use to clean there on Saturdays
and Sundays and one odd thing
about that is my brother younger
brother Ray or Clifford we use to
call Rito he use to bill for me
in the winter time when I'd
ski, Saturdays or Sundays if we'd
go on a trip and I use to get
\$10.00 a week and I had to pay

grandpa: him \$5.00 for the two days ⑨

me: How did you become interested in ski jumping?

grandpa: well it was almost natural where we lived on the hill and to go downtown you went downhill anyway and there was one street light on the way down and at night me and the neighbors some of the neighbor boys used to ski and there was a 100 watt light bulb that's all we had there in that street light but we'd ski by that and then of course we built hills in the winter time up there and this was at that time a sport, one of the few sports there were.

me: How old were you when you started?

grandpa: Oh, I could it of been maybe 5 or 6 yrs. old, when I first started to ski

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me: Did any of your brothers ski jump?

grandpa: yes, both of my brothers jumped, neither one of them jumped very much and they never did get to master it too well.

me: What special equipment or clothing ~~did~~ did ski jumping require?

grandpa: Well the jumping skis were always wider with at that time 3 grooves now I guess they get up to 6 or 7 but they're much wider today but you had bindings, when I first started I had leather with a metal buckle strap in the back and then they went into cable bindings with a spring in the back and a clamp in the front of the ski. The clothing of course we thought it was pretty tight at the time we had these pants with the elastic strap underneath your arch, but they still fluttered quite a bit, compared to the clothes they have today.

me: Did ski jumping require any special training?

grandpa: As training I would say that the thing you tried to do was perfect your timing by any diving you could do would help you of course physical condition to be in shape and keep your legs in good shape because you depended a lot on your legs. Your legs and your and the timing are two of the most important things.

me: Does height have anything to do with ski jumping?

grandpa: Well we use to always think so that most ski jumpers were short but some of the better ones in the world in our time came over in fact one of them was a place kicker for the Green Bay Packers and the Kansas City Chiefs, Jan he was tall

(B)

grandpa: he was well over 6ft. I would say he was about 6ft 3 or 4. He had come over from Norway and had gone to school at Colorado. But he had a very successful career in football as a place kicker. Height really doesn't make that much of a difference

me: Did you have a personal trainer?

grandpa: No, we pretty much trained each other, we worked with each other whenever we went out on the hill and practiced well you'd build the hill and you'd practice and you would help one another. You'd watch each other when you go down and you'd always try to point out what the other fella's doing. Now a days these countries like we send the skiers to Europe or the send skiers here, they even

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Grandpa: send one skier they send a coach with him and that was unheard of in our days.

me: what did you do in the summer time to prepare yourself for ski jumping.

Grandpa: Well as I said timing was important so we use to swim and dive and that was equivalent to jumping in a way in that you were diving but you were diving but you were projecting your timing and of course any exercise that helped the legs helped you out. You built up the strength in your legs.

Grandpa: Can you give a brief explanation of coming down a ski jump?

Grandpa: Well that's a hard one, it's awful quick and I guess the feeling I can only tell you that I had is when I left

grandpa: the top up where I always liked to take one or two quick steps, now the rules state you can't do that, you can't make any extra movement, you just drop in the track and go down. But I use to like to take a couple steps to give me it seemed to give me confidence, I felt more sure of myself then. But naturally coming down your eye is pretty much on the take-off all the way down and that's what your watching for and of course once you get in the air you gotta ski according to what wind conditions are and what kind of take off you had and if your early or late.

me: What rules or regulations in ski jumping are necessary to know?

grandpa: well you have rules now that you naturally have judges that are judging your style. The distance is done by wherever you land the marker mark your distance, which is

grandpa: there is nothing you can do about that, that's where you land. But the judges will check the, your style and usually style and distance rates about 50-50 as far as your total points. Also in judging if they have 5 judges they'll knock out the score of the high judge and the low judge and give you the score of the middle 3 scores to count. (15)

me: What was the most rewarding part of ski jumping?

grandpa: I think in my case I felt it was the personal satisfaction you got of doing a good job because it's to me it's always been a individual sport, when you leave the top of the slope there's no one else riding with you to help you, it up to

grandpa: you ^{all} alone to do and if you can jump and make a good jump I think it's the satisfaction, that's the most rewarding part of it is the personal satisfaction of ^{it} it.

me: What was the most challenging or difficult part of ski jumping?

grandpa: That question is hard to answer. Challenging again is your challenging yourself. That why I felt I had my personal satisfaction because I was challenging myself every time I got up at the top of that hill. The difficult part of it is it's not an easy sport and you can get hurt you've gotta realize that and it's not difficult if you're doing something you like to do.

o me: Were you on any olympic teams?

grandpa: Yes, I was picked on the 1948 olympic team to Strouitz

Grandpa: Switzerland and I was picked
on the 1952 team to go to
Norway.

me: Did you take any places?

Grandpa: I placed 15th in the 1948
Olympics and that was the
first time I ever skied with
a pair of goggles on it was
snowing very very heavy in fact
it was snowing so heavy
that after every few jumps
they'd stop and have to
rake the snow on the take
off - It was coming down so
hard, but I did place 15th
there and in 1952 we were
sent to Wisconsin to train
and I used to always have trouble
with my landing and I had
a stiff landing which could cause
trouble altho I never fell too
much but I took a bad fall
down there and I crushed a
couple vertebrae and cracked off
a couple ribs down by my spine
of course 1956 I was on the world
Championship team in Lake -

grandpa: Pleased, New York and in the pre-champion meet we didn't have much snow out there they had scraped up from airports and that and spread it on the hill there were bottle caps and rocks in it and I took a fall there and I could have skied in the championship but we had 10 men on a team so they weren't going to put a man up there that was partially crippled to ski when your only allowed 4 competitors so they weren't going to put a man up there who was crippled so I stood and watched it from the side lines.

me: Could you explain about the F.I.S. world cup team?

grandpa: The F.I.S. means federation of International skiing, and it's at one time I don't know if they even hold that anymore but at one time the olympics were every 4 years and the worlds championships were every 3 yrs. inbetween

grandpa: the olympics

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me: Have you ever had any injuries from ski jumping?

grandpa: yes, as I told ya I had hurt my back that was the one ^{bad} fall that I can remember altho I did have alot of trouble for years skiing with bad ankles I had to have my ankles wrapped when ever I skied and I think came from when I was a youngster I couldn't even ice skate my ankles were always so weak but in ski jumping with the heavy boot and by taping them I had a trainer a fellow skier from Minneapolis that taught me how to properly wrap my ankles and I got by that way.

me: How were you chosen for all these teams you were on?

grandpa: well they usually had the try-outs like the 1948 team

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grandpa: The olympic team tryouts were 1947 in Seattle and we had 2 days of jumping for it. I placed 1st on the one day and 3rd on the 2nd day and I was in total point I was 1st over all & in the 1952 team was picked tryouts in Iron Mountain and I placed 2nd in the total tryouts that year and the F.I.S. team was picked strictly on your records there was no special tryout, but they picked the skiers that had done the best for the year. The F.I.S. Team had 10 men on the team that went to Lake Placid and the olympic team there were 6 of us on each team there again there are only 4, each country was only allowed 4 competitors.

me: What countries or states have you been to for ski jumping?

grandpa: Well I was in Switzerland for the olympics and of course I didn't get to Norway I wanted to go there real bad but I was home here in a hospital in a cast ~~had~~ and I skied in of course Wisconsin, Illinois

grandpa: Minnesota, Michigan, Colorado, ^(aa) Washington and also California, we skied at a summer meet there.

me: How did you get to all these places?

grandpa: Most of the time in the mid-west here we drove by car our club would send you out they would give you so much for the mileage for your car and then back skier got so many dollars for you never ate steakes you could afford a hamburger or something on the trip to there and back and when you went to these meets the host club payed for your room and meals while you were there.

me: Do you have any funny stories about ski jumping?

grandpa: Well funny stories, it wasn't really funny but it was interesting that we skied at Los Angeles at the L.A. county fair that was in 1951, I think in August or September in 1951.

grandpa: we had an artificial ski slide ⁽²³⁾
built there out of scaffolding
it was 245 ft. straight up
in the air and we jumped
up to 100 ft. on it and they
used a 120-150 tons of crushed
ice a day on that hill there.
They blew it on there with the
threshing machines, and the
funny part of it was it was
real narrow on the top and
being that high the scaffolding
had a certain amount of swaying
to it and they used set off oral
bombs like fireworks and these
things would explode right
up by the top where we were
and when they'd explode
the whole scaffolding would
seem to shake but it was
one of the skiers never realized
that until he was bending
down when they'd knock his
bindings up and he said
this thing is moving, but
it was really something
we skied for 2 weeks down
there, we stayed in the
Huntington hotel in Pasadena
where the rose bowl football
team stayed?

me: What was the longest distance you've ever flown ski jumping?

grandpa: Officially was 297 ft. that the year 1949 when I set the American record but I did jump 302 ft. in an extra jump so I did get to go over 300 ft. which isn't much of a jump today now they're going 400 ft. at Iron Mt.

me: Did you ever receive any special awards or prizes from ski jumping?

grandpa: Yes, in 1949, which was a great year for me I set the American record and I won the American Ski Trophy which is a ski boot that is silver it goes to the one person who in the year for the outstanding event in skiing and I also got married that year so it was a real good year.

me: What was your most unusual ski jumping experience?

grandpa: I think it was that skiing

in California on the ice. We were used to skiing in the winter with cold and here we skied out there with just a tee shirt on and it was an unusual experience. A very good experience.

Me: What year did you retire from ski jumping?

Grandpa: I got hurt in 52, we were sent to Wisconsin to train and I did ski the following year, the following 2 years. The following year I skied at Ishpeming Iron Mt. & Westbe I wanted to go back to the hill where I had gotten hurt and then the 1954 I skied in Ishpeming & Iron Mt. and that. The desire was it there anymore I didn't, and I had the family then I had two children then and I didn't feel I could be away taking that time for myself.

me: Now adays do you still ski? (26)

grandpa: No, I don't anymore, I did when I first retired from the mine I did some cross-country skiing, but I don't anymore.

me: Do any of your grandkids, nieces or nephews ski jump?

grandpa: The only ski jumpers I had were my sons 2 girls and that was Amy + Sarah. I used to go out to Seaside they had the junior program out there and I used to go out there and watch them there I enjoyed that because there isn't too many girls ski.

me: Did you have another career besides ski jumping?

grandpa: Well you could call it a career I think it was earning a living and raising my family. I worked at the I started peddling papers then I

grandpa: then I went to the theater and then I used to work at Chodas and the funny thing about that when you think back in I used to make 43¢ an hour and after being there for a year I was called in the office and told me I had a raise and when I got my check I found out I was making 44¢ an hour. Then I went in the Service and when I came out of Service I worked at Iron Mt. for awhile at Michigan Machine company and then I came back here I started at the Jayd Mine, The Clipp shaft mine after that and then I went to the Reasearch Lab and from there I went down to the Empire mine

me: What year did you retire?

grandpa: 1982

me: Were you ever in the Military?

grandpa: I was in the 10th Mt. division I went in April 1943 out to Camp Haul Colorado

me: Where were you stationed ⁽⁵⁸⁾
and what were your duties?

grandpa: I was stationed in Camp
Hail Colorado and Apehill
Military Reservation Virginia
and also in Camp Swift,
Texas and then we went
over to Italy.

me: Did you ever fight in any
major wars?

grandpa: We were in the battle when
we first got in to Italy and
we were there until the
war ended in Europe and
then we were sent to, home
supposedly to go to the Pacific
but we got as far as our
redeployment center, which
mine was camp McCoy and
the war being over with in the
Pacific they disbanded the
division and then I stayed
at camp McCoy until Dec.
the first part of December
then got my discharge.

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me: Did you ever receive any
Comondations?

grandpa: Yes. I have, I recieved
the silver star in Italy
for the sargent and the
captin and I were checking
the area for mines and we
went up this old road
to this farm house and
while we were standing
watching some snipers
a shell went off in front
of us and wounded the
Sargent and I bandaged
him up and brought him
into the house and band-
aged him up and the
captin had me go back and
I had checked the road
with them for mines and
was able to pick up a jeep
and come back and pick
up the sargent and get
out of there and I got
the silver star for that

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

Grandpa: I think I've always liked hunting and fishing I done quite a bit of early Rainbow fishing this Spring but I like Brook Trout fishing, I don't get to do it as much as I should anymore, but I think it's just being lazy I like deer hunting, being out at the camp on Bearch Lake, not so much for the hunting in getting game but for more to be with the flas and that at the camp.

me: Have you been involved in any clubs or organizations?

Grandpa: I belong to The Ishpeming Elks and The Ishpeming VFW most of my activity

Grandpa: there is peeling potatoes ⁽³¹⁾
for the pasty sales. they
have.

me: Were you in Band?

Grandpa: I play in the Negaunee
City band and I played
in High school band then I
played in the Ishpeming City
band for years. When I first
came out of service I played
with the Ishpeming City
band but I was playing
with the Negaunee City band
when I went in service &
I used to play with both of
them for awhile and then
Ishpeming band disbanded
and I quit playing for
quite a few years and when
I retired I was talked
back in to go playing
with the Negaunee band.

I enjoy it.

me: What instrument do you play?

Grandpa: The Trumpet

me: If you had to do it all over again would you choose the same careers as you did?

Grandpa: Yes, except that I don't call working at the mine a career, I suppose it is a career in it's where I earn my living and raise my family with

me: In closing do you have any thing else left you would like to add?

Grandpa: Yes I think one important thing is my first ski metal that I got was at National Mine at what they used to call "Little Bluff Hill". That's the first metal that I ever work. I still have it and also an interesting thing is that at the National Mine hill anyone

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grandpa: that knows it, there
was a creek across the
bottom and I like every
one else had a chance
to ball and went into
the creek so I did get a
\$ dunking out there at
Little Bluff Hill.